

Course Title

Ancient Art in Berlin

Discovering the Collections of Museum Island

Course Number

ARTH-UA.9150D01

Instruction Mode: Blended**Fall 2020**

If you are enrolled in this course 100% remotely and are not a Go Local/Study Away student for NYU Berlin, please make sure that you've completed the online academic orientation via NYU Classes so you are aware of site specific support structure, policies and procedures. Please contact berlin.academics@nyu.edu if you have trouble accessing the NYU Classes site.

Syllabus last updated on: 31-Aug-2020**Lecturer Contact Information**

Dr. Stephanie Pearson

Your instructor will inform you about the office hours.

Course Details

Wednesdays, 2:30pm to 5:15pm

Location: Rooms will be posted in Albert before your first class.

Remote Participants: Your instructor will provide you with the Zoom link via NYU Classes.

Prerequisites

None

Units earned

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Course Description

This course provides an overview of Egyptian, Greek, and Roman art as represented in the world-class collections of antiquities on Berlin's Museum Island. A focus is placed on both the fundamentals of ancient art as well as its role in modern society, including principles of museum display and other instrumentalizations of ancient art for contemporary uses. Classroom sessions allow students to build up foundational knowledge of these topics, while their own independent site visits encourage them to understand these principles "in action" in the museum. Independent site visits are recommended but not mandatory, in order to accommodate remote students. The collections to be studied include the Egyptian collection in the Neues Museum, the ancient Greek collection in the "Pergamonmuseum. Das Panorama," and the Greek, Etruscan, 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 the sources' arguments and relevance, and incorporate these into their interpretations. They will be able to present their ideas and arguments to their peers in a cogent, comprehensible, polished way. They will be able to identify 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 use of ancient art in modern society, particularly in museum collections.

Assessment Components

You are expected to attend class in person or remote synchronously. Failure to submit or fulfill any required component may result in failure of the class, regardless of grades achieved in other assignments.

Class Participation: 15%. This includes arriving to class punctually and prepared, as well as contributing in writing, discussion, and activities.

7 Short Writing Assignments: Each 400–600 words; 25%. Each week, students prepare a written response to a prompt based on the assigned reading and video-watching for that coming week. **Students bring their responses to class** – either a printed or digital version – to use during discussion. Failure to do so results in a reduction of the grade for that assignment. In addition, the responses are uploaded to NYU Classes "Assignments" before the start of class each week. Be sure you receive a confirmation saying that your upload was successful!

Take-Home Quiz: 10%. A take-home quiz on the readings, videos, and material discussed in class sessions after the midterm will be completed by each student independently, using whatever resources they deem appropriate, and submitted over NYU Classes.

Take-Home Midterm Exam: 20%. A take-home exam of essay questions based on the readings, videos, and material discussed in class will be completed by each student independently, using whatever resources they deem appropriate, and submitted over NYU Classes.

Annotated Bibliography – Draft 1: 5%. In preparation for the Final Presentation, students prepare an annotated bibliography (1 page, single-spaced) of three scholarly sources (apart

from the required readings) useful for researching a chosen object. How to research and write an annotated bibliography will be discussed in class; no prior knowledge is needed. Draft 1 of this bibliography focuses on locating appropriate resources – evaluating their scholarlyness and usefulness – without having read them yet.

Annotated Bibliography – Draft 2: 5%. Students summarize explicitly and concisely the arguments of the sources chosen in Draft 1, and include their own scholarly evaluation of the argument (is it convincing?) and how it relates to their chosen object (1-2 pages, single-spaced).

Final Presentation and Write-Up: 15-minute presentation with ensuing discussion and write-up; 20%. Each student will choose an object either from Museum Island or from the online collections of the Metropolitan Museum of New York City, research it using appropriate methods and sources, and present an art historical analysis and interpretation of it in class. The object must be from an ancient culture treated in this class. The presentation is held in class, with photos of the selected object. Presenters answer questions and engage in discussion after the presentation. Each student submits a write-up of their presentation (2000-2200 words), including specific address of the feedback and discussion, during Finals Week (by 16 December 2020, 5:15pm Berlin time). A photograph of the object and a bibliography based on the Annotated Bibliography assignments must be included with the write-up.

Required Text(s)

Electronic Resources (via NYU Classes / NYU Library)

Supplemental Text(s) (not required to purchase)

Maischberger, M., A. Schwarzmaier, and A. Scholl, eds. 2015. *The Antikensammlung. Altes Museum, Neues Museum, Pergamon Museum*. Translated by S. Pearson. Darmstadt: Philipp von Zabern.

Further supplemental literature is available in the Reading Room for local students. Please follow this link for the [NYU Berlin Library Catalogue](#) or the link on NYU Berlin's website (Academics/Facilities & Services).

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, in order for students to access the collections for independent projects. Note that tickets usually need to be booked online in advance, depending on the current health and safety rules.

Session 1 – 2 Sep 2020

Approaching Ancient Art

Recommended site visit: Museum Island.

The goal of this session 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 continually exercise and refine these methods. Practicing on select objects from Berlin museums also affords an overview of the collections on Museum Island.

Reading: None.

Watching: [What's on Berlin's Museum Island?](#)

Due: None.

9 Sep 2020 – Monday Schedule – No Class

Session 2 – 16 Sep 2020

Egyptian Funerary Culture

Recommended site visit: Neues Museum, floors -1, 0, 1.

Egyptian art survives best from funerary contexts. The objects recovered in tombs reveal a wealth of information not only about gods and mythology, but about Egyptian world views and daily life. Learning about these aspects of ancient Egyptian culture goes hand-in-hand with understanding the way they are portrayed in the surviving objects. What makes the Egyptian style so distinct? How does it represent Egyptian experience, and why does it take the form that it does? This investigation is an important building block in developing the skills of visual analysis and interpretation.

Reading: Robins 12–29; Pinch sections on [Amun, Anubis, Aten, Atum, Isis, Maat, Nephthys, Osiris, Ra, Snakes](#); Book of the Dead 21–27, 49–63, 97–106 (NYU Classes).

Due: Writing Assignment.

Session 3 – 23 Sep 2020

Egyptian Principles of Kingship

Recommended site visit: Neues Museum, floors 0, 1.

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 the dynasty of Akhenaten, the sun-worshipper who single-handedly transformed Egyptian art and religion. Akhenaten’s consort Nefertiti, represented in one of the Berlin Museums’ masterpieces, is examined here in the context of the dynasty “style.” What qualities of these rulers were meant to be evident in the portraits? When can we speak of a portrait rather than a statue of an ideal?

Reading: Cooney, xi–29; Robins 122–165; Winter 254–270 (NYU Classes).

Watching: [Nefertiti in Berlin: Discovery and Debate](#)

Due: Writing Assignment.

Session 4 – 30 Sep 2020

Greek Gods and Heroes

Recommended site visit: Altes Museum, floor 0.

Understanding the major Greek deities and heroes 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. Heroes too are scrutinized for what they reflect about their society – notably different to heroes in the modern Western tradition.

Reading: The Odyssey (trans. Fagles) 211–229; selected Homeric Hymns (NYU Classes).

Due: Writing Assignment.

Session 5 – 7 Oct 2020

Greek Gods and Transformation

Recommended site visit: Altes Museum, floor 0.

Delving deeper into the ancient Greek world, we see that the Greek gods have the power to effect life-altering transformations. How were these represented in antiquity, and what does this say about the Greeks who accepted and propagated these stories as part of their world? Two case studies anchor the discussion: the women driven to wild, crazed revelry under the power of Dionysus; and Hermaphrodite, the son of Hermes and Aphrodite, who was transformed into one of the few documented transgender people of antiquity.

Reading: Euripides, Bacchantes (trans. Hadas/McLean) 317–353; Ovid, Metamorphoses 4 (highlighted passages; trans. Kline) (NYU Classes).

Watching: [Diversity in the Museum: Hermaphrodite, Gender, and Genitals](#)

Due: Writing Assignment.

Session 6 – 14 Oct 2020

Technique in Ancient Art

Recommended site visit: Altes Museum, floor 1.

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. We examine 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: Writing Assignment.

Session 7 – 21 Oct 2020

Midterm Exam

Not a normal class meeting. Students use this time to finish and submit their take-home midterm exams on this day by 5:15 Berlin time.

Reading: None.

Due by end of class time: Take-Home Midterm Exam.

Session 8 – 28 Oct 2020

Roman Funerary Art Using Greek Myth

Recommended site visit: Altes Museum, floor 1.

In the second century AD, Romans started burying their dead in marble coffins carved with elaborate figural scenes—a new form of art in the ancient Mediterranean. Often these depict Greek myths, which, like many other aspects of Greek culture, were passionately adopted by the Romans for their own uses. Two world-famous examples allow us to see the importance and innovation of these sarcophagi: the Rinuccini Sarcophagus with its mix of myth and “real life,” and the Medea Sarcophagus with its stunning retelling of the myth known from Euripides’ Greek tragedy of the 5th century BC.

Reading: Kleiner 79–87, 217–229; Zanker 21–49; Euripides, *Medea* (trans. Hadas/McLean) 31–63 (NYU Classes).

Due: Writing Assignment.

Session 9 – 4 Nov 2020

Roman Portraits

Recommended site visit: Altes Museum, floor 1.

One of the most impressive and abundant genres of Roman art is the portrait. Drawing on different modes pioneered by the Greeks and earlier Italic people, the Romans created portraits that even today feel relatable. But how much can we really intuit from these objects? In this session, we investigate the motivations and values that informed Roman portraiture – and discover that these pieces have far more hidden significance than a modern viewer might suppose.

Reading: TBA.

Due: Writing Assignment.

Session 10 – 11 Nov 2020

Research Skills in Ancient Art History

How do archaeologists and ancient art historians gather information about ancient objects, and how do they construct their interpretations? In preparation for the final assignment, this session focuses on modern research methods—not just in ancient-world disciplines, but across the humanities. Topics include the vetting of internet sources, using reference works as a springboard, making the most of library stacks, and effectively using scholarly works even in unfamiliar languages.

Reading: ancient studies library guides (linked on NYU Classes).

Due: Annotated Bibliography Draft 1.

Session 11 – 18 Nov 2020

Polychromy and Plaster Casts

Recommended site visit: [Abgusssammlung](#) in Charlottenburg (note the very limited opening hours!).

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. How did scholars use these copies to better understand not only ancient material culture but the ancient world as a whole? How did these white plaster copies enhance the already strong impression that ancient sculpture was white, and what long-term social effects has this had?

Reading: Talbot 1–20; Borbein 29–43; Bradley 426–457 (NYU Classes).

Watching: [Diversity in the Museum: Portrait of an African Roman?](#)

Due: Annotated Bibliography Draft 2.

Session 12 – 25 Nov 2020

Reanimating Ancient Art

Recommended site visit: Pergamon. Das Panorama

While the historic Pergamon Museum is partially closed for renovation, some 80 pieces of Pergamene sculpture have been put on display in a temporary exhibition called “Pergamon. Das Panorama.” The presentation of this ancient Greek art by contemporary

artist Yadegar Asisi differs substantially from that in the other houses of Berlin's antiquities collection. Specifically, it juxtaposes ancient art with very modern installations. What effect can this have on viewers? With the knowledge we have built this semester, we examine the objects as well as their display to understand their significance for both ancient and modern viewers.

Reading: Smith, 155-166; Squire (NYU Classes).

Watching: [Two Pergamon Museums?](#)

Due: Take-Home Quiz.

Session 13 – 2 Dec 2020

Final presentations.

Reading: None.

Due: None.

Session 14 – 9 Dec 2020

Final presentations.

Reading: None.

Due: None.

Session 15 – 16 Dec 2020

No class meeting. Final Presentation Write-Up due by 5:15pm Berlin time.

Important Hygiene/Social Distancing Regulations in the Classroom

In the interest of protecting the NYU Berlin community, we are closely following guidance around COVID-19 from the Robert Koch Institute (Germany's institute for disease control and prevention), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the World Health Organization, and the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and adjusting our recommendations and policies accordingly. Your health and well-being is our top priority. Please consult the NYU Berlin Resource Page frequently for the latest information. You are required to adhere to the most recent policies.

If you are attending in person, you will be assigned a seat on the first day and are expected to use that seat for the entire semester due to NYU COVID-19 safety protocol. Please note that you are expected to attend every class meeting in-person; however, this may change during the drop/add period if in-person student registration increases significantly or at any point during the semester if local COVID-19 regulations require additional physical distancing.

Classroom Etiquette

To optimize the experience in a blended learning environment, please consider the following:

- Please be mindful of your microphone and video display during synchronous class meetings. Ambient noise and some visual images may disrupt class time for you and your peers.
- Please do not eat during class and minimize any other distracting noises (e.g. rustling of papers and leaving the classroom before the break, unless absolutely necessary).
- If you are not using your cell phone to follow the lesson, cell phones should be turned off or in silent mode during class time.

- Make sure to let your classmates finish speaking before you do.
- If deemed necessary by the study away site (ie COVID related need), synchronous class sessions may be recorded and archived for other students to view. This will be announced at the beginning of class time.
- Students should be respectful and courteous at all times to all participants in class.

Laptops and tablets are to be used in class only for notetaking. Phones and other electronic devices are not to be used during class unless specific instructions to the contrary are given.

Suggested Co-Curricular Activities

To be discussed in class.

Your Lecturer

Dr. Pearson works on ancient Mediterranean art and archaeology at the Humboldt-Universität, the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, NYU Berlin, and her own online cultural initiative, museums.love. Cross-cultural interactions and artistic technique are central themes in her work, from her M.A. thesis on Greek sculpture from ancient Gandhara (modern Pakistan) to her book on the import of Egyptian luxury goods to Rome (to appear in early 2021). Other central themes include gender and sexuality explored through the lens of material culture, and effectively communicating with diverse audiences through museum display.

Academic Policies

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

Studying at Global Academic Centers is an academically intensive and immersive experience, in which students from a wide range of backgrounds exchange ideas in discussion-based seminars. Learning in such an environment depends on the active participation of all students. And since classes typically meet once or twice a week, even a single absence can cause a student to miss a significant portion of a course. To ensure the integrity of this academic experience, class attendance at the centers, or online through NYU Classes if the course is remote synchronous/blended, is expected promptly when class begins. Attendance will be checked at each class meeting. If you have scheduled a remote course immediately preceding/following an in-person class, you may want to write to berlin.academics@nyu.edu to see if you can take your remote class at the Academic Center.

As soon as it becomes clear that you cannot attend a class, you must inform your professor and/or the Academics team (berlin.academics@nyu.edu) by e-mail immediately (i.e. before the start of your class). Absences are only excused if they are due to illness, Moses Center accommodations, 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 that you wish to be treated confidentially must be presented to the Director. Doctor's notes must be submitted in person or by e-mail to the Academics team, who will inform your professors.

Unexcused absences will be penalized with a two percent deduction from the student's final course grade for every week's worth of classes missed, and may negatively affect your class participation grade. Four unexcused absences in one 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 frequently joining the class late.

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 berlin.academics@nyu.edu; 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](#)

Final exams

Final exams must be taken at their designated times. Should there be a conflict between your final exams, please bring this to the attention of the Academics team by writing to berlin.academics@nyu.edu. Final exams may not be taken early, and students should not plan to leave the site before the end of the finals period.

Late Submission of Work

- (1) Work submitted late receives a penalty of 2 points on the 100 point scale for each day it is late (including weekends and public 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.
- (2) Without an approved extension, written work submitted more than 5 days (including weekends and public holidays) following the submission date receives an F.
- (3) Assignments due during finals week that are submitted more than 3 days late (including weekends and public holidays) without previously arranged extensions will not be accepted and will receive a zero. Any exceptions or extensions for work during finals week must be discussed with the Site Director Dr. Gabriella Etmektsoglou (ge377@nyu.edu).
- (4) Students who are late for a written exam have no automatic right to take extra time or to write the exam on another day.
- (5) 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.

Moses Accommodations Statement

Academic accommodations are available for students with documented and registered disabilities. Please contact the Moses Center for Student Accessibility (+1 212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for further information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance. Accommodations for this course are managed through NYU Berlin (berlin.academics@nyu.edu).

Academic Honesty/Plagiarism

As the University's policy on "[Academic Integrity for Students at NYU](#)" states: "At NYU, a commitment to excellence, fairness, honesty, and respect within and outside the classroom is essential to maintaining the integrity of our community. By accepting membership in this community, students take responsibility for demonstrating these values in their own conduct and for recognizing and supporting these values in others." Students at Global Academic Centers must follow the University and school policies.

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, and may check your assignments by using TurnItIn or another software designed to detect offences against academic integrity.

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. 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 guidelines on academic honesty, clarification of the definition of plagiarism, examples of procedures and sanctions, and resources to support proper citation, please see:

[NYU Academic Integrity Policies and Guidelines](#)

[NYU Library Guides](#)

Inclusion, Diversity, Belonging and Equity

NYU is committed to building a culture that respects and embraces diversity, inclusion, and equity, believing that these values – in all their facets – are, as President Andrew Hamilton has said, "...not only important to cherish for their own sake, but because they are also vital for advancing knowledge, sparking innovation, and creating sustainable communities." At NYU Berlin, we are committed to creating a learning environment that:

- fosters intellectual inquiry, research, and artistic practices that respectfully and rigorously take account of a wide range of opinions, perspectives, and experiences; and
- promotes an inclusive community in which diversity is valued and every member feels they have a rightful place, is welcome and respected, and is supported in their endeavors.