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Mughal Landscapes: History, Heritage & Design

F A L L 2 0 0 9

This seminar focuses on environmental design during the Mughal empire of South Asia (16th through 18th centuries), a dynasty of Central Asian origins that extended over what are today the territories of India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan.

The seminar critically evaluates places described as gardens, cities, landscapes, and territories, along with their changing meanings over time. These sites range from tomb-gardens such as the Taj Mahal to palaces, citadels, waterworks, and pleasure gardens. They have meanings that conjoined religious symbolism with economic production, environmental functions, and political power.

We begin with modern debates over the cultural heritage value, conservation, and design significance of Mughal landscapes. From these modern questions, which constitute "the designer's problem," we follow diverse strands of evidence that may help us reconstruct and interpret these historic places. Some students may focus on the representation of landscapes in texts, paintings, or historical photography. Others may choose to analyze extant landscape forms, shapes, and metrics. Each type of evidence raises as many questions as it answers. We work together to weigh and synthesize the results in ways that reinterpret the history, heritage, and design of Mughal landscapes; and strive to assemble our findings in an edited report.

Each year the seminar focuses on a specific historical and historiographical issue.



DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE

TIME:	Wednesday 9-12
ROOM:	1-132
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UNITS:	3-3-6
LEVEL:	H
PREREQUISITE:	Consent of instructor