Spring 2021
AEAH 5801-002/602: Re-Contextualizing Ancient Mediterranean Art

Class Meetings: Thursdays from 5:00-7:50

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

Office Hours: On Zoom on Mondays from 2:00-4:00 PM and by appointment. All appointments must be scheduled at least 24 hours in advance.

Course Description:
This graduate seminar confronts current issues in the study of ancient Mediterranean art, exploring the ways in which we conceptualize the material record of the ancient Mediterranean through the contextualization of artifacts and the arguments that surround them. The seminar explores the development of influential perspectives and approaches to the study of the art of ancient Egypt, Greece, Rome, and the Near East and the ways in which the problematization of traditional schools of thought surrounding major categories of ancient Mediterranean art has shifted the disciplinary discourse. With an emphasis on the integration of contemporary theoretical perspectives with close visual and material analyses, the course pairs the consideration of theoretical perspectives with art works which serve as case studies. While excavated materials often travel from their sites, to be confined in glass cases, isolated and idolized, statues and vases, wall paintings and reliefs all began their life cycles as part of an integrated system of spatial, environmental, textual, and cultural contexts. Through ongoing discussion, seminar participants will consider the ways in which the integration of these context shift analyses of the materials at hand together with the ways in which the biases inherent in previous perspectives on ancient Mediterranean art have shaped both popular and scholarly thought on the visual and material culture of the area.

Course Objectives:
Through the evaluation and discussion of the work of seminal scholars together with analyses of material and visual evidence seminar participants will:

• Critique the connections between the biases of past scholars and the notion of the “Classical canon.”
• Explore and utilize key discipline specific terminology
• Identify and describe styles, periods, and media associated with ancient Mediterranean art and artifacts
• Contextualize artistic creations by time period, group, function, and identity intersection
• Integrate multiple theoretical and methodological approaches into discussion and writing
• Generate original research projects or artistic works that expand upon the major themes and artworks presented in the course

Course Structure:
This course meets remotely. Before each synchronous meeting, seminar participants will read and analyze a set of assigned readings upon which we will build our synchronous discussions. In these meetings, an artistic or artifactual case study related to the assigned readings will be presented, after which we will devote our time to the consideration of connections between the readings and the case study. In later weeks, this period of discussion will be lead and framed by seminar participants. At the end of each meeting, we will conclude by framing the discussion for the upcoming week, highlighting themes to consider in assigned readings and potential connections to draw between them.

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

Discussion Expectations:

• 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 sign-off for the day and will be counted absent.
• 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.
• Keep your camera on. To ensure that we are all engaged, we will demonstrate our attention to discussion, in part, by sharing a digital space.
• In order to minimize distractions, when you are not speaking, keep your microphone muted.
• Keep your focus on the discussion. While minor interruptions are inevitable, prolonged distractions that divert attention away from the topics at hand are disruptive for all participants.

Course Requirements:

Required Texts: All required texts will be provided as PDFs on the course Canvas site.
Required Equipment:
In order to participate in course discussions, seminar participants will need the following equipment:

- Regular access to a computer
- A stable internet connection
- Regular access to a webcam
- Regular access to a microphone (Built-in microphones, such as those found in most laptops and desktop computers are fine!)

Assessments:

Grading:

Discussion Attendance and Participation: 15%
Please be signed into Zoom slightly prior to your assigned time, to ensure that we are all present at the start of discussion. Absences will be excused for documented medical reasons, family emergencies, university activities, and for religious observances. If you must be absent, please make sure to turn in any assignments that are due that day and to ask a classmate for notes. As unforeseen difficulties are a fact of life, all students may take one absence from class, with no questions asked; unless there are previously discussed difficulties, those who are more than 15 minutes late will be counted as absent for the day. After the second unexcused absence, the student's attendance grade will be dropped by 5 points for each subsequent absence.

While attendance is expected as outlined above, please contact me if you are ill or unable to attend class due to COVID-19. It is important that you communicate with me prior to your absence, so that I may make a decision about accommodating your request to be excused from class. Although our course meets remotely, it is still important to take appropriate steps to ensure your health, and the health of our community. If you are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 seek medical attention from the Student Health and Wellness Center (940-565-2333 or askSHWC@unt.edu) or your healthcare provider prior to any campus interactions. UNT also requires you to contact the UNT COVID Hotline at 844-366-5892 or COVID@unt.edu for guidance on actions to take due to symptoms, pending or positive test results, or potential exposure.

Weekly Response Papers: 20%
Each week, seminar participants will produce a response paper that analyzes and compares the readings for the week, highlighting themes for discussion, areas for further exploration, and topics of interest or contention. These responses should be no shorter than 500 words and no longer than 1500 words. While participants may choose the ideas upon which to focus, each assigned reading should be
addressed as part of the response. All responses are due no later than 11:59 PM each Friday.

**Discussion Leading: 10%**
During Week 1, each seminar participant will sign-up for a topic around which they will frame the discussion. Discussion leaders should prepare questions both to prompt discussion and to direct it. As part of this framing, discussion leaders have the opportunity to integrate ideas and information relevant to their own areas of interest, and to build upon the concepts presented in the lecture using images, slides, or handouts as they feel it is useful.

**Discussion Leadership Conversation: 5%**
In the week before each seminar participant’s foray into discussion leadership, the discussion leader will schedule 15-20 minute meetings with Dr. McFerrin to consider useful pedagogical strategies, discussion goals, and the discussion planning process.

**Paper/Project Presentation: 10%**
During weeks 14 and 15, each seminar participant will prepare and present a twenty minute presentation that discusses their final paper or project. This presentation will frame the position of the project or paper within the scope of the ideas presented in the course together with outlining the major arguments of the paper or processes and progress of the project. After the presentation, the seminar will discuss the project, presenting thoughts to enable the presenter to strengthen the work.

**Final Paper or Project: 40%**
Seminar participants have the option of undertaking either a final project or a final paper, depending on their areas of study and interest. Final papers should be 5000 words in length and can focus upon any topic related to the themes, artworks, sites, and artifacts discussed throughout the course. MFA students may choose to create a final project that will consist of an artwork in any medium. This work should expand upon, explore, or intersect with the themes, artworks, sites and artifacts discussed during the semester. This creative work will be accompanied by an artist’s statement of around 1,250 words that describes intersections between course themes and the creative work produced.

This project is due no later than Thursday, April 29 at 11:59 PM.

**Course Policies:**

**Policy on Late Work:** For weekly response papers, late work is accepted via the Canvas portal with a deduction 0.5 points for each day that the assignment is late, until half credit is reached, after which point, assignments will receive no more than half credit. For discussion leading, discussion leadership meetings, and paper/project presentations, missed meetings will result in a zero for the
assignment, unless extreme circumstances require accommodation. In the absence of 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 of one’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 me no later than Friday, January 22. 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, and assignment deadlines will provide us with the structure needed to tackle our topic. However, the following information is subject to change, given the interests and aptitudes of the class.

**Thursday, January 14: Introduction to the Course**

**Thursday, January 21: The Problem of Art**

*Traditional Perspectives:* G.W.J. Hegel, “The Classical Form of Art,” p. 427-442


**Thursday, January 28: The Problem of the “Classical”**


**Thursday, February 4: The Problem of the “Copy”**


**Thursday, February 11: The Problem of the Artist**


Thursday, February 18: The Problem of the Art Object


Alternative Approaches: Milette Gaifmann and Verity Platt, “From Grecian Urn to Embodied Object,” 402-419

Thursday, February 25: The Problem of Collecting


Alternative Approaches: Christopher Chippindale and David Gill, “Material Consequences of Contemporary Classical Collecting,” p. 463-511

Thursday, March 4: The Problem of Context


Thursday, March 11: The Problem of Restoration and Reconstruction


**Thursday, March 18: The Problem of Polychromy**

*Traditional Perspectives:* Johann Joachim Winckelmann, “History of Ancient Art,” p. 117-121


**Thursday, March 25: The Problem of the Incomplete**


*Alternative Approaches:* Rachel Kousser, “Creating the Past: The Venus de Milo and the Hellenistic Reception of Classical Greece,” p. 227-250

**Thursday, April 1: The Problem of the Beautiful**


**Thursday, April 8: The Problem of the Museum**


*Alternative Approaches:* Kwame Athony Appiah, “Whose Culture is It?” p. 71-86; Alex Potts, “Installation and Sculpture,” p. 7-23
Thursday, April 15: The Creation of the Future—Presentations Part I

Thursday, April 22: The Creation of the Future—Presentations Part II

Final Paper/Project due by Thursday, April 29 by 11:59 PM