Fall 2022
ARTH 4803: The Art of Ancient Rome

Class Meetings: Mondays and Wednesdays 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. If emailing, please include the course number in the subject line.

Office Hours: Tuesdays from 1:00-3:00 PM in Art 206 and by appointment. All appointments must be scheduled at least 24 hours in advance.

Course Description:
From arches to amphitheaters, from pottery to wall painting, the Romans had a talent for blending ruthless practicality with transcendent grace. This course considers the visual and material record of the peoples associated with the Italian peninsula in the period between the 9th century BCE and the 5th century CE. Key themes include the tensions between continuity and change, the material, spatial and visual mediation of power, expressions of public and private identities, connections between art, memory and memorialization, and the ongoing dialogue between those who call themselves Romans and the larger Mediterranean world.

To explore these themes, the course will focus on close visual analyses and the integration of multiple theoretical apparatuses to think critically about the role that art played in the lives of Romans and how it was and is used to create and disseminate particular narratives.

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

• Explore the range of artistic and creative practices associated with ancient Rome
• Identify major sites, artifacts, and objects
• Describe styles, periods, and media associate with Roman 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 a chronological overview of art generated by the peoples of the Italian peninsula, and those who come into direct and prolonged contact with these peoples. It will present these explorations through in-person, face-to-face 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 should be read over the weekend before, and readings listed on a Wednesday should be read on the Monday or Tuesday prior to the Wednesday class meeting.

- *Look.* A copy of the slides from each class will be uploaded to our course Canvas site. Take the time to look carefully at each work presented, both in these slides and in the assigned readings. Consider the composition and media of each work, 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 sign-off for the day and will be counted absent.

**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.

- Turn off all cell phones. Those who choose to text during our course meetings will not be given participation credit for the session in which the texting occurs.
• 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 Equipment:**
In order to access course materials provided on Canvas students will require regular access to a computer with an Internet connection.

**Assessments:**

**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 violation 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, offered during Week 5, is designed to prepare students for the longer tests that will occur later in the course. It will feature a previously unseen artifact or work of art, and will ask students to craft an argument regarding a probable date, place of origin and identification of the artifact, using terms and identifications presented in the course materials to support this argument.

Test 1: 15%
This test, focusing on material from lectures and readings assigned during the first half of the course will be offered in Week 7. To ensure that all students have time to take the test, there will be no discussions, lectures, or assigned readings on Monday, October 10.

Paper/Project Proposal: 5%
At the end of week 10, students will propose a theme or topic for their final project. They will generate a short proposal of 250-300 words identifying the format of their final project together with two ancient Roman images or two sources that will inform the 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 week 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 offered in week 14. To ensure that all students have time to take the test, there will be no discussions, lectures, or assigned readings on Monday, November 28.

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 759 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 Roman art, including appropriate identifications, that helped to inform their work.

This project is due no later than Wednesday, December 14 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, Dr. McFerrin will send an email requesting a meeting with the student to determine if there are other factors that may influence the student’s ability to complete assignments. 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. Students must notify Dr. McFerrin to identify the circumstances that prevent them from completing any missed test within 24 hours of the due date. All late work must be submitted no later than Wednesday, November 30 at 11:59 PM. 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

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 offenses. 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, September 8. 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 a topic as complex as Roman art. However, the following information is subject to change, given the interests and aptitudes of the class.

*Week 1: Art and the Italian Peninsula*

*Monday, August 29: Introduction to the Course*
Wednesday, August 31: Roman Art? Considering the Terms

Reading: PDF on Canvas, Alfred Gell, “Vogel’s Net: Traps as Artworks and Artworks as Traps,” p. 15-38

Assignment: About Me, Due Friday, September 2 by 11:59 PM

Week 2: Early Italy

Monday, September 5: Labor Day! No Class!

Wednesday, September 7: The View from the North: Considering the Etruscans

Reading: PDF on Canvas, Andrew Rammage and Nancy Rammage, “The Etruscans,” p. 35-67

Week 3: The View from Early Rome

Monday, September 12: Rome before the Romans: Early Rome and its Artistic Contexts

Reading: PDF on Canvas, Patricia S. Lulof, “Archaic Terracotta Acroteria Representing Athena and Heracles: Manifestations of Power in Central Italy,” p. 208-219

Wednesday, September 14: Cosa and the Idea of the Republic

Reading: PDF on Canvas, Stephen Dyson, “Cosa,” p. 472-483

Assignment: Conspicuous Consumption in Context, due Friday, September 16 at 11:59 PM

Week 4: Patrons at Multiple Scales

Monday, September 19: Pompeii and the Late Republican Villa


Wednesday, September 21: Pompey Magnus and the Rise of Euergetism

Reading: PDF on Canvas, J.E. Packer, “The Theater of Pompey in Rome: The Archaeological Evidence, the Architecture and Destruction,” p. 9-40

Week 5: Art and Revolt at the End of the Republic
Monday, September 26: Julius Caesar and the Art of Propaganda


Wednesday, September 28: The Rise of Augustus

Reading: PDF on Canvas, Caroline Quenemoen, “The Portico of the Danaids: A New Reconstruction,” p. 229-250

Assignment: Mini-Test due by Friday, September 30 at 11:59 PM

Week 6: Ambition, Competition, and Recreation—Augustus and Imperial Patronage

Monday, October 3: Augustus and the Image of Rome

Reading: PDF on Canvas, Josephine Shaya, “The Public Life of Monuments,” 83-110

Wednesday, October 5: The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus

Reading: PDF on Canvas, Sheldon Nodelman, “How to Read a Roman Portrait,” p. 10-26

Week 7: Art Beyond Augustus

Monday, October 10: Test 1! No class meetings! No readings!

Wednesday, October 12: Art and the Power of Leisure in the Age of Tiberius

Reading: PDF on Canvas, A.F. Stewart, “To Entertain an Emperor: Sperlonga, Laokoon, and Tiberius at the Dinner Table,” p. 76-90

Assignment: Test 1 due no by Friday, October 14 at 11:59 PM

Week 8: Imperialism is a Spectator Sport: The Flavians and Public Art

Monday, October 17: Imperial Monuments and Legitimacy under the Flavians


Wednesday, October 19: The Colosseum and the Image of the Gladiator

Reading: PDF on Canvas, Valerie Hope, “Fighting for Identity: The Funerary Commemoration of Italian Gladiators,” 93-113
Assignment: The Art of Propaganda, due Friday, October 21 at 11:59 PM

Week 9: Pompeii—Everyday Life in the Early Empire

Monday, October 24: Wall Painting and Pompeian Houses

Reading: Elsner, Chapter 4, “Art and Social Life,” p. 85-105

Wednesday, October 26: Resistance and Rebellion in Pompeii: Elite and Non-Elite Dissent

Reading: PDF on Canvas, Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, “Pompeian Identities: Between Oscan, Samnite, Greek, Roman and Punic,” p. 1-14

Week 10: Art and Transformation: Trajan, Hadrian, and Ideas Revised

Monday, October 31: Strong Emperors Build Elaborate Cities: Trajan in Rome

Reading: Elsner, Chapter 7, “Art and the Past: Antiquarian Eclecticism,” p. 155-173

Wednesday, November 2: Hadrian and the Architectural Imagination

Reading: PDF on Canvas, Mark Wilson Jones, “Who Built the Pantheon? Agrippa, Apollodorus, Hadrian, and Trajan,” p. 31-49

Assignment: Paper/Project Proposals, due Friday, November 4 by 11:59 PM

Week 11: Images and Ceremonies: The Performance of Empire

Monday, November 7: The Subtle Originality of Antoninus and Faustina

Reading: Elsner, Chapter 6, “Art and Death,” p. 135-146

Wednesday, November 9: Individual meetings! No class meeting!

Week 12: The Severans and the Art of the Provinces

Monday, November 14: The Memory of the Severans


Wednesday, November 16: Art, Inclusion and the Maintenance of Identity at Leptis Magna

*Week 13: The View from the East*

**Monday, November 21:** Dressing the Resistance in Roman Palmyra

Reading: PDF on Canvas, Maura K. Heyn, “Gesture and Identity in the Funerary Art of Palmyra,” 631-61

**Wednesday, November 23:** No Class! Thanksgiving Break!

*Week 14: Art and Crisis: The Rise of the Tetrarchs*

**Monday, November 28:** Test 2! No class meetings! No readings!

**Wednesday, November 30:** The Rise of Diocletian: Art for a New World Order

Reading: PDF on Canvas, Tuna Agtürk, “A New Tetrarchic Relief from Nicomedia: Embracing Emperors, p. 411-426

*Week 15: Art and Change: Constantine and Reimagined Beginnings*

**Monday, December 5:** Constantine and the Revitalization of Rome

Reading: PDF on Canvas, Elizabeth Marlowe, “Framing the Sun: The Arch of Constantine and the Roman Cityscape,” p. 223-242

**Wednesday, December 7:** Constantine’s Churches, Spandrels, and the Potential of Art

**Final Paper/Project due no later than Wednesday, December 14 at 11:59 PM!**