Spring 2024
ARTH 4847: Art and Everyday Life in the Ancient Mediterranean World

Class Meetings: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:30-10:50 AM in ART 280

Instructor: Dr. Neville McFerrin

Contact Information: neville.mcferrin@unt.edu and Canvas Inbox. I will respond to all student emails within 24 hours on weekdays; on weekends and university holidays, responses will be delayed. If emailing, please include the course number in the subject line.

Office Hours: Thursdays from 2:00-4:00 pm in ART 310 and by appointment. All appointments must be scheduled at least 24 hours in advance.

Course Description: From mosaics to wall paintings, painted vases to terracotta sculptures, some of the most prevalent art of the ancient Mediterranean world was created, commissioned, and used not by emperors, archons, and pharaohs, but by everyday people. This course considers visual and material culture associated with ancient Egypt, Greece, Rome, Pompeii, and North Africa in the period between the sixteenth century BCE and the 6th century CE. While it considers themes ranging from mass production and artistic identity to gender identity and resistance in art, it focuses in particular upon domestic space, upon houses and the art and artifacts associated with them. In this context it explores a range of topics from the organization of interior space to household work to explore the ways in which individuals structured their daily lives. The course considers a variety of media and materials ranging from domestic architecture to wall painting, from mosaics to ceramics, re-contextualizing such visual and material culture by considering them, not as isolated art objects, but within their broader spatial, social, and cultural contexts, offering students the opportunity to compare household activities and the material and visual culture of everyday people across time and space.

Course Objectives:

Through the analysis of material, visual, and textual evidence, students will:

• Explore the range of artistic and creative practices associated with non-elite art in the ancient Mediterranean.
• Identify major sites, artifacts, artworks, and objects
• Describe styles, periods, and media associated with domestic art and artifacts
• Contextualize artistic creations by time period, group, function, and identity intersection
• Integrate multiple theoretical and methodological approaches into discussion and writing
• Apply terms and identifications to the analysis of previously unseen works
• Generate original research projects or artistic works that expand upon the major themes and artworks presented in the course

**Course Structure:**

This course presents an overview of a range of artworks, media, and objects generated by groups around the Mediterranean. To explore the many ways that art is integrated into the daily lives of these individuals, the course is organized by theme. It will present these explorations through in-person course meetings that will blend lecture, discussion, and experiential activities.

All additional readings, assignments, and discussion prompts will be uploaded to the course Canvas website. Weekly modules on the course Canvas site will provide links to relevant readings, assignments, and prompts.

**Classroom Expectations:**

- **Attend.** As much of our discussion together will reference, but not replicate, the information provided in assigned texts, a lack of attendance will lead to a lack of understanding.
- **Participate.** Class meetings are designed to give you the opportunity to engage actively with ideas and images that are central to the themes of our course. It is through dialogue that new ideas come to light.
- **Read.** Assigned readings are the foundation for insights that will propel discussion and inform written work. All readings listed on the syllabus are intended to be read before the class on which they will be discussed. Thus, readings listed on a Monday on the syllabus should be read before the Monday course meeting; similarly, readings listed for Wednesday should be completed before the Wednesday meeting.
- **Look.** After each class, a copy of the slides from that class will be uploaded to Canvas. Take the time to look carefully at each work presented, both in class and in readings. Consider the composition and media of the piece, together with any relevant comparanda that might help to provide insight into the work.
- **Think.**
- **Respect.** While discussion without dissent would be futile, a healthy discussion environment is dependent upon mutual respect for differing opinions. Students who do not show proper respect for their classmates may be asked to leave the room and will be counted absent for the day.

**Course Environment:**
In order to foster an inclusive learning environment, each of us must respect the thoughts and opinions presented by others. Although you may have a pertinent point, refrain from interrupting. And while disagreements lead to lively and interesting conversations, comments must be kept impersonal.

Restrict the use of cell phones to class related activities. Except in cases of emergencies, those who choose to text during sections will not be given credit for the session in which the texting occurs. Similarly, if students choose to use phones to explore sites not related to course activities, particularly those that distract others, will not be given credit for the course session.

Restrict your use of computers to classroom purposes. Those who choose to use computers for activities that are not related to the day's coursework will receive no participation credit for the day.

Course Requirements:

**Required Readings:** All required readings for the course will be uploaded as PDFs on our course Canvas page.

**Required Equipment:** In order to access course materials provided on Canvas students will require regular access to a computer with an Internet connection.

**Attendance:** 5%
Please be on time to class. Those who are more than 15 minutes late will be counted absent for the day. If you must miss a class, you are responsible for turning in any assignment due that day. In the case of excused absences, assignments are due upon the day you return to class. You are also responsible for the materials covered during any missed days. Such information can be obtained by asking classmates for notes, reviewing posted slides, and studying posted readings. Should you have questions after undertaking these steps, please set up a meeting with Dr. McFerrin.

Absences will be excused for documented medical reasons, family emergencies, university activities, and religious observances. As unforeseen difficulties are a fact of life, all students may take two absences from class with no questions asked and without penalization.

**Discussion Participation:** 10%
Prior to each course meeting, students will have access to a set of assigned readings, which together with the prompts provided at the end of each course meeting, will serve as a starting point for our discussions in class. Students should read the assigned texts carefully, making note of any questions or thoughts that arise from
them. If questions are posed to accompany the readings, students should be prepared to discuss these as a group.

There are many ways to be an active participant in our course discussions. Active participants may put forth points or raise questions that stimulate discussion. They may provide relevant examples in support of the points raised by others, or point the class towards useful resources. They may tie ideas presented in lectures or readings to other works of art, or to contemporary visual culture. Students may nod, shake their heads, or offer other signs of active listening. Some students may choose to devote their time to note taking, which can lead to active participation should we wish to reference discussions that took place in previous meetings. Any combination of the above listed approaches contributes in valuable ways to our work together. However, activities that are disruptive to others, including belligerent or combative behavior or responses, undermine the spirit of scholarly dialogue. These behaviors, together with those that may actively detract from the ability of other students to learn, will result in a one-point deduction from the final course grade for each violation.

Responses: 15%

Over the course of the semester, students will be asked to generate short written responses of approximately 500 words, or to seek out relevant images, in response to a series of prompts. Guidelines for each of these assignments will be provided as part of the Canvas module in which they are assigned. Relevant due dates are noted below in the course schedule.

Mini-Test: 5%

This short test, due no later than Sunday, February 18 at 11:59 pm, is designed to prepare students for the longer tests that will occur later in the course. The mini-test will feature a previously unseen structure, artwork, object, or artifact that is related to similar items discussed in readings and recorded lectures. Students will be asked to identify and discuss the previously unseen image based upon relevant comparanda.

Test 1: 15%

This test, focusing on material from lectures and readings assigned during the first half of the course will be due no later than Sunday, March 10 at 11:59 pm. To make certain that all students have time to take the test, there will be no course meeting on Thursday, March 7.

Paper/Project Proposal: 5%

At the end of week 9, students will propose a theme or topic for their final project. They will generate a short proposal identifying the format of their final project and
3 images or sources, including at least two sources that are not on the syllabus or in lectures that will inform this project. Students will then provide either a brief description of their intended project output, or propose a question that they wish to explore through further research.

**Paper/Project Consultations: 5%**

During weeks 10 and 11, each student will sign up for a 10-minute consultation with Dr. McFerrin. In this individual meeting, students will have the opportunity to expand upon their project proposals, and Dr. McFerrin will provide suggestions for further research or idea revision. Students should come to this meeting prepared with questions, concerns, or further ideas to present. Failure to schedule a meeting or to appear at during the chosen meeting time will lead to a grade of zero for this assignment.

**Test 2: 15%**

This test, focusing on material from lectures and readings assigned during the second half of the course will be due no later than Sunday, April 28 at 11:59 pm. To make certain that students with complicated schedules have enough time to take the test, there will be no course meetings on Thursday, April 25.

**Final Paper/Project: 25%**

This final work, which may take the form of a traditional research paper or a creative work in any medium, offers students the opportunity to expand upon the ideas presented and discussed in the course. Papers should be approximately 2500-3000 words in length and should present an arguable thesis, clear argumentation, and an appropriate scholarly bibliography. This bibliography should include no fewer than eight scholarly works, at least three of which should be drawn from sources beyond the course materials. Students choosing to generate creative works should provide an artist’s statement of no fewer than 750 words, which describes the intersections between course themes and artworks of their own creation. Together with this statement, students undertaking a creative project will submit no fewer than four works of ancient Italian art, including appropriate identifications, that helped to inform their work.

Final papers or projects are due no later than **Thursday, May 9 at 11:59 pm.**

**Course Policies:**

**Policy on Late Work:**
For written assignments with a 10-15 point value, late work is accepted via the Canvas portal with a 0.5 point deduction for each day that the assignment is late until the seventh calendar day after the due date. After seven days, if assignments are not turned in, students wishing to turn in late assignments should contact Dr.
McFerrin. At this point, Dr. McFerrin may offer alternative due dates at her discretion. For paper/project consultations, missed consultations will result in a zero for the assignment, unless extreme circumstances require accommodation. Late tests may be accepted at the discretion of the professor. Except in cases of extreme duress, late final projects will not be accepted.

**Policy on Cheating and Plagiarism:**
Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses and violate UNT’s Code of Student Conduct. According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to, cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. Plagiarism, defined by the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities, as “the deliberate adoption or reproduction of ideas, words, or statements of another person’s own without acknowledgement,” is a serious academic offense. Students who fail to attribute ideas appropriately, or who put forward another's work as their own, as in the case of purchasing term papers, will be reported to the appropriate academic authorities. Upon evaluation of the incident, the student may fail the assignment, fail the course, or be expelled from the University. Please consult policy 06.003 for further information.

**Policy on Student Behavior in the Classroom:**
Student behavior that interferes with an instructor’s ability to conduct a class or other student’s opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be instructed to leave the instructional space and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student’s conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university’s expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional fora, including university and electronic classrooms labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at [http://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct](http://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct)

**Policy on Sexual Discrimination, Harassment, and Assault:**
UNT is committed to providing an environment free from all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. If you, or someone you know, has experienced or experiences any of these acts of aggression, please know that you are not alone. The federal Title IX law makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offences. UNT has staff members trained to support you in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more.

**Policy on ADA Accommodation:**
The College of Visual Arts and Design is committed to full academic access for all qualified students, including those with disabilities. In keeping with this commitment and in order to facilitate equality of educational access, faculty members in the College will make reasonable accommodations for qualified
students with a disability, such as appropriate adjustments to the course environment and the teaching, testing, or learning methodologies when doing so does not fundamentally alter the course.

Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty, after which we can enter into private discussion to consider a student’s specific course needs. Students may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester, to ensure that appropriate steps are taken. Students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for each semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students who have letters of accommodation should schedule an appointment to discuss their individual needs with Dr. McFerrin no later than Friday, February 3. Additional information can be found on the ODA website at http://disability.unt.edu/

**Course Risk Factor:**
According to University Policy, this course is classified as a category one course. Students enrolled in this course will not be exposed to any significant hazards and are not likely to suffer any bodily injury. Students in this class will be informed of any potential health hazards or potential bodily injury connected with the use of any materials and/or processes and will be instructed how to proceed without danger to themselves or others.

**Emergency Notifications and Procedures:**
UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency, i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence. In the event of a university closure, please refer to Canvas for further instructions regarding course continuity.

**Policy on Course Content:**
Content in the arts can sometimes include works, situations, actions, and language that can be personally challenging or offensive to some students on the grounds, for example, of sexual explicitness, violence, or blasphemy. As the College of Visual Arts and Design is devoted to the principle of freedom of expression, artistic and otherwise, it is not the College’s practice to censor these works or ideas on any of these grounds. Students who may feel unduly distressed or made uncomfortable by such expressions should withdraw at the start of the term and seek another course.

**Policy on the Syllabus:**
This document serves as an agreement between students, professors, and the community of the course. Students with questions regarding any of the procedures or policies outlined here are strongly encouraged to schedule an appointment to
discuss any concerns with Dr. McFerrin. By remaining in the course, students signal their willingness to adhere to the policies presented here.

**Course Topics, Schedule and Overview:**

The following list of topics, readings, assignments, and deadlines will provide us with the structure needed to consider the complex and fascinating art of early Italy. However, the following information is subject to change, given the interests and aptitudes of the class.

**Unit 1: Considering Terminologies**

*Week 1: Considering Everyday Art*

**Tuesday, January 16:** Introduction to the Course

**Thursday, January 18:** Defining the Terms: What is Art in the Ancient Mediterranean World?


**Assignment: About Me, Due Sunday, January 21 by 11:59 PM.**

*Week 2: The Mechanics of Mass Production*

**Tuesday, January 23:** Considering Clay—The Case of Hellenistic Terracottas

Reading: Monica Smith, “The Concept of Copies,” p. 23-43

**Thursday, January 25:** Beyond the Copy—Replication and Emulation in Roman Art

Reading: Elaine Gazda, “Roman Sculpture and the Ethos of Emulation,” p. 121-156

*Week 3: The Issue of the Artist*

**Tuesday, January 30:** The Artist’s Signature

Reading: John Frow, “Signature and Brand,” p. 56-74

**Thursday, February 1:** Painters in Pompeii

Reading: Francesa Bologna, “Painters and Workshops in Pompeii,” p. 3-14
Assignment: Meaning in Repetition—Reconsidering Copies, Due Sunday, February 4 by 11:59 PM

*Week 4: Defining the Domestic*

*Tuesday, February 6:* Space and Thought


*Thursday, February 8:* Houses and Other Microcosms

Reading: Shelley Hales, “Freedmen’s Cribs: Domestic Vulgarity on the Bay of Naples,” p. 161-180

*Unit 2: The Mechanics of the House*

*Week 5: Household Architecture, Part I*

*Tuesday, February 13:* Early Houses

Reading: Lisa Nevett, “House Form and Social Complexity: The Transformation of Early Iron Age Greece,” p. 22-42

*Thursday, February 15:* Egyptian Villages and their Houses

Reading: Kate Spence, “The Three Dimensional Form of the Amarna House,” p. 123-152

*Mini-Test due no later than Sunday, February 18 at 11:59 PM!*

*Week 6: Household Architecture, Part II*

*Tuesday, February 20:* Olynthos and the Greek House


*Thursday, February 22:* Ideal Roman Houses and the Townhouses of Pompeii

Reading: Joanne Berry, “Boundaries and Control in the Roman House,” 125-141

Assignment: Domestic Assemblages in Pompeii, due no later than Sunday, February 25 at 11:59 PM.
**Unit 3: Houses and Structures**

*Week 7: Houses and Politics*

Tuesday, February 27: Hurling Furniture in Classical Athens

Reading: Lisa Nevett, “A Space for Hurling the Furniture?” p. 43-62

Thursday, February 29: Ambitious Dinner Parties: The Case of Trimalchio

Readings: Petronius, Excerpts from the *Satyricon*, Francesca C. Tronchin, “Roman Collecting, Decorating, and Eclectic Practice in the Textual Sources,” p. 333-345

*Week 8: Houses, Politics, and Gender*

Tuesday, March 5: Gender and the Greek House

Reading: Carla Antonaccio, “Architecture and Behavior: Building Gender into Greek Houses,” p. 517-533

Thursday, March 7: No Class Meetings! Take Test I!

**Test 1 due no later than Sunday, March 10 at 11:59 PM!**

Spring Break! No classes on Tuesday, March 12 or Thursday, March 14!

*Week 9: Houses and Gender, II*

Tuesday, March 19: Work and Gender in the Roman House

Reading: Polly Lohmann, “Tracing the Activities of Female Household Members within the Roman domus?” p. 192-201

Thursday, March 21: Toys and Gendered Play

Reading: Fanny Dolansky, “Playing with Gender,” p. 256-292

**Assignment: Paper/project proposals due no later than Sunday, March 24 at 11:59 pm.**

*Week 10: Houses and Local Identity*

Tuesday, March 26: Considering Delos
Reading: Monika Trümper, “Differentiation in the Hellenistic Houses of Delos,” p. 323-334

Thursday, March 28: No Class Meeting! Sign-Up for Individual Meeting Times!

**Assignment: Individual Meetings due by Tuesday, April 2 at 5:00 PM.**

*Week 11: Houses and Identities at Multiple Scales*

**Tuesday, April 2:** Resistance and Rebellion in Pompeii

Reading: Bettina Bergmann, “The Pregnant Moment: Tragic Wives in the Roman Interior,” p. 199-218

**Thursday, April 4:** Constructing Selves in the House of the Vettii


*Week 12: Light and the Gods*

**Tuesday, April 9:** Light, Lamps, and North African Houses

Reading: Simon Ellis, “Shedding Light on Late Roman Housing,” p. 283-302

**Thursday, April 11:** Household Religion in Pompeii

Reading: John Clarke, “Everyman, Everywoman, and the Gods,” p. 73-94

**Unit 5: Social Art**

*Week 13: Considering Neighborhoods*

**Tuesday, April 16:** Beyond the Walls of Pompeian Houses


**Thursday, April 18:** Household Graffiti in Pompeii


*Week 14: Conversations Across Media*
Tuesday, April 23: Political Pots

Reading: Jeffrey Hurwit, “Reading the Chigi Vase,” p. 1-22

Thursday, April 25: No Class Meeting! Take Test 2!

Test 2 due no later than Sunday, April 28 at 11:59 PM!

Week 15: Unauthorized Art

Tuesday, April 30: Ostraca, Humor, and Dissent in Egypt

Reading: Kathlyn M. Cooney, “Apprenticeship and Figured Ostraca from the Ancient Egyptian Village of Deir el-Medina,” p. 145-170

Thursday, May 2: Life, the Universe, and the Meaning of Everything

Final papers/projects due no later than Thursday, May 9 at 11:59 PM!