Art and Identity in Antiquity
ARTH 420/599 Spring 2021
Thursday 4:30 – 7:10 PM
Innovation Hall 204
Professor Jacquelyn Williamson

Class in the time of Covid-19
We will follow these procedures in each class meeting

1. Masks are required at all times
2. We maintain social distancing (6 feet/2meters) from each other at all times
3. Bring cleaning products to the classroom and scrub your personal space
4. Depending on weather/other considerations, we will try to keep windows/doors open

Note that GMU will not observe a spring break this spring semester 2021

Contact information and Office Hours:
Email: jwilli98@gmu.edu Please use your GMU email address for school business.
Art History Department Phone: 703-993-1250
Virtual office hours: Mondays at 4:30pm by appointment (see the link to the left of the Blackboard page for our class. Be sure to ask me in advance for an appointment)

Course Description:

Some scholars believe there were no portraits before the art of Greece and Rome, in contradiction to this theory this class seeks to put Egyptian and Mesopotamian portraiture in context with the portrait traditions of the later Greco-Roman world. It will also demonstrate the influence of Egypt and Mesopotamia on Greco-Roman artistic traditions.

The other objective of the course is to explore theoretical approaches to understanding the representation of individuals in the ancient world, using specific case studies. The modern construct of individuality, as conveyed through the representation of the human face, differs from past concepts. We will thus ask questions designed to alert us to our modern gaze and how that gaze differs from, and thus obstructs, the original meaning of a work of art.

Many other questions will be explored in this class. We will ask how social roles are conveyed in portraiture. We will ask whether the medium, coin verses statue for example, influences the style and message of a portrait. How does the portrait’s original context in architecture add to the story of the person represented? And finally we will be equipped to ask: what exactly is a portrait?

Course Requirements with Approximate Grade Determination:
1. Class attendance, class participation, and completion of reading assignments (30%)
2. self-portrait assignment (scheduled by sign-up sheet wiki which can be found in the course content section on Blackboard) (20%)
3. First part/draft of research paper (see directions for details), approximately 3-4 pages for undergrads and 5-6 for grads (due 3/11) (20%)
4. Final Research Paper 7-8 pages for undergrads and 9-10 for grads (due 4/29) (30%)
Class participation grade:
“A” Level: Great class participation—student demonstrates understanding of subject and the ability to think critically about it, makes connections with other students and encourages friendly and positive discussion, no “one-upping.”
“B” level: Normal class participation—student shows up on time, keeps up with classwork, participates in group activities, does not cause problems
“C” level: Student shows poor class attendance, does not pay attention, is not up to date with reading, is disruptive, etc.
“D-F” level: Student will get a D-F in class participation automatically if they use their personal technology devices in any way that is not connected to the classroom. IE no Facebook, Tinder, etc etc etc. You are allowed to monitor emergency campus alerts of course.

Schedule of Readings:

Note that updates to these readings may take place over the semester.

Week 1 1/28

*Introduction and What is a Portrait?*

Week 2 2/4 Theory I

Brilliant, *Portraiture*, Chapter 1

Week 3 2/11 Theory II

Brilliant, *Portraiture*, Chapter 3

Week 4: 2/18 Early representations of the human form in Mesopotamia and Egypt

G. Robins, *The Art of Ancient Egypt*, Chapter 1
I. Winter “What/When is a Portrait? Royal Images of the Ancient Near East.”

Week 5 2/25 Early Egypt and Early Mesopotamia: royal piety

G. Robins, *The Art of Ancient Egypt* 40-57
I. Winter, “The Body of the Able Ruler: Toward an Understanding of the Statues of Gudea”

Week 6 3/4 Divine Justice: Zimri-Lim and Hammurabi

K. Slanski, “The Mesopotamian ‘Rod and Ring’: Icon of Righteous Kingship and Balance of Power between Palace and Temple”
Week 7 3/11 Middle Kingdom Portraits/ Hatshepsut and her “male” portraits

G. Robins *The Art of Ancient Egypt*, 110-114
Short excerpts from C. Roehrig, R. Dreyfus, and C. Keller, *Hatshepsut: From Queen to Pharaoh* 87-91, 135-140, 158-163

Week 8 3/18 Neo-Assyrian Kings

I. Winter, “Art in Empire: The Royal Image and the Visual Dimensions of Assyrian Ideology”
J. Aker, “Workmanship as Ideological Tool in the Monumental Hunt Reliefs of Ashurbanipal”

Week 9 3/25 Amarna Period in Egypt: Akhenaten, Nefertiti, and Tutankhamen

G. Robins, *The Art of Ancient Egypt* 149-165
Braverman, Redford, Mackowiak “Akhenaten and the Strange Physiques of the Egypt’s 18th Dynasty” Annals of Internal Medicine.

Week 10 4/1 Greece I Biography as self image: Portraits of philosophers and poets


Week 11 4/8 Greece II: Portraits for the Philosophical Schools: Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, and Paint and Perception

Ashmolean Museum, *Gods in Colour*, 1-14

Week 12 4/15 Roman Portraits, Roman Women

S. Nodelman, “How to Read a Roman Portrait”
J. Tanner, “Portraits, Power, and Patronage in the Late Roman Republic”

Week 13 4/22 Mummy Portraits of the Fayum, Vestal Virgins
Excerpt from S. Walker, *Ancient Faces: Mummy Portraits from Roman Egypt* 9-36
M. Lindner, *Portraits of the Vestal Virgins*, chps 2, 6, look at images in chp 7

Week 14 4/29
Final paper due
Bibliographic Sources


Stanwick, P. *Portraits of the Ptolemies: Greek Kings as Egyptian Pharaohs* Austin : University of Texas Press, 2002.


**CLASS POLICIES**

*Attendance* is necessary. You are responsible for getting notes, and for all consequences of missed classes. *Class participation will affect your grade*. I will be making spot checks of attendance.

*Classroom atmosphere.* Courtesy and common sense, please. Talking over each other, wandering in and out, cell phones, etc are all badly distracting to everyone else. *Disruptive individuals can be asked to leave, according to GMU policy.*

*Written work* is a major part of the course, and will count heavily towards your final grade. Please study the explanation of my writing standards, attached to this syllabus. In short: *Papers must be written in good formal English, with full documentation* in a standard format such as MLA or Chicago. *All students are expected to use word-processors with spell-checkers. Spelling and grammar count – but don’t take the computer’s word for*
it. Ex: “Throne” and “thrown” are not the same word. Please submit papers typed, double-spaced, and PROOFREAD. Badly written work will be downgraded, returned for a rewrite, or flunked at my discretion. Laptop computers are fine for taking notes in class. No Facebook, Solitaire, etc. Phones will be turned off at all times, of course, as a courtesy to all. No computers or telephones may be used during tests unless special permission is obtained due to a specific disability (see below).

Late work will be graded down five points per weekday and ten points over a weekend. Plan ahead—last-minute hard-disk and printer failures do not constitute legitimate excuses. By the final exam, all missing work becomes F work. Make-up tests and elaborate medical excuses will require verification with a physician’s or associate dean's excuse. There will be no make-up final exams.

English as a Second Language: If English is not your first language, I will be happy to help you do your best in the writing assignments. The final result must be written in good standard English. Please work with The Writing Center. See their web page for English language help, at: http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/. Look for the ESL (English as Second Language) tab.

Learning disabilities. If you are a student with disabilities, and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disabilities Resources.

Religious holidays. This syllabus is arranged according to the George Mason University calendar. If you observe a religious holiday that the University does not, please let me know and I will make necessary accommodations for you (but not for the whole class).

Auditors are welcome to sit and listen, if there is room. If they would like to participate more actively, that’s fine with me if (!!) you are keeping up with the assigned class reading.

Academic honesty is expected, according the GMU Honor Code. “Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work,” according to the official website, http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/ Please respect the Honor Code, our classroom standards, your fellow students, and yourself. Please report violations to the Honor Committee, using the procedures explained in the website. See the explanation of plagiarism, and how to avoid it, in the guidelines for writing.

Outside of this classroom:

If you or anyone you know has been subjected to any form of harassment (race, religion, gender, sexual assault, etc), please consider a visit to GMU’s Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights. They will be supportive and discreet. GMU is proud of its diverse student body and committed to protecting the rights and the dignity of all students.

GMU Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights Website: http://integrity.gmu.edu/compliance/titleIX.cfm