GWU Museum and Textile Museum

Museum Information

Field Trip Information

- Contact the education department (museumed@gwu.edu) for more information

Events Calendar

Introduction

George Washington University's art museum includes an extensive textile collection with textiles from around the world. The collection is especially strong in non-Western textiles, which makes it a great potential source of medieval art and artifacts from South America, the Middle East, and Asia. Much of the Museum's collection is available online, so teachers can share examples of textiles with students or have students explore the site.

Recommended resources for DC teachers

Textiles 101 is an exhibit that is also accessible online with basic information about textile production, vocabulary, and history. Not specifically related to medieval history, but could be useful as part of a lesson or unit about the importance of textiles to medieval trade and daily life, especially when combined with examples of medieval textiles (see below). Secondary teachers could share this essay from the Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History for additional context on Incan textiles.

DC Standards: K.2, 1.4, K-2.His1, 3-5.His1, 3-5.His3, 6.6, 9.1, 9.3, 9.6 (9th grade standards will depend on textile examples chosen)

Highlighted objects and lesson resources

Students learning about the Silk Road could consider and compare textiles from across Eurasia to understand how culture influenced the specific designs of textiles, but also how silk textiles, in particular, were highly valued across the world during the Middle Ages. An analysis of specific objects in the collection could be combined with a Silk Road simulation or a reading about the Silk Road. Objects from the collection to consider (see video for more details): 3.213A, 73.660, 73.17.

Additional items from the collection related to medieval history

Ottoman carpet (late 15th or early 16th century)
Mamluk carpet fragment (late 15th or early 16th century)
Japanese wall hanging (13th century)

Sacrificial textile (Peru, 8th century)
Sash (Spain, 14th-15th century)
Sock (Egypt, medieval)
Fragment (Peru, no date)
Tunic (Peru, 15th-16th century)
Tunic (Peru, 15th-16th century)
Tunic (Peru, 800-950)
Tunic (Peru, 1400-1540)