This seminar focuses on the Silk Road Buddhist cave site at Mogao, Dunhuang. Through a series of case studies based on individual caves, iconography, style, and patronage, the seminar seeks to understand the various contexts that shaped the paintings, sculptures, and architecture in nearly 500 caves from the 4th to the 14th c. The course is also attentive to the relationship between these caves and modern concepts of space, materiality, and cultural patrimony, especially those raised by the discovery of the “secret library cave” in 1900, and whose artistic and historical treasures are now found in London and Paris, among other repositories. For those of us who cannot go to the Gobi Desert this summer, Dunhuang will come to the West Coast with a major exhibition at the Getty and a smaller one at the Seattle Asian Art Museum.