**Key Terms**

**West and Central Asia**

**arabesque** - Arabesque means “Arab-like.” It is a flowing, intricate pattern derived from stylized organic motifs, usually floral; generally, an Islamic decorative motif.

**calligraphy** - Calligraphy in Greek means beautiful writing.” It is handwriting or penmanship, especially elegant writing, created as a decorative art.

**cuerda seca** - Cuerda seca is a type of polychrome tile work used in decorating Islamic buildings.

**Hijra** - The Hjira is the flight of Muhammad from Mecca to Medina in 622, the year from which Islam dates its beginnings.

**hypostyle hall** - A hypostyle hall is a hall with a roof supported by columns.

**imam** - In Islam, the imam is a leader of collective worship.

**iwan** - An iwan a vaulted rectangular recess opening onto a courtyard found in Islamic architecture.

**Kaaba** - Kaaba in Arabic, means “cube.” It is a small cubical building in Mecca, the Muslim world’s symbolic center.

**Koran** - The Koran is Islam’s sacred book. It is composed of surahs (chapters) divided into verses.

**madrasa** - The madrasa is the Islamic theological college adjoining and often containing a mosque.

**mihrab** - A mihrab is a semicircular niche set into the qibla wall of an mosque.

**minbar** - In a mosque, the minbar is the pulpit on which the imam stands.
mosque - A mosque is the Islamic building for collective worship. The word comes from the Arabic word masjid, meaning a “place for bowing down.”