Spring 2022
ARTH 5900.705: Special Problems
Current Theoretical and Methodological Approaches to the Study of Numismatics

Class Meetings: Tuesdays from 2:00-3:00 PM

Instructor: Dr. Neville McFerrin, neville.mcferrin@unt.edu

Office Hours: In person office hours will be held at my office ART 206 on Thursdays from 2:00-3:00 PM and by appointment; Zoom office hours will be held on Thursdays from 3:00-4:00 PM and by appointment. Please schedule any appointments at least 24 hours in advance of the desired appointment time.

Course Description:
This course, open to advanced students, aims to enable students to undertake independent research under the direction of an instructor. This semester, the course focuses on theoretical and methodological approaches that enable the study of numismatics. Rather than focusing our attention on gaining mastery of any particular subset of material, period, or iconographical type, the course presents a range of approaches, many of which center on different time periods, questions, and subsets of this material type. Course discussions will focus upon how theoretical and methodological perspectives are applied to the materials chosen by each author, and the ways in which these approaches further their aims, rather than focusing on the particulars of the coins themselves. This approach will enable students to explore frameworks that can be applied to materials of their choice, together with allowing them to become familiar with the current standards for research in this sub-discipline.

Requirements and Assessment:

Weekly Meetings: 30%

Each week, during one-on-one meetings, we will discuss the readings chosen to present our weekly theme. These meetings offer the opportunity to think through ideas together and to gain further information and clarification regarding topics of interest. By preparing for these meetings in advance, thinking through questions to explore and connections to consider, these meetings can be a productive space. Without adequate preparation, these meetings will be futile.

Reading Responses: 30%

Each week students will prepare a formal written response to the week's readings. This response should first highlight the theoretical and methodological approaches associated with each reading, before discussing the applicability of these
approaches to their own work. Any practical issues with utilizing the highlighted methodologies and theories should be highlighted. After the first week, it will be productive to compare the methodologies and theoretical approaches used by authors in the week at hand with those of the previous week. The reading response for each week is due by 11:59 PM on the Monday before the meeting that discusses these readings.

Research Paper: 40%

To prepare students to undertake the work of an M.A. project, this course aims, in part, to help students to build skills that will facilitate the generation of sustained written arguments. Each week, we will discuss the ways in which reading responses could be productively expanded, and this discussion and work will culminate in a final paper of between 4,000-5,000 words. This paper will include an arguable thesis and the integration of multiple scholarly sources into a cohesive whole. It should employ at least one of the theoretical or methodological approaches explored in the course and should form an argument grounded primarily in numismatic evidence.

Schedule of Classes:

Tuesday, January 18: Introductory Discussion

Tuesday, January 25: A Basic Introduction to Numismatics


Reading response due no later than 11:59 on Monday, January 24

Tuesday, February 1: A Further Introduction to Numismatics

Tuesday, February 8: Coins and Text


Reading response due no later than 11:59 on Monday, February 7

Tuesday, February 15: An Overview of Methodological Approaches


Reading response due no later than 11:59 on Monday, February 14
Tuesday, February 22: An Overview of Theoretical Approaches


Reading response due no later than 11:59 on Monday, February 21

Tuesday, March 1: Current Approaches to Iconography, Part I


Reading response due no later than 11:59 on Monday, February 28

Tuesday, March 8: Current Approaches to Iconography, Part II


Reading response due no later than 11:59 on Monday, March 7

Tuesday, March 22: Considering Portraits


Reading response due no later than 11:59 on Monday, March 21

Tuesday, March 29: Coins and History


Assignment: Reading response due no later than 11:59 on Monday, March 28; Paper proposal due no later than 11:59 on Monday, March 28

Tuesday, April 5: Coins and Identity


Reading response due no later than 11:59 on Monday, April 4

Tuesday, April 12: Cognitive Numismatics


Reading response due no later than 11:59 on Monday, April 11

Tuesday, April 19:

Readings: Student Directed Readings

Reading response due no later than 11:59 on Monday, April 18

Tuesday, April 26:

Readings: Student Directed Readings

Reading response due no later than 11:59 on Monday, April 25

Tuesday, May 3: Discussion of Written Draft

Readings: Student Directed Readings

Assignment: Complete written draft of final paper due, no later than 11:59 on Friday, April 29.

Final Paper due by 11:59 PM on Friday, May 13