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ART HISTORY 319
Art and Archaeology of the Ancient Near East:
Egypt

George Mason University
History and Art History Department
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Office: Robinson B 373A - by appointment

Fall Semester 2014
Class:
MW 12:00-1:15
Robinson B 113

Course Description and Goals

Art History 319 focuses on the amazing civilization of ancient Egypt. In this course, we will explore virtually every aspect of that long-enduring civilization. We'll travel from the Great Pyramids, the oldest of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, to the Valley of the Kings, where were once hidden the tombs of the most powerful pharaohs, as well as of the "Boy King," Tutankhamun. We'll visit the village of the workers who decorated - and robbed? - those royal tombs. We'll also study the animal-headed gods and goddesses worshipped by the Egyptians and we'll tour the enormous temples dedicated to those strange divinities. We'll see vivid scenes of daily life depicted in brightly painted reliefs and we'll reflect upon the complex status of women in this traditional society. And we'll witness the dramatic conquest of Egypt by Alexander the Great and the tragic death of Cleopatra, the last Macedonian-Greek ruler of Egypt.

In the course of our survey of ancient Egyptian civilization, we'll encounter those mysterious hieroglyphs inscribed on towering obelisks, as well as the three other writing systems used by the ancient Egyptians. We'll read passages in the Egyptian "Book of the Dead," as well as ancient love lyrics to the living. We'll watch over the Roman conquest of Egypt, the advent of Christianity and the disappearance of Egypt's most ancient religion, the transformation of Egypt upon the arrival of Islam, and, finally, the opening up of Egypt to the western world with the arrival of Napoleon's troops in 1798.

We will view the brilliant achievements of the ancient Egyptians in the major arts of architecture, sculpture, and painting. Throughout our exploration of this ancient civilization, we'll learn the fascinating stories of those archaeologists who have brought the buried past to light.

Our goal throughout is an educationally challenging, intellectually stimulating, and rewarding experience.

Prerequisite(s): 24 credits.

ARTH 319 fulfills the Core requirement in global understanding.
ARTH 319 fulfills the college requirement in non-Western culture.

Required Texts

Robins, Gay. *The Art of Ancient Egypt*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008 Revised Edition [1997]. ISBN 978-0-674-03065-7

Tentative Syllabus

Students are responsible for the reading assignments listed on the syllabus and for any announcements, information, or assignments given in class. The readings are to be completed before the class for which they are assigned. Additional reading assignments may be announced in class. **Quizzes or in-class writing assignments based on the readings may be given - with or without prior announcement - at the class for which the assignments have been made. Grades for such work may be factored into the final course grade.**

Like the mind, the syllabus is subject to change.

Week 1 - Introduction

1. Monday, August 25
2. Wednesday, August 27

Robins, *Art*, Chapter 1: "Understanding Egyptian Art,"
pp. 12-18 only - up to: *Principles of Egyptian art*

Week 2 - Rediscovery and the Beginnings

Robins, *Art*, Chapter 2: "Origins: The Early Dynastic Period," pp. 30-39

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| Monday, | September 1 | LABOR DAY - UNIVERSITY CLOSED |
| Tuesday, | September 2 | LAST DAY TO ADD CLASSES |
| | | LAST DAY TO DROP WITH NO TUITION LIABILITY |

3. Wednesday, September 3
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Week 3 - The Old Kingdom: The Pyramids

- TEST 1

Robins, *Art*, Chapter 3: "The First Flowering: The Old Kingdom (I)," pp. 40-57

4. Monday, September 8
 5. Wednesday, September 10 **TEST 1**
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Week 4 - The Old Kingdom: The Pyramids

- The Old Kingdom: Sculpture and Painting

Robins, *Art*, Chapter 4:

"A Golden Age: The Old Kingdom (II)," pp. 58-67 - up to: *Non-royal tombs*

6. Monday, September 15
 - Tuesday, September 16 LAST DAY TO DROP WITH A 33% TUITION PENALTY
 7. Wednesday, September 17
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Week 5 - The First Intermediate Period

Robins, *Art*, Chapter 5:

"Diversity in Disunity: The First Intermediate Period," pp. 80-89

8. Monday, September 22
 9. Wednesday, September 24 NO CLASS
 - Friday, September 26 FINAL DROP DEADLINE (67% TUITION PENALTY)
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Week 6 - TEST 2**- The Middle Kingdom**

Robins, *Art*, Chapter 6:

"Return to the Heights: The Middle Kingdom (I)," pp. 90-101

- up to: *Private Funerary Art*

10. Monday, September 29 **TEST 2**

SELECTIVE WITHDRAWAL PERIOD: Monday, September 29 > Friday, October 24

11. Wednesday, October 1

Week 7 - The Middle Kingdom and The Second Intermediate Period

Robins, *Art*, Chapter 7:

"Change and Collapse: The Middle Kingdom (II),"

pp. 110-118 - up to: *The human figure*

12. Monday, October 6

13. Wednesday, October 8

Week 8 - The New Kingdom: The Early Eighteenth Dynasty

Robins, *Art*, Chapter 8:

"A New Momentum: The New Kingdom (I): Ahmose to Amenhotep III," pp. 122-137

Monday, October 13 COLUMBUS DAY RECESS

Tuesday, October 14 ARTH 319 WILL NOT MEET

14. Wednesday, October 15

Week 9 - Akhenaten and Tutankhamun

Robins, *Art*, Chapter 9:

"The Great Heresy: The New Kingdom (II):

The Amarna Period and its Aftermath," pp. 148-156

- up to: *Non-royal tombs*

Read: *The aftermath of Amarna and Conclusion*, pp. 158-165

15. Monday, October 20

16. Wednesday, October 22

Week 10 - Ramses the Great

Robins, *Art*, Chapter 10:

"The Glories of Empire: The New Kingdom (III)," pp. 166-192

17. Monday, October 27

18. Wednesday, October 29

Week 11 - TEST 3**- The Third Intermediate Period**

Robins, *Art*, Chapter 11:

"Fragmentation and New Directions:

The Third Intermediate Period," pp. 194-200 - up to: *Non-royal tombs*

19. Monday, November 3 **TEST 3**

20. Wednesday, November 5

Week 12 - The Late PeriodRobins, *Art*, Chapter 12:"Looking to the Past: The Late Period (I)," pp. 210-218 - up to: *The elite*.

21. Monday, November 10

22. Wednesday, November 12

Week 13 - The Late Period

23. Monday, November 17

24. Wednesday, November 19

**Week 14 - Alexander the Great and Ptolemy I
Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt**Robins, *Art*, Chapter 13:

"The Final Flowering: The Late Period (II)

and Ptolemaic Period," pp. 230-245 - up to: *Burials*.Robins, *Art*, Chapter 14: "Epilogue," pp. 252-255

25. Monday, November 24

Wednesday, November 26 THANKSGIVING RECESS

Week 15 - TEST 4

26. Monday, December 1

27. Wednesday, December 3

Monday, December 15 FINAL EXAM 10:30-1:15

Schedule of Tests

You are required to take the tests when they are assigned. **NO MAKEUPS** will be given without an acceptable excuse from a doctor or an academic dean.

Wednesday,	September 10	Test 1	5%
Monday,	September 29	Test 2	25%
Monday,	November 3	Test 3	35%
Monday,	December 15	Test 4	35%
10:30-1:15			

A+ 100-99	A- 93-90	B 86-83	C+ 79-77	C- 72-70		
A 98-94	B+ 89-87	B- 82-80	C 76-73	D 69-60	F 59-0	

If there has been an error in grading, clearly note the error on the first page of the test and return your test to me for review. **DO NOT DELAY.**

Grades will not be sent via e-mail.

You are required to keep all graded work until after you have received and accepted your grade for the course.

All students are responsible for understanding, conforming to, and upholding the Honor Code. "Cheating and attempted cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing of academic work and related materials constitute Honor Code violations. To maintain an academic community according to these standards, students and faculty must report all alleged violations of the Honor Code to the Honor Committee. Any student who has knowledge of, but does not report, an Honor Code violation may be accused of lying under the Honor Code." - George Mason University.

CHEATING WILL RESULT IN A FAILING GRADE FOR THE COURSE

Our major goal of this course is to attain an understanding of ancient Egyptian art. We will learn about the archaeological discoveries that have brought to light so much of that art and we will look closely at that art since it reveals so much about the world of the ancient Egyptians, their ideas and beliefs, and their views about their own past, present, and future.

Questions on quizzes or tests may include may include:

1. Slide identifications of works seen in class or shown in the texts.
2. Dating of major periods, historical figures, and works of art.
3. Location of important sites on maps.
4. Definitions of technical and stylistic terms and concepts.
5. Knowledge of ancient Egyptian ideas and beliefs, including identification of gods and goddesses.
6. Identification of historical figures, of those ancient writers who had first-hand knowledge of ancient Egypt, and of those modern explorers and archaeologists who have brought the past to light.
7. Questions on the readings and lectures.

ABSOLUTELY NO ELECTRONIC DEVICES ARE TO BE USED IN CLASS.

Throughout this course, you are expected to be considerate of your fellow students. Late arrivals, early departures, and talking in class are distracting to others. Such behavior is not acceptable and may be counted against your grade.

Doing Well

Please review the syllabus carefully and seek clarification of any assignments or instructions that might seem unclear.

Material presented in class is intended to help clarify the assigned readings, to provide more extensive background for certain topics, and to explore new subjects. The format for class will be primarily lecture, but you are welcome to raise questions.

Do not take this course unless you plan to attend class regularly.

You will be responsible for all material presented in class, including images. In a single class, roughly six per cent of the course material is covered. So, missing one class could result in the drop of one letter grade for your final grade in the course. Coming to class on time means that you have the advantage of any review that is covered at the beginning of class.

Cross-referencing your class notes with the reading assignments and illustrations in the texts is an excellent way to integrate the material covered in the course. You can do this, for example, by simply adding in the margins to your class notes the page references to illustrations in Robins. Do NOT, however, do this during class. Flipping through the books in an attempt to find one illustration distracts you from taking notes on the material that is being presented; doing so is also distracting to others and, consequently, is not allowed.

Forming a study group with fellow classmates is an excellent way to improve your performance in any course. By participating in a study group, you can learn whether your class notes are adequate, whether you have the right focus in preparing for tests. Through a study group, you might even make a new friend.

If you miss class on the day when a hand-out is distributed, please ask a fellow student for a copy of the hand-out. You are responsible for picking up graded work when it is handed back. If you are absent from that class, please request the return of your work.

Class participation - if it is outstandingly good, obviously lacking, or occasionally disruptive - may affect your grade, as may also exceptional improvements in performance.

If you are not satisfied with your performance, please talk with me as soon as possible so that we can try to figure out the problem. It might simply be a matter of finding a way for you to study more efficiently. Good strategies for study result in successful performance.

If there has been an error in grading, clearly note the error on the first page of the quiz/test and return your test to me. **DO NOT DELAY.** Individual students are responsible for requesting the return of any work submitted for re-evaluation.

Accommodations will be made for students with documented disabilities, in accordance with law and university policies. Students requiring accommodations must register with and provide documentation to the University's Disability Resource Center. This must be done well in advance before the first test in case alternate arrangements need to be made.

Please feel free to e-mail me and I will do my best to reply promptly to your messages. You may wish to ask me to clarify a point made in class, to raise an unexplored topic at our next class, or to request an appointment for us to meet. You can do that quickly and easily by e-mail. On e-mail messages to me, please always include under the subject heading: **ARTH 319.** That immediately lets me know which course you're writing about. Do not include attachments in e-mail messages.
