Course Title

Ancient Art in Berlin: Discovering the Collections of Museum Island

Course Number
ARTH-UA.915001

SAMPLE SYLLABUS

Lecturer Contact Information
Stephanie Pearson
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Course Details
Wednesdays, 1:30pm to 4:15pm
Location of class: NYUB Room “Tempelhof” and museums on Museum Island.

Prerequisites
None

Units earned
4

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 Altes Museum.

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.

10 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: Catalog entry (2 pages, double-spaced) and annotated bibliography (1 page, double-spaced), 20%. Each student will choose an object of ancient art displayed on Museum Island—one that is not treated in the weekly reading assignments—, research it using appropriate methods and sources, and write a catalog entry for it. Three scholarly sources (apart from the required readings) must be used for researching the object; these must be listed and annotated in a one-page bibliography. How to research and write a catalog entry and annotated bibliography will be discussed in class; no prior knowledge is needed.

Final Presentation: 15-minute oral presentation; 30%. Each student will select an object in a different medium and from a different culture than that chosen for the midterm assignment (again, one that is displayed on Museum Island and not treated in the weekly reading assignments), research it, and present it to the class in a polished oral presentation of 15 minutes. 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

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:

\[
\begin{align*}
B+ &= 87-89 \\
C+ &= 77-79 \\
D+ &= 67-69 \\
F &= \text{below 65}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
A &= 94-100 \\
B &= 84-86 \\
C &= 74-76 \\
D &= 65-66
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
A- &= 90-93 \\
B- &= 80-83 \\
C- &= 70-73
\end{align*}
\]

Alternatively:

\[
\begin{align*}
A &= 4.0 \\
A- &= 3.7 \\
B+ &= 3.3 \\
B &= 3.0 \\
B- &= 2.7 \\
C+ &= 2.3 \\
C &= 2.0 \\
C- &= 1.7 \\
D+ &= 1.3 \\
D &= 1.0 \\
F &= 0.0.
\end{align*}
\]

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. Furthermore, your professor is entitled to deduct points for frequent late arrival or late arrival back from in-class breaks. Being more than 15 minutes late counts as an unexcused absence. 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.

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 http://www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/policies-and-guidelines/university-calendar-policy-on-religious-holidays.html

**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 (https://www.nyu.edu/students/communities-and-groups/students-with-disabilities.html) 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: http://nyu.libguides.com/citations).

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 please see: www.nyu.edu/global/academic-policies

**Required Text(s)**
All required reading for this course is available through NYU Classes.

Additionally, several introductory books with excellent illustrations are 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:** http://guides.nyu.edu/global/berlin 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**
Enterance passes for the museums on Museum Island will be provided by NYU Berlin.

**Session 1 – 30 Aug 2017**
Approaching Ancient Art on Museum Island
Meet in NYU Berlin Room "Tempelhof" 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 – 6 Sep 2017**
Egyptian Art: Akhenaten’s Revolution (Neues Museum)  
Meet in front of the Neues Museum at 1:30pm. You will receive your museum pass at this time, so please arrive punctually.

The art of the Amarna Period of Egyptian history must be understood in relation to the art that came before it, for the kings of the later Eighteenth Dynasty both leveraged and reacted against it. In preparation for our visit to Berlin’s Neues Museum, where one of the best-represented sets of Egyptian material comes from this period, the art of the Eighteenth Dynasty is introduced within its historical context to give students an understanding of earlier Egyptian artistic tradition as well as a detailed view of its transformation in the New Kingdom.

Reading: Kleiner 54–83; Robins 12–29, 122–165 (NYU Classes).

Due: Writing Assignment 1.

Session 3 – 13 Sep 2017

Egyptian Art: Cleopatra and the Ptolemies (Neues Museum)  
Meet at coat check in the Neues Museum at 1:30pm.

In the Late Period and Greco-Roman Period of Egyptian art, the artistic formulae used for millennia underwent strong shifts in two opposing directions: on the one hand, a hyper-traditional revival of older forms; on the other, an expansion catalyzed by forms and styles brought into Egypt from other cultures—including the Assyrian, Persian, Greek, and Roman. This session focuses on these trends by means of the superlative Egyptian collections in the Neues Museum.

Reading: Robins 210–255; Stanwick 33–53; Smith 203–213 (NYU Classes).

Due: Writing Assignment 2.

Session 4 – 20 Sep 2017

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

Focusing on another great dynasty of the second millennium BC, we turn from Egypt to the Near East to explore the Babylonian Empire and its successor states. The collections in the Pergamon Museum offer the perfect starting point to discuss the ideal of kingship initiated by Hammurabi, imitated by Neo-Babylonian rulers (most notably in the Ishtar Gate, a highlight of the museum), and sustained in the art of the Persian kings who invaded Greece c. 500 BC. Through an independent study project, students decipher the cunning use of text and image to reify these rulers’ power.

Reading: Kleiner 30–53; Slanski 95–114; Mieroop 257–275 (NYU Classes).

Due: Writing Assignment 3.

Session 5 – 27 Sep 2017

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 4 and Independent study from last session.

**Session 6 – 4 Oct 2017**

Greek Art: Grave Goods (Altes Museum)
Meet at coat check in the Altes Museum at 1:30pm.

This session furthers our understanding of Greek art and life by means of the objects dedicated at graves. This corpus comprises a variety of media (from terracotta vessels to marble sculpture) and depictions (from mythology to daily life), and also gives insight into the values and social dynamics of ancient Greece. What’s more, the stunning display of grave goods in Berlin’s Altes Museum allows us to closely examine individual objects as well as to learn how they were deployed in ensembles.


Due: Writing Assignment 5.

**Session 7 – 11 Oct 2017**

Greek Art: Vase Painting (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 in ancient Greece.

Reading: Osborne 87–116, 133–156; Maischberger et al. 24–40; von Bothmer 3–9 (NYU Classes).

Due: Writing Assignment 6.

**18 Oct 2017 – Fall Break – No Class**

**Session 8 – 25 Oct 2017**

Etruscan Art (Altes Museum)
Meet at coat check in the Altes Museum at 1:30pm.

In the eighth and seventh centuries BC, Etruscan art—like Greek art—adopted and modified many features of Egyptian and Near Eastern art. Beginning with this period thus allows us to draw together the material discussed in previous sessions. Afterwards, we will proceed to another momentous point of contact, one that strongly characterized Etruscan art in the following centuries: the Etruscan response to Greek art. The Altes Museum’s beautiful Etruscan collection illustrates these intercultural exchanges as well as the Etruscans’ unique contributions to the art of ancient Italy.

Reading: Kleiner 164–177; Maischberger et al. 41–61; Haynes 47–78, 287–326 (NYU Classes).

Due: Midterm Assignment.
Session 9 – 1 Nov 2017
Technique in Ancient Art (Bode Museum, Altes 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; NYU Classes).
Due: Writing Assignment 7.

Session 10 – 8 Nov 2017
Roman Art: Luxurious Living from Republic to Empire
Meet at coat check in the Altes Museum at 1:30pm.
The Romans were masters of appropriation and adaptation. Beginning in the Republican period, Romans imported vast quantities of Greek material to Rome for both political and private purposes. Focusing on this aspect of the first centuries BC and AD, and particularly what it meant for the Roman ideal of a luxurious home life, affords a glimpse of several fundamental aspects of Roman art and society as a whole.
Reading: Kleiner 139–151; Ancient Rome 48–49, 54–55, 64–93; excerpt of the Satyricon by Petronius 1–10 (NYU Classes).
Due: Writing Assignment 8.

Session 11 – 15 Nov 2017
Roman Art in the Altes Museum: Death and the Late Empire
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 9.

Session 12 – 22 Nov 2017
Ancient Art in Berlin’s Historic Plaster Cast Collection
Meet in the Plaster Cast Collection (Abgußsammlung) at 1:45pm. Address: Schloßstr. 69b, 14059 Berlin. Please note that there are multiple Schloßstr. in Berlin; this one is in CHARLOTTENBURG. The Abgußsammlung is just south of Schloss Charlottenburg, next
door to the Sammlung Scharf-Gerstenberg. See transit suggestions here: http://www.abguss-sammlung-berlin.de/index.php/anfahrt

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 10.

Session 13 – 29 Nov 2017
Student Presentations – 1
Meet at coat check in the Altes Museum at 1:30pm.
This is the first of two sessions devoted to students’ Final Presentations (detailed above in Assessment Components.)

Session 14 – 6 Dec 2017
Student Presentations – 2
Meet at coat check in the Altes Museum at 1:30pm.
This is the second of two sessions devoted to students’ Final Presentations (detailed above in Assessment Components.)

Session 15 – 13 Dec 2017
Not a normal class session. Meet only for final discussion and farewell.
Meet in NYU Berlin Room "Tempelhof" 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.