The Byzantine Empire emerged out of the Christian Roman Empire of the fourth and fifth centuries to become one of the major political and cultural forces of the Middle Ages. From its foundation in the fourth century to its fall to the Ottoman Turks in the fifteenth, the Byzantine capital at Constantinople was the envy of the European and Mediterranean worlds; a center of wealth and divinely sanctioned power. Central to the creation and maintenance of this image were Byzantine visual traditions in art and architecture. This course will examine these traditions from the rise of Byzantium in the sixth century through the period of its Mediterranean hegemony in the 12th and its collapse in the 15th century. Images and architectural monuments from the Byzantine capital in Constantinople will be considered together with works from the hinterlands of Greece and Asia Minor, the territories of the greater Byzantine commonwealth, places such as Armenia, Georgia, and Kievan Rus, and western centers such as Aachen, Venice, and Palermo. Works of art will be considered in the contexts of such institutions as church and court in an effort to understand the ways in which developments in art and architecture both responded to and shaped the concerns of Byzantine society.