GAHTC Grant Proposal 2015
Manu P. Sobti, Sahar Hosseini & Kate Malaia

A. Team Members & Bios

MANU P. SOBTI is Associate Professor in Buildings-Landscapes-Cultures *(blc)* at the School of Architecture & Urban Planning (SARUP) at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. He co-coordinated the Buildings-Landscapes-Cultures *(blc)* program between 2009-14, and is currently Chair of SARUP's PhD Program in Architecture. Sobti's research focuses on cross-cultural synthesis, metamorphosis, and change in the architecture and urbanism of globalizing cities in Asia and Central Asia. He is the author of three publications - the first, a monograph titled *Urban Form and Space in the Islamic City: A Study of Morphology and Formal Structures in the city of Bhopal, Central India* (CEPT/Vastu Shilpa Foundation, 2003); and two book manuscripts nearing completion - *Space and Collective Identity in South Asia: Migration, Architecture and Urban Development* (Under contract: I. B. Tauris Publishers-UK, expected completion Dec. 2015), & *Riverine Narratives East and West* (Under contract: Ashgate Publishers-UK, expected completion May 2016). He is also directing a Public Television Documentary Proposal titled *Medieval Riverlogues* (currently under review by the NEH) focused on Central Asia's legendary River Oxus, and preparing a fourth publication titled *The Sliver of the Oxus Borderland: Medieval Cultural Interactions between the Arabs and Persians* (Brill Publications, Fall 2016). In Spring & Fall 2015, he is director of SARUP's prestigious Urban Edge Award, comprising a Chandigarh (India) Urban Design Studio (Spring 2015), alongside related lectures, a Spring 2015 symposium and a Fall 2015 Symposiums in Chandigarh and Milwaukee. Sobti coordinates SARUP's architectural history sequence, comprising of survey courses and a host of advanced seminars.

SAHAR HOSSEINI is PhD candidate in the Buildings-Landscapes-Cultures *(blc)* doctoral program at the School of Architecture and Urban Planning, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Hosseini's work examines the continuity and metamorphosis of material culture, architecture and urban design in early modern Persia during the region's passage into modernity. Hosseini has published and presented her work at national and international venues such as the Society of Architectural Historians, the Middle Eastern Studies Association, the Iranian Studies Society, and the American Historical Society. Her dissertation research examines the making and transformation of hydraulic landscape in Isfahan between the seventeenth and early twentieth century, positioned within the framework of Persia's emergence at the crossroads of local, regional, and global treatment of urban waterways. Hosseini has multiple years of experience teaching and lecturing on various aspects of history of art and architecture to undergraduate and graduate students at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and the William Paterson University. In recognition of her work, she has received multiple awards and fellowships including UWM's Golda Meir Library Scholar Research Award, the SAH SAHARA Fellowship, and the SAH Scott Opler Fellowship.

KATERYNA MALAIA is PhD candidate in the Buildings-Landscapes-Cultures *(blc)* interdisciplinary program at the School of Architecture and Urban Planning, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. She holds a B.Arch (2009) and an M.Arch (2011) from the National Academy of Arts and Architecture, Kyiv (Ukraine). Malaia's research interests include the examination of social, spatial and aesthetic transformations of urban environments following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Malaia has presented her work at several conferences, including the Society of Architectural Historians 67th Annual Conference. Based upon her presentation at the SAH convention, she is currently preparing a paper titled "A Building in Siege: A Case Study of Moscow Congregational Mosque" towards publication in the *International Journal of Islamic Architecture* (forthcoming 2016). She is also working on a contribution for *Riverine Narratives East and West, ed. Manu P. Sobti (*Ashgate Publishers-UK, expected completion May 2016). Malaia is also co-author of an ongoing project on the spatial narratives of the 2013-2014 Ukrainian Revolution. Malaia continues to teach design studio, theory and history classes in architecture. In Fall 2014, she took part in the collaborative development and teaching of the

undergraduate and graduate level Global Architectural History curriculum with Prof. Manu P. Sobti.

B. Title, Theme & Goal

Peripheries of Contact - Beyond Geographies and Historical Flatland

What is a periphery? As a liminal zone of contact and exchange, how do its spatial qualities exaggerate and endorse conflict, contestation and tolerance, while addressing the issues of hierarchy, power, and social norms? How does the so-called 'peripheral condition' pre-empt change for those who transgress and embrace it, indexing degrees of significance, while creating and reflecting distributions of power, and articulating standards and deviations? What change does this produce, both within and beyond the periphery itself - directed centripetally and centrifugally towards traditionally established centers?

While the term periphery implies movement around the edge or circumference, as a spatial concept, it remains ripe for metaphorical extension. On these lines, and in contrast to assumptions of the periphery as a limiting condition, we propose the re-consideration of the periphery as a *zone of transition*. In effect, positing the notion of the periphery as a complex, spatial region encompassing geographical features and overlapping cultures, while undergoing transformative change due to goings-on within it and in reaction to the center that it formally opposes. Beyond its formally perceived center (or centers), concomitantly, the periphery also serves as the beginning of another entity immediately adjoining it and laying well beyond. Given these changing (mercurial) attributes of the periphery, we suggest no longer looking at the periphery as merely peripheral, but rather as central to the processes of cultural change and thereby instrumentally shaping cumulative regional and global histories. Finally, we recognize the critical role of the periphery within the historiographical discourse of the cultural region (or regions) that it overlaps, encompasses, overlaps and connects. In this sense, the making and un-making of the periphery remains central to what constitutes the construction of legitimate history, and how multiple voices should be considered in its writing, many clearly residing well outside the 'convenient' center. On these lines, the current NAAB-accredited and conventionally accepted architectural history discourse curriculum remains a classic example of these incomplete stories. So do the Humanities themselves, once central to the college curriculum, and today unfortunately regarded as peripheral to the main business of higher education. It is therefore hoped that these perspectives would soon be revised in light of the new maps of center and periphery that humanists, among others, are producing.

Entitled as the *Peripheries of Contact - Beyond Geographies and Historical Flatland,* our GAHTC course development proposal examines the dynamic peripheries of a cultural region (area) - a global region loosely defined not only by its ethno-linguistic character, but more importantly, by its inherently intertwined environment and culture. Given that cultural regions have adjoined each other, often connecting (and sharing) the same periphery, these cultural regions are also viewed as those with peripheral affinities and interconnections through the course of their complex histories. In recognizing the inherent dynamism and instability of these spatialities, we consider that as the centers rise and fall, peripheries are constantly redrawn and redefined. *Peripheries of Contact* is therefore particularly focused on interrogating these liminalities as an effective zone of transmission. It explores how these conventionally 'outlying' zones (or sites) have effectively enhanced and continue to enhance, artistic and artifactual transmission owing to comparative (and occasionally contested) notions of regional and nationalistic identity. Also, given the penchant for agents of cultural exchange and transfer to move through the borderland periphery (or occupy points within it on a temporary basis), the periphery is a fertile site of experimentation in its exemplars of cultural mixing, un-mixing and stylistic change. On these lines, peripheries are often border zones where peoples or things are thrown into unexpected contact, creating hybrid spaces, while yielding new possibilities for social and cultural organization. In comparative perspective, therefore, while centers may seem more advanced or more privileged than peripheries, decisive change and innovation often begin at these fringes.

Towards these overarching goals, we employ three examples to create the core of a course framework with an inherent flexibility to allow additional cultural zones to be added, as per curricular needs emerging in the future. Moving beyond the normative nation state and/or chronological sub-divisions employed in course

primers, the three cultural worlds at the center of our proposal are the Slavic cultural zone, the Persianate cultural zone, and the Indian Subcontinent cultural zone. While 'messy' in the nature of their spatio-cultural definitions, these three zones fall well within the specialist purview of the three collaborators, yet provide an unbridled opportunity to adventurously explore a new way of looking at the past, present and future. Moreover, through the course of their complex histories, these three cultural zones have remained interconnected to each other via a fourth zone (or periphery). This periphery - an ungainly zone, yet distinct in its own right - is a rich continuum of cultural landscapes effectively combining the domical churches of the Slavic lands, with the rigor of Seljuk exposed brickwork, and the terracotta-marble combinations of the Indian Subcontinent. Furthermore, if the agents and actors of the three mentioned cultural worlds were the stalwarts of sedentary (and unstable) empires, these were aptly contrasted by the fecund nomadic-sedentary exchanges characteristic of the peripheral zone. Lastly, even the concept of what constituted architecture and cities underwent radical shift between the four cultural zones, their avenues of transmission and exchange based on traveling armies, migrating craftsmen and moving (occasionally canonized artifact and craft-making traditions).

Within this framework, the collaborating team shall design the *Peripheries of Contact - Beyond Geographies and Historical Flatland* course proposal under the supervision of Manu P. Sobti. Sobti's experience at coordinating SARUP's existing architectural history sequence offered to undergraduate and graduate students, and disciplinary breadth in non-Western (Central Asian and Indian Subcontinent) studies strategically connected via global 'moments' shall be critical. This shall be appropriately matched by Doctoral candidates Sahar Hosseini and Kate Malaia's emerging expertise on the Persianate and Slavic worlds respectively.

A working sample of our approach to the three cultural zones and their 'liminal' sites is as follows:

The **Persianate** world, inaccurately imagined within the borders of modern nation state of Iran, corresponds to a much larger geographical boundary, with a more complex history that the modern borders of Iran would suggest. The region encompasses the territories of modern Iran, Afghanistan, Tajikistan as well as the Caucasus, Central Asia, the Indian Subcontinent, and parts of the former Ottoman Empire. From the Zoroastrian religion of the Sassanids, to the Islamic culture and alphabet used by Arab scholars and administrators, and politics and customs of the nomad Turks, to name just a few, Persianate culture incorporated traditions, culture, and language of many groups who occupied its center and peripheries.

The **Slavic** world, a linguistic entity, located between the conceptual West and East of the Occident thought, has been seen as a periphery for centuries. The Eastern European Black Sea shore was a periphery of the Classic Antiquity, leaving behind multiple trade towns with Greek architectural orders and grid street organization. Byzantium spread its tradition of Christianity onto the Slavic peripheries, only to later discover itself under attack of the energetic former pagans from Kyiv Russ, struggling for influence in the Eastern Christian lands. Persians encountered the Slavic World through the sea trade and crafts. Between the thirteenth and the fifteenth centuries, the Golden Horde left its cultural and political footprints on the Slavic lands, as the Ottoman Empire and the Austro-Hungarian Empire several centuries later. The constructed periphery of the Slavic World, in fact, occupied a territory bigger than that of Western Europe, which conditioned this entity to participate in the major European, Middle Eastern and even Asian empires. The geographic spread of the Slavic World also meant that its regions had peripheries of their own; in addition, the Occident thought also stratified Slavic geographies as more or less "civilized."

In relationship to the first two, the world of the **Indian Subcontinent** was a realm of isolated centers and 'thick' peripheries, controlled by its specific geographies. In fact, much of Indian medieval history remains replete with the contesting control of these centers and the geographical features that 'contain' these centers. On these lines, no longer does a linguistic and/or political assessment suffice to explain the idea of the subcontinent as a cultural region. Could the northwestern mountainous massif of the Himalayan range, combined with the densely forested Gangetic and Central Indian riverine plains, be better definitions to the perceived limits of this

cultural region? This initially idiosyncratic 'geographical' reconstruction is substantiated by the realms of control and cultural exchange exercised by the Delhi Sultanate ruling elite, who controlled sites located in the north western and northern part of the Indian subcontinent, in addition to several more positioned deep in the interior. What is perhaps most critical to the cultural resilience of the Indian subcontinent is the continuing interaction between the migrant and the indigenous, its transmission facilitated by the porous frontiers located to the northwest. This porous frontier connects to the our defined 'peripheral or matrix' zone - in itself, constantly changing owing to conditions around it.
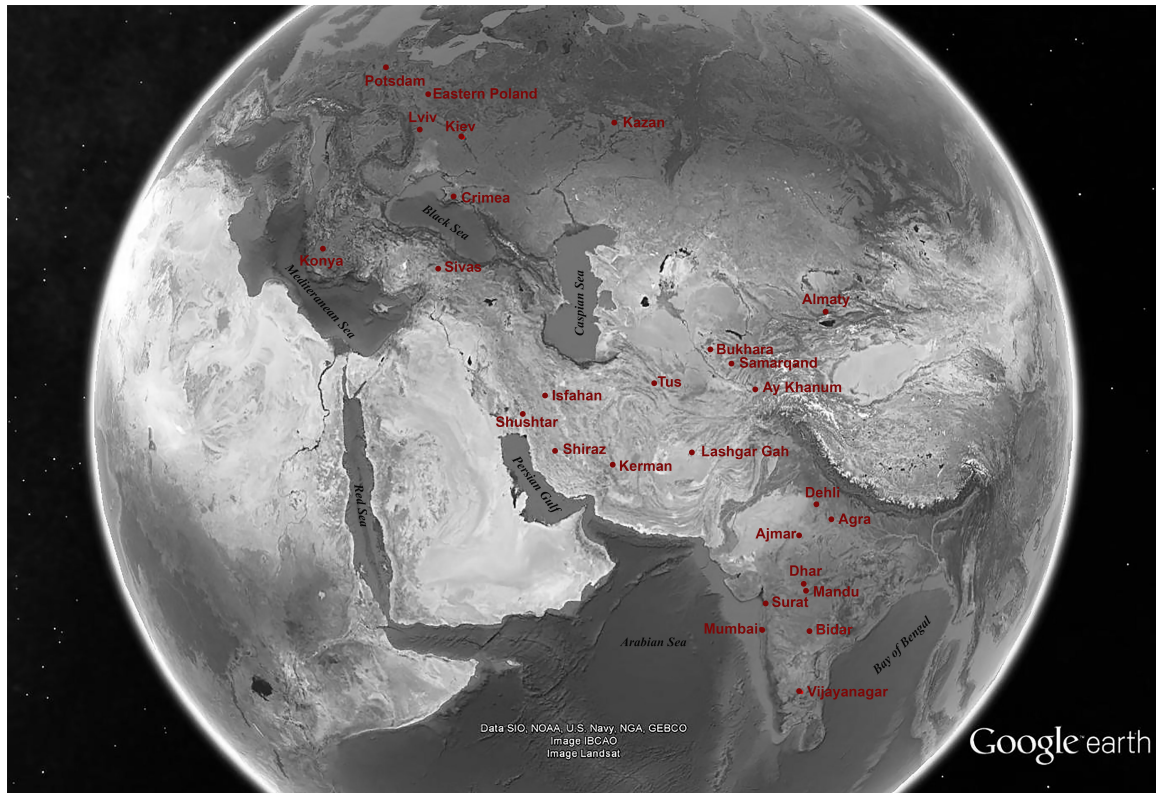
C. Context and Fit

This course contributes to the disciplines of art and architecture history, urban studies, cultural history, global studies and anthropology. It goes beyond the established cannons of teaching architecture history through survey courses that relegate zones of transformation and hybridity to the peripheries of architectural history pedagogy. Instead of chronological narratives that focus on established civilization centers, we shape our narratives through relationships and references that emerge from the peripheries.

A course structure that involves 10 modules is proposed. The first module serves as an introductory overview to what we define as the *peripheries of contact* between cultural regions. The second module presents the idea of the *cultural region* and discusses the mechanisms of interaction between these regions. In addition, it provides a comprehensive overview of theories and methods specific to cultural contact, conflict, reconciliation, synthesis, hybridity and change. Following this introduction, we proceed to the examination of the peripheries of each cultural region, with Persianate world being discussed in modules 3 and 4, the Indian Subcontinent addressed in modules 5 and 6, and the Slavic world detailed in modules 7 and 8. In each of the 6 mentioned modules, we provide an in-depth examination of architectural examples emerging and specific to the peripheries of these cultural regions, in light of the discussed methods [cultural translation, re-use and hybridization]. In effect, modules 3 to 8 lead us to redefine the making and un-making of peripheries in module 9, which uniquely elaborates the unstable 'periphery' or matrix zone encompassing the fringes of Persia, north-western India and Central Asia. Finally, in our tenth and

concluding module, we suggest directions for this process of thought to be extended and accommodate the scholarship of experts in other fields.

Each of the 10 modules listed above shall be approached as 2 weekly lectures 60 - 90 minutes each (currently at SARUP-UWM, Architectural History surveys are taught twice weekly - 50 minutes each class). Each lecture shall include 2-4 overarching questions connected to the central theme of the course, substantively illustrated via appropriate architectural and/or urban exemplars, and in most cases especially developed time line diagrams and maps (the collaborative team has experience with these representations). Over the last few years, the members of the project team have also employed site animations and videos to 'rebuild' site and building evidence to invoke student interest - this shall be incorporated within the described modules. Examples of our continuing work are available at *www.blcurbanmorphologies.com*

D. List of Buildings

Select list of Persianate examples

1. The Status of Darius at Susa and Apadana reliefs in Persepolis, representing the influence of Periphery (Egypt) on the Persianate center
2. Ay Khanum City in Afghanistan, representing the impact of Hellenistic culture in the Persianate world (abandoned possibly between 145-120 BCE)
3. Samanid Mausoleum (914-943 CE)
4. Lashkari Bazar (second half of tenth century)
5. Great Mosque of Sivas (minaret for its brick muqarnas) (1128-29 CE)
6. Qutb complex (12th century onwards)
7. Seljuq suburban gardens of Konya (early fifteenth century)
8. Alaeddin Kosku (Kiusk) (1246-1264 CE)
9. Qawan Madrasa in Bidar (1472 CE)
10. Audience Hall of Shah Jahan in Agra (1628 CE)
11. Taj Mahal (1632-1643/4 CE)
12. Ganjali Khan complex in Kerman (1596-1631 CE)
13. Zoroastrian temples in nineteenth century Mumbai and Surat (Vakil Atash Bahram -1823, Wadia Atash Bahram-1830, Banji Atash Bahram 1845, Tuthi Adrian-1851.)
14. Ferdowsi tomb at Tus (1934)
15. Urban reform in provinces (early twentieth century)
16. Social Housing in Shushater new town (1977)

Select list of Slavic examples

1. Tatar Mosques in Kazan (Märcani Mosque, c. 1766-1770)
2. Tatar Mosques in Crimea (Kokkoz Mosque (c. 1910), Kebir-Jami Mosque (c.1508), etc)
3. Lipka Tatar Mosques in Poland (18th-19th century)
4. Jewish Shtetl towns in Poland and Ukraine (1791-1917)
5. St. Sophia Cathedral in Kiev, Ukraine (c. 1011-1137 CE, reconstructed at the end of the 17th century)
6. Lviv old city ensemble, Ukraine (14th-20th centuries)
7. Kyzyl-tan Textile House(c.1896), Almaty and Zharkent Mosque (1895), Kazakhstan
8. Alexandrowka, Potsdam, Germany (c.1826-1827))

Select list of Indian examples

1. Delhi - Sultanate Sites (873-1500 CE)
2. Ajmer - Sultanate Sites (950 - 1350 CE)
3. Dhar - Hoshang Shah Sites (1350 - 1450 CE)
4. Mandu - Hoshang Shah Sites (1350 - 1450 CE)
5. Vijaynagara - Sangama Sites (1350-1600 CE)

E. Process

Once the approval of the project is received, the three project collaborators shall develop the 10 described course modules by the beginning of Fall 2016.

Three significant phases are seen necessary towards this -

> The <u>first</u> shall comprise a collaborative phase of intensive research and development (around 4-6 meetings), also including 1-2 scholarly 'retreats' or 'show and tells' sessions. At these retreats, it is planned that academics and or scholars from within and outside the university community would be tapped for their insights on the conceptualization of peripheries and modes of contact at these peripheries.

> The <u>second</u> collaborative phase among the three participants shall include a clear delineation of module content, structure, narrative and style. It is likely that an existing history survey shall be co-opted towards this role and as the basis for a draft 'run' (perhaps around Spring-end 2016). It is expected that 4-6 meetings shall be required.

> The <u>third</u> phase shall consist of individual team members developing their specialized modules (Sahar Hosseini - Persianate/Kate Malaia - Slavic/Manu P. Sobti - Indian Subcontinent). Towards the last month of Summer 2016, all modules shall be arranged side by side to establish continuity and flow. Introductory and concluding modules to the course shall also be finalized at this time. In this last phase, 4-6 meetings shall be required.

Overall, given the collaborative, yet individualized nature of the course proposal, it is expected that 2-4 opportunities over the year would be required to allow all the collaborators to come together.

F. Timeline
Suggested Project Timeline:

Phase 1: Nov. 2015-Feb. 2016
Phase 2: March-May 2016
Phase 3: June-Aug. 2016
Fall 2016: Course Modules delivered to GAHTC as per deadlines suggested

G. Budget

1. We envisage a total of 10 modules, or a set of 20 lectures, paced at about two lectures/week. Given the size of our team (3 collaborators), we envisage a budget of $1500/lecture (total for 20 lectures = $30,000)

2. Request towards 2 planned scholarly retreats described in Phase 1 (see E above) is $2500/retreat. Total for two retreats would be $5000 (including travel and board for 2-3 visiting scholars; the 3 collaborators shall also request competitive university funds towards the same)

3. It is expected that once complete, all course modules shall be freely available via the Internet and therefore engage a wide audience. In anticipation, the 3 collaborators hope to set up a dedicated web-based interface to accomplish the same. Amount requested towards cloud-based storage and web site hosting and development $ 5000

Total amount requested (Items 1 to 3, as above) = US $40,000