Course Title

Ancient Art in Berlin: Discovering the Collections of Museum Island

Course Number
ARTH-UA.9150D01

SAMPLE SYLLABUS

Lecturer Contact Information
Stephanie Pearson
steph.pearson@nyu.edu

Course Details
Wednesdays, 1:30pm to 4:15pm

Location
Location: Rooms will be posted in Albert before your first class. Please double check whether your class takes place at the Academic Center (BLAC – Schönhauser Allee 36, 10435 Berlin) or at St. Agnes (SNTA – Alexandrinenstraße 118-121, 10969 Berlin).

Prerequisites
None

Units earned
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Course Description
This course provides an overview of Egyptian, Near Eastern, Greek, and Roman art as represented in the world-class collections of antiquities on Berlin's Museum Island. Classroom sessions give students a foundation of knowledge of ancient art, while numerous site visits allow them to understand these principles “in action” within Berlin's internationally renowned collections of ancient art housed on Museum Island. The sites visited include the Egyptian collection in the Neues Museum, the ancient Near Eastern collection in the Pergamon Museum (which remains on view, unaffected by the closure of the Pergamon Altar gallery), and the Greek and Roman collections in the Bode Museum and Altes Museum.
Two special components of this course in Fall 2018 are noteworthy:

1) Workshop: “Whose Culture? Whose Heritage? A discussion with Arjun Appadurai, NYU/HU.” This workshop is a joint project between two NYU Berlin courses, "Shaping an Educational Landscape: Museum Island" and "Ancient Art in Berlin: Discovering the Collections of Museum Island". A joint session is planned to address challenging questions such as, What (or when) is a museum, collection, display? What kind of context(s) does a museum provide? How do museums address issues of provenance, acquisition and appropriation? How can we describe an object's 'journey'? What is the difference between the terms 'object' and 'exhibit'? Arjun Appadurai, professor at NYU and visiting professor at Humboldt University, will lead a discussion with students about how questions such as these relate to controversial debates about the universal museum, the production of a global cultural heritage, and notions of shared heritage. We will explore how museum narratives about memory and identity-building might include or reject issues of diversity and equity; and we will ask who has been producing what kind of narratives, and who has been silenced. Whose heritage have museums produced and keep (re-)producing through their narratives? What can be done? The workshop will take place on Friday, October 12, and is mandatory. To offset the Friday session, there is no class on Wednesday, October 10.

2) Public discussion: “Decolonize Mitte! The Humboldt Forum, Museum Island, and Schloss.” This conversation with Ares Kalandides, Annette Loeseke, Stephanie Pearson, and other invited guests brings the themes in this course to a public forum, encouraging Berlin communities to join the conversation. The discussion will take place on Monday, November 19, 6–8pm, and is mandatory. To offset the Monday session, there is no class on Wednesday, November 21.

Course Objective

By the end of this course, students will be able to perform a visual analysis of an ancient art object and present a historically accurate interpretation of it. They will be able to locate the resources to research an ancient object, evaluate the integrity of these sources, summarize their arguments and relevance, and incorporate them into their interpretations. They will be able to present their ideas and arguments to their peers in a cogent, comprehensible way. They will be able to enumerate the major points of scholarly texts and put them into dialogue with other concepts discussed in class. They will be able to apply the knowledge they gain from reading and writing to actual museum objects, and in turn use these objects to reinforce their understanding of broad historical, cultural, and artistic concepts. They will be attentive to key issues in the display of museum collections.

Assessment Components

Class Participation: 15%. Because field trips to Museum Island are an essential component of this class, active participation constitutes a substantial portion of the grade.

8 Short Writing Assignments: Each 400–600 words (equivalent to 1-2 pages, double-spaced); 35%. Each week, the instructor will detail the assignment that is due before class the following week. The assignment will be either an art-historical writing exercise or a response to the assigned reading for the coming week. These must be uploaded to NYU Classes “Assignments” before the start of class each week. Be sure you receive a confirmation email saying that your upload was successful!
Midterm Assignment: “Whose Culture? Whose Heritage?” Workshop Paper; 25%. Around 2500 words (equivalent to 5 pages, double-spaced). For the midterm paper, students will select one of the museums visited so far and rethink the display strategies and narratives according to the discussion of challenging topics with Arjun Appadurai during the joint workshop on Friday, October 12. This session is mandatory; students who enroll in the class commit to participating on this date. To offset the Friday session, there is no class on Wednesday, October 10. Paper due by the start of class on October 17 via NYU Classes.

Final Presentation: 15-minute oral presentation; 25%. Each student will select an object displayed on Museum Island and not treated in the weekly reading assignments, research it, and present it to the class in the museum with a polished oral presentation of 15 minutes. An annotated bibliography of three appropriate scholarly sources not included in the syllabus must be turned in in advance, by November 21, 1:30pm. A successful Final Presentation relies on proper content as well as good oral presentation skills, to be discussed in class. The notes for this presentation must be submitted in typed form during Final Exam Week.

Failure to submit or fulfill any required component may result in failure of the class, regardless of grades achieved in other assignments.

Required Text(s)
Electronic Resources (via NYU Classes / NYU Library)

One copy of each book is kept in the Reading Room of NYU Berlin’s Academic Center, for you to read in the center but not to take out.

NYU Berlin Library Catalogue or follow the link on NYU Berlin’s website (Academics/Facilities & Services).

Supplemental Text(s) (not required to purchase)

Internet Research Guidelines
To be discussed in class.

Additional Required Equipment
Entrance passes for the museums on Museum Island will be provided by NYU Berlin. These must be brought without fail to every class session on Museum Island.

Session 1 – 5 Sep 2018
Approaching Ancient Art on Museum Island (NYU Academic Center)
Meet at the Academic Center (BLAC) in the room posted on ALBERT at 1:30pm.
The goals of this session are twofold. The first is to introduce students of all backgrounds to the basics of looking at and writing about ancient art. By highlighting the special principles of ancient art history, this session lays the groundwork for students who are entirely new to the
study of visual culture as well as students who are already familiar with the art history of other periods or with art practice (which differ substantially from the study of ancient art). Throughout this course, students will practice these methods in the extraordinary collections on Museum Island; so the second part of this session is devoted to a brief history of the island, its museum landscape, and its art collections.

Reading: None.

Session 2 – 12 Sep 2018

Egyptian Art: Principles of Kingship (Neues Museum)
Meet in front of the Neues Museum (at equestrian statue) at 1:30pm.

The principles of Egyptian art—and the societal values that shaped them—are examined through an overview of the life and land of ancient Egypt, on the one hand, and on the other, a concentrated look at depictions of royalty. Kings and queens in ancient Egypt were expected to serve very specific functions, which they sought to communicate and strengthen through artistic commissions. Two case studies illustrate the point: Hatshepsut, the “woman who became king,” and Akhenaten, the sun-worshipper who single-handedly transformed Egyptian art and religion. Berlin’s Neues Museum offers an excellent glimpse into both New Kingdom dynasties.

Reading: Cooney, TBA; Robins 12–29, 122–165 (NYU Classes).
Due: Writing Assignment 1.

Session 3 – 19 Sep 2018

Representing Ancient Egypt in Modern Germany (Neues Museum)
Meet in front of the Neues Museum (at equestrian statue) at 1:30pm.

The art-historical analysis of Egyptian art is here combined with an analysis of its display in the Neues Museum, building the foundation for our Workshop discussions on October 12. We benefit from the Neues Museum’s expansive Egyptian collection in order to evaluate the presentation of Egyptian art as “universal cultural heritage” outside its country of origin, and what narratives the museum chooses to tell about it.

Reading: Marchand 333–367; Philips 758–774; Kaplan 152–169 (NYU Classes).
Due: Writing Assignment 2.

Session 4 – 26 Sep 2018

Babylonian and Neo-Babylonian Art (Pergamon Museum)
Independent study in the Pergamon Museum.

The Pergamon Museum collections exemplify several issues discussed in the last session, particularly the acquisition of stunning archaeological material through diplomatic activities now seen as controversial. Furthermore, the collections offer the perfect starting point to explore the art of Babylon. Here we focus on the ideal of kingship initiated by Hammurabi and imitated by Neo-Babylonian rulers (most notably in the Ishtar Gate, a highlight of the museum). How did these rulers present themselves in portraiture as well as monuments in the urban landscape in order to reify their power? The ability to critically analyse images meant to propagate a certain political image is still relevant today.

Reading: Bilsel 159–188; Winter 254-270; Mieroop 257–275 (NYU Classes).
Due: Writing Assignment 3.

3 Oct 2018 – Public Holiday – No Class
Session 5 – MAKE-UP DAY: Friday, 5 Oct 2018
Workshop Preparation: New Neighbors on Museum Island
Meet at the Academic Center (BLAC) in the room posted on ALBERT at 1:30pm.
What motivated German museums to collect ancient Greek, Egyptian, and Near Eastern art in the 19th and early 20th centuries? What historical circumstances allowed for and sometimes even encouraged this collecting activity? What initiatives are currently being implemented to address this history? Drawing on recent scholarly work on this important phase of German history—a formative moment for archaeology, art history, and acquisition practices in European museums—we discuss the foundations of this “cultural diplomacy” as well as its lasting effects to the present day.

Reading: Vick 483–500; Eissenhauer et al. 118–139, 156–172, 392–402; Prussian Cultural Heritage TBA (NYU Classes).
Due: Writing Assignment 4 and Independent Project.

10 Oct 2018 – No Class
To compensate for the Friday session on October 12, there is no class on this day.

Session 6 – FRIDAY SESSION: Friday, 12 Oct 2018
This workshop is mandatory; students who enroll in the class commit to participating on this date.
Location: TBA. Time: 1:00pm to 4:00pm.
This workshop is a joint project with the NYUB course “Shaping an Educational Landscape: Museum Island” (Annette Loeseke). A joint session is planned to address challenging questions such as, What (or when) is a museum, collection, display? What kind of context(s) does a museum provide? How do museums address issues of provenance, acquisition and appropriation? How can we describe an object's 'journey'? What is the difference between the terms 'object' and 'exhibit'? Arjun Appadurai, professor at NYU and visiting professor at Humboldt University, will lead a discussion with students about how questions such as these relate to controversial debates about the universal museum, the production of a global cultural heritage, and notions of shared heritage. We will explore how museum narratives about memory and identity-building might include or reject issues of diversity and equity; and we will ask who has been producing what kind of narratives, and who has been silenced. Whose heritage indeed have museums produced and keep (re-)producing through their narratives? What can be done?
Reading: TBA.
Due: Writing Assignment 5.

Session 7 – 17 Oct 2018
Technique in Ancient Art (Bode Museum)
Meet in the Bode Museum (at horse statue in entrance hall) at 1:30pm.
Knowing how artists created these masterful works of art is necessary to appreciate and understand the objects and, through them, the ancient cultures they represent. So, although the subject of artistic technique is omnipresent in this course, in this session it stands at the center of the discussion. The collections on Museum Island feature a rare array of objects in various states of finish, from rough “sketches” to highly polished end products. Studying these pieces reveals not only the process by which they were made, but also the ideas that drove the ancient artists’ choice of material.
Reading: Allen 153–171; Wootton et al. 1–27 (please carefully study the color photos).
Due: Workshop Paper.
Session 8 – 31 Oct 2018
Greek Art: Meeting the Gods (Altes Museum)
Meet at coat check in the Altes Museum at 1:30pm.
Not only Greek art but Greek life itself revolved around the gods. Understanding the domains of the Twelve Olympians and the many minor deities thus sheds light on ancient Greek society and ways of thinking. In this session, we learn about the gods’ multiple realms of power (Aphrodite controls far more than just love!), to recognize the gods as they are portrayed in Greek art, to understand how and why they are depicted differently in different contexts, and to compare their representations in texts and images.
Reading: selections from Homer and the Homeric Hymns (NYU Classes).
Due: Writing Assignment 6.

Session 9 – 7 Nov 2018
Greek Art: Sport and Symposium (Altes Museum)
Meet at coat check in the Altes Museum at 1:30pm.
Painted clay vessels not only preserve some of the finest artistry known from the ancient world but also offer valuable testament to social practices, as many of these impressive vessels were used in the symposium, an institutionalized drinking party that played a crucial role in Greek male life. The world-class collection of Greek vases in the Altes Museum offers the chance to appreciate the extraordinary craftsmanship that went into making these pieces and to simultaneously study the culture of drinking and entertainment, including athletics, in ancient Greece.
Reading: Osborne 133–156; Ormand 130–155; Maischberger et al. 24–40; von Bothmer 3–9 (NYU Classes).
Due: Writing Assignment 7.

Session 10 – 14 Nov 2018
Roman Art: Death and the Late Empire (Altes Museum)
Meet at coat check in the Altes Museum at 1:30pm.
The second century AD saw two innovations in Roman funerary art, each of which embodied a critical element of Roman art and life in this period. The first was the birth of marble coffins carved with elaborate figural scenes, a new genre that underscores the key role of Greek myth in Roman culture. The second was the invention of mummy portraits: these lifelike paintings of deceased Romans in Egypt were fastened to the deceased’s mummy case. The stunning combination of Egyptian mummification with Greco-Roman portrait likenesses is a testament to the extreme breadth of the Roman Empire at its height, as well as to the intense intercultural exchanges that shaped Roman art.
Reading: Kleiner 79–87, 217–229; Zanker 21–49; Euripides 31–63 (NYU Classes).
Due: Writing Assignment 8.

Session 11 – MONDAY SESSION: 19 Nov 2018
This event is mandatory; students who enroll in the class commit to participating on this date.
Location: Humboldt University, Grimm Zentrum Auditorium. Time: 6:00pm to 8:00 pm.
This conversation with Ares Kalandides, Annette Loeseke, Stephanie Pearson, and other invited guests brings the themes in this course to a public forum, encouraging Berlin communities to join the conversation.

Reading: None.
Due: None.

21 Nov 2018 – No Class
To compensate for the Monday session on November 19, there is no class on this day.
Due: Annotated Bibliography for Final Presentation.

Session 12 – 28 Nov 2018
Ancient Art in Berlin’s Historic Plaster Cast Collection (Abgussammlung)
Meet in the Plaster Cast Collection (Abgussammlung) at 1:45pm. The later start time allows for the extra transit time required to reach the museum. Likewise, class will end by 4pm to allow you to reach your next class on time. Address: Schloßstr. 69b, 14059 Berlin. Please note that there are multiple Schloßstr. in Berlin; this one is in CHARLOTTENBURG. The Abgussammlung is just south of Schloss Charlottenburg, next door to the Sammlung Scharf-Gerstenberg.
Beginning as early as the fifteenth century, plaster casts were made of an enormous number of ancient sculptures in order to teach artists and classical scholars about the famous artworks in collections worldwide. Berlin’s contribution to this industry is huge, its own Royal Workshop producing thousands of plaster casts from 1819 onward—and still to this day. In this session we visit the illustrious collection of plaster casts of ancient art to discuss how scholars used these copies to better understand not only ancient material culture but the ancient world as a whole.
Reading: Miller 13–20; Borbein 29–43; Bradley 426–457 (NYU Classes).
Due: Writing Assignment 9.

Session 13 – 5 Dec 2018
Student Presentations
Meet at coat check in the Altes Museum at 1:30pm.
This is one of two sessions devoted to students’ Final Presentations (detailed above in Assessment Components.)

Session 14 – 12 Dec 2018
Student Presentations
Meet at coat check in the Altes Museum at 1:30pm.
This is one of two sessions devoted to students’ Final Presentations (detailed above in Assessment Components.)

Session 15 – 19 Dec 2018
Not a regular class session. Meet only for final discussion and farewell.
Meet at the Academic Center (BLAC) in the room posted on ALBERT at 1:30pm.
Due: Final Presentation notes (detailed above in Assessment Components).
Classroom Etiquette
For our museum sessions, please come prepared with a pencil (pens are not allowed), paper, and clipboard or other surface to write on; there will be no space for laptop use. Please note that no food or drink is allowed in the museums.

Suggested Co-Curricular Activities
To be discussed in class.

Your Lecturer
Stephanie works on ancient Mediterranean art and archaeology at the Humboldt-Universität and the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin as well as NYU Berlin. She received her Ph.D. in the History of Art at U.C. Berkeley with a dissertation on Hellenistic and Egyptian motifs in ancient Roman wall painting, inspired in part by four years of field work with the Via Consolare Project in Pompeii. Her M.A. thesis likewise considered cross-cultural interaction and artistic technique—with a focus on ancient Gandhara (modern Pakistan). Effectively communicating through museum display is a running theme in Stephanie’s exhibition reviews and her blog, Ideas on Display.
Academic Policies

Assessment Expectations

Grade A: The student makes excellent use of empirical and theoretical material and offers well-structured arguments in their work. The student writes comprehensive essays / answers to exam questions and their work shows strong evidence of critical thought and extensive reading.

Grade B: The candidate shows a good understanding of the problem and has demonstrated the ability to formulate and execute a coherent research strategy.

Grade C: The work is acceptable and shows a basic grasp of the research problem. However, the work fails to organize findings coherently and is in need of improvement.

Grade D: The work passes because some relevant points are made. However, there may be a problem of poor definition, lack of critical awareness, poor research.

Grade F: The work shows that the research problem is not understood; there is little or no critical awareness and the research is clearly negligible.

Grade Conversion

Your lecturer may use one of the following scales of numerical equivalents to letter grades:

A = 94-100 or 4.0
A- = 90-93 or 3.7
B+ = 87-89 or 3.3
B = 84-86 or 3.0
B- = 80-83 or 2.7
C+ = 77-79 or 2.3
C = 74-76 or 2.0
C- = 70-73 or 1.7
D+ = 67-69 or 1.3
D = 65-66 or 1.0
F = below 65 or 0

Attendance Policy

Participation in all classes is essential for your academic success, especially in courses that meet only once per week. Your attendance in both content and language courses is required and will be checked at each class meeting. As soon as it becomes clear that you cannot attend a class, you must inform your professor by e-mail immediately (i.e. before the start of your class). Absences are only excused if they are due to illness, religious observance or emergencies. Your professor or NYU Berlin's administration may ask you to present a doctor's note or an exceptional permission from NYU Berlin's Director or Wellness Counselor as proof. Emergencies or other exceptional circumstances must be presented to the Director. Doctor's notes need to be submitted to the Academics Office, who will inform your professors. Doctor's notes need to be from a local doctor and carry a signature and a stamp. If you want the reasons for your absence to be treated confidentially, please approach NYU Berlin's Director or Wellness Counselor.
Unexcused absences affect students' grades: In content courses each unexcused absence (equaling one week's worth of classes) leads to a deduction of 2% of the overall grade and may negatively affect your class participation grade. In German Language classes two or three (consecutive or non-consecutive) unexcused absences (equaling one week's worth of classes) lead to a 2% deduction of the overall grade. Three unexcused absences in one content course and five unexcused absences in your German language course may lead to a Fail in that course. Being more than 15 minutes late counts as an unexcused absence. Furthermore, your professor is entitled to deduct points for frequent late arrival or late arrival back from in-class breaks. Please note that for classes involving a field trip, transportation difficulties are never grounds for an excused absence. It is the student’s responsibility to arrive in time at the announced meeting point.

Exams, tests and quizzes, deadlines, and oral presentations that are missed due to illness always require a doctor's note as documentation. It is the student's responsibility to produce this doctor's note and submit it to the Academics Office; until this doctor's note is produced the missed assessment is graded with an F and no make-up assessment is scheduled. In content classes, an F in one assignment may lead to failure of the entire class.

Regardless of whether an absence is excused or not, it is the student's responsibility to catch up with the work that was missed.

**Attendance Rules on Religious Holidays**
Members of any religious group may, without penalty, excuse themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. Students who anticipate being absent due to religious observance should notify their lecturer AND NYU Berlin's Academics Office in writing via e-mail one week in advance. If examinations or assignment deadlines are scheduled on the day the student will be absent, the Academics Office will schedule a make-up examination or extend the deadline for assignments. Please note that an absence is only excused for the holiday but not for any days of travel that may come before and/or after the holiday. See also [University Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays](#)

**Late Submission of Work**

1. Written work due in class must be submitted during the class time to the professor.

2. Late work should be submitted in person to the lecturer or to the Academics Office, who will write on the essay or other work the date and time of submission, in the presence of the student. Another member of the administrative staff may also personally accept the work and will write the date and time of submission on the work, as above.

3. Work submitted late receives a penalty of 2 points on the 100 point scale for each day it is late (excluding weekends and public or religious holidays), unless an extension has been approved (with a doctor's note or by approval of NYU Berlin's administration), in which case the 2 points per day deductions start counting from the day the extended deadline has passed.

4. Without an approved extension, written work submitted more than 5 days (excluding weekends and public or religious holidays) following the submission date receives an F.

5. End of semester essays must be submitted on time.
(6) Students who are late for a written exam have no automatic right to take extra time or to write the exam on another day.

(7) Please remember that university computers do not keep your essays - you must save them elsewhere. Having lost parts of your essay on the university computer is no excuse for a late submission.

Provisions for Students with Disabilities
Academic accommodations are available for students with documented disabilities. Please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at 212-998-4980 or see their website for further information.

Plagiarism Policy
The presentation of another person’s words, ideas, judgment, images or data as though they were your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes an act of plagiarism. Proper referencing of your sources avoids plagiarism (see as one possible help the NYU library guide to referencing styles).

NYU Berlin takes plagiarism very seriously; penalties follow and may exceed those set out by your home school. Your lecturer may ask you to sign a declaration of authorship form.

It is also an offense to submit work for assignments from two different courses that is substantially the same (be it oral presentations or written work). If there is an overlap of the subject of your assignment with one that you produced for another course (either in the current or any previous semester), you MUST inform your professor.

For a summary of NYU Global’s academic policies.