Course: ARTH 009-601  Instructor: Dr. Sarah J. Scott
E-mail: sjarmen@sas.upenn.edu  Location: Jaffe 113, T 6-8:40 PM
Office Hours: Thursdays 4-5, & by appointment  Office: B-17, Jaffe Building

Blackboard URL: https://courseweb.upenn.edu

Course Description:
All ancient civilizations have a story to tell; great Assyrian kings bragged about military feats, Minoan priestesses reigned over bull-jumping ceremonies, Mayan nobles watched as champion athletes played a lethal ball-game. In this course we will examine how these stories and ‘historical’ events found a place in the visual artistic tradition of these different ancient civilizations. Students will actively participate in critiquing various scholarly texts and objects on display at the Penn Museum; in addition they will be responsible for a series of writing projects dealing with narrative art and the context for which it was created. These assignments will be completed in various phases, each designed to build upon the other and improve writing skills through in-class workshops, and peer review; specific writing skills will be targeted such as description, analysis, argument, organization, and narrative.

Goals and Objectives: This is first and foremost a writing-intensive seminar where we will work on improving the skills of critical thinking, reading, and writing. We will be learning about some of the most fascinating civilizations of the ancient world through the eyes of art historians, archaeologists, and anthropologists. Presentation style, topic/thesis clarity, description, analysis, evidence, style, and organization are writing skills you will use throughout your entire educational career and your whole life. They are skills that will make you better able to actively participate in today’s world. Our goals will thus be the following:

• Improve upon written and oral communication skills
• Learn to read, both introductory texts and scholarly articles, critically
• Familiarize yourself with the process of presenting your ideas in a classroom situation
• Achieve the ability to discuss and write about art objects
• Gain an understanding of several ancient cultures, and the material world they created and valued

Our Methods: The teaching philosophy of this instructor is based on learning through active participation of the students. Our class meetings will comprise a variety of learning activities. There will be a few instructor-led presentations/lectures. We will hold active discussions about articles we have all read, which will follow with further elaboration about both the content matter of the articles as well as the writing. Writing workshops, occurring almost every class period, are designed to highlight specific issues of writing which you will be expected to incorporate into your assignments. We will split into groups to embark upon various projects, including short in-class writing assignments, presentations, and peer reviews of each other’s work. Student presentations are meant to be an informal, active discussion, resulting in clarification of the material and refining of students’ ideas for written assignments. Interactive learning is a main
component of this course; peer discussion and review and instructor-student private conferences will facilitate students’ improvement in writing skills. Trips to museums will be incorporated into the course as well.

**Course requirements:** Over the course of the semester you will complete an independent writing project. It is toward this end that many of the writing assignments are designed. Therefore, doing your best on all the assignments, paying attention to detail, asking questions, and actively engaging in every part of this class is important. In addition to the main writing project there will also be 2 additional, shorter, formal assignments, and a number of other response assignments. The supplementary assignments are REQUIRED, and are designed to help you with your larger written assignments. (see below for specific assignment instructions) It is on the basis of the longer writing assignments (3), response assignments, and class participation that you will receive your grade for the course.

**Grading Criteria:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment Type</th>
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<tr>
<td>Article Critique:</td>
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<td>Formal Analysis:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comparative Analysis Essay:</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Response Assignments:</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Discussion Assignments</td>
<td>10%</td>
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**Classroom Policies:** Class attendance is of utmost importance for this class, and counts toward a portion of your grade. It is not a lecture class where you get notes from a friend and expect to be caught up. Absence will put you behind and leave you without information vital to our end goals. You will be allowed one (1) unexcused absence during the semester, and after that your participation grade will be adversely affected. You are expected to be on time as well, and any tardiness will be considered an absence.

I expect you to show as much respect to your classmates as you do to me; you will learn as much from them as anyone. We are not just a class but a community and team of researchers. The power of many is greater than one.

Most assignments are due in class on the due date (some should be turned in via the digital dropbox on Blackboard; assignments vary, see schedule below). When bringing your paper to class, bring four copies. During most of our in-class workshops we will be working on these papers. Late assignments will receive a 10 point deduction per day. Extensions will be granted only in special cases. Please also bring copies of the articles to class for use in workshops as well.

Plagiarism is unacceptable. An instance of this horrendous crime will result in the failure of the assignment and appropriate University disciplinary procedures (see Penn’s Code of Academic Integrity; [http://www.upenn.edu/osl/acadint.html](http://www.upenn.edu/osl/acadint.html)).

**Blackboard Site:** For the majority of the course, we will be utilizing Penn’s Blackboard, or Course Web, as our major information site. After the initial review of this version of the syllabus, updated versions, assignments, due dates, calendars, announcements, and required readings will be placed on the Blackboard site. You are responsible for checking this site, and using it on a regular basis to keep up with the course work. Be aware of it and use it. The syllabus is of the utmost importance; written and reading assignments are due as per the syllabus; it is your responsibility to be aware of what is due when. I may remind you of what is due the following class session, but just because
I haven’t reminded you doesn’t mean that nothing is due! **Pay attention to your syllabus!**  [https://courseweb.upenn.edu](https://courseweb.upenn.edu)

**Texts (Those with an asterisk will be on reserve at the Fine Arts Library):**

**Available at Penn Book Center (34\textsuperscript{th} St. between Sansom and Walnut):**
* Barnet, Sylvan. *A Short Guide to Writing About Art.* New York: Longman Inc, 2004 (8\textsuperscript{th} ed.).

**On Reserve at Fisher Fine Arts Library, (optional to purchase if you so desire):**

**Articles on Blackboard site:**

**Group 1 (Narrative Art in Ancient Cultures)**
Hayden White, ‘The Value of Narrativity in Visual Culture’

**Group 2 (Narrative Texts in Ancient Cultures)**
Group 3 (Focused Topics on Art and Narrative)


*Miller, Mary Ellen. Bonampak Murals and Structure I.

In addition to the articles, it is recommended you complete some general background reading on each of the four cultures we will cover. It is up to you where you do that reading. For each of the four cultures, you may read the relevant sections in at least ONE of the following:

Scarre and Fagan
Gardner
Collon, Robins, Preziousi, and Miller
Grove Dictionary of Art (available on-line)

There are many other wonderful texts that you may want to read once we get into the material. See the ‘further reading’ section at the end of this syllabus, and be sure to ask me about other suggestions. There is an ocean of information out there on any possible topic you might choose.

Written Assignments:

Museum Narrative: The study of Ancient Art (and other disciplines) requires careful observation and description about what we see. This is not as easy as it seems. Your first assignment is to spend a few hours in the University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology during the second week of classes; choose one of the following galleries to write about: Egypt, Mesopotamia, Mesoamerica, Greece. Compose a 4 page essay describing your experience in the gallery, and focus specifically on THREE objects that attract your attention. In your introduction and conclusion, describe you overall experience at the museum, and how these three objects gave you that specific experience. Bring 4 copies of your paper to class.
Length: 4 pages
Due: 9/27

Response Papers: During the first portion of the semester we will read four articles, each dealing with some aspect of narrative art in one of four ancient cultures. After reading each article, choose one specific detail/bit of evidence the author discusses and critique it as much as you can. How does it help/hinder the thesis? Be sure you understand the main thesis of the article and how the particular detail/bit of evidence you discuss is related to it.
Length: 1-2 pages (double spaced)
Due: 9/27, 10/4, 10/11, 10/25, 11/1, 11/8
Total grade percentage: 5% each

Article Critique: Choose one of the articles that we have read and discussed in class thus far and write a formal critique of it. Your thesis should be a statement about how it is or isn’t a successful argument as presented by the scholar. Clearly elucidate what you believe the author’s thesis to be, and then establish the major points/criteria/evidence that the author uses to prove his/her thesis. Address whether the evidence is enough for
holding up the thesis. What other types of evidence might the author have chosen to make the thesis stronger? What other problems do you see in the article? How would you have approached the topic differently to make the article more successful?

Use your notes and commentary from the first response papers and peer group discussions as a guide. Spend plenty of time thinking about your paper. What criteria have you chosen? Why? How do these criteria relate to each other? Be sure your paper has a solid thesis, introduction, body and conclusion. Pay attention to organization and proofread and edit carefully.

Length: 3-5 pages (double spaced)
Final due: 10/25
Total grade percentage: 10%

Formal Analysis Assignment: The study of art history takes in many methodologies, but the basis of art historical studies is careful observation and analysis of art objects and monuments. We will spend considerable time in class working on the skill of formal, or visual, analysis. After choosing one of the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, write a 4 to 5 page formal analysis on the work. Organize your analysis around a solid thesis, and plan the analytical description according to this thesis. Take into consideration the formal elements of the piece, such as size, shape, materials, color, ornamentation, the likely function of the work and its state of preservation. Also, consider its display in the museum galleries – lighting, surrounding objects, vistas and visual connections created with other pieces. What impact do all of these elements have on the museum viewer? Do you think it was the same impact as an ancient or medieval viewer might have felt (i.e. what do you think was the original context of this piece, and how would the change affect a viewer’s perception of it)? Use the format we have discussed in class for visual analysis and you should consult the reading from Barnet, A Short Guide to Writing About Art, further to aid you in this essay.

Use your museum narrative assignment as a guide; but be sure to visit the museum at least one more time. No formal research should be conducted. While you may want to consult other materials available in the galleries such as wall labels, this is to be completed through careful observation and your own interpretation.

As we will establish, a visual analysis is not a description. If you find yourself writing long paragraphs with large amounts of description, you are not completing the assignment correctly. Describe the attributes toward proving your thesis. Pay careful attention to organization (generally based on formal properties), flow, proofreading and editing. Include a thoughtfully composed conclusion, including a paragraph about further avenues for research (as we will discuss in class).

Pay careful attention to your thesis and organization. Include a thoughtfully composed conclusion, including a paragraph about further avenues for research (as we will discuss in class). Proofread and edit carefully.

Length: 3-5 pages (double-spaced)
Draft Due: 10/30
Peer review: 11/1
Narrative Analysis: Your final written assignment will focus on two works of narrative art from one or more of the cultures we are studying. Your essay should be comparative in nature, and comprise mostly analysis. This assignment is not a research paper – it should be a formal analysis and comparison of two works of narrative art. You may consult some of the basic texts we have used in class for background information, but do not spend all your time finding sources – spend your time finding a good topic, analyzing the works of art, and comparing them. Work on your writing and argument style.

Topic: You must turn in a 250-word statement of your topic. The early topic selection is meant to ensure that you get an early start on the paper, so that we will have time to workshop through the assignment during the last portion of the semester.

The topic proposal should have two parts:
1. a statement of the works of narrative art to be treated, detailing why it is of significance in the history of art
2. a brief description of two or three specific avenues of approach or working hypotheses you plan to explore in your specific treatment of the general problem or issue, with a list of comparative issues you may plan to investigate.

You should take care in the succinct and clear formulation of your proposal, which will help you in defining the further course of your writing. Ultimately the proposal should be of use to you in writing the final comparison.

Outline: An outline of the essay will be due November 22.

Presentation: To aid you in the formulation of your research topic, thesis, and paper, you will be required to present your topic to the class during our class meetings on November 22 and 29. This presentation should include information about your thesis, or possible theses, the type of evidence you will be using, and how the problem has developed for you during your writing. You will need to use images in your presentation in order to explain your thesis; also be prepared to discuss your topic with the entire class – come with a list of problems you are having, and questions you would like to ask of the class. This is a formal presentation, but is meant to be a working presentation where you can iron out the final questions/problems you have before writing your first draft.

First Draft: Due on December 2.

Narrative Analysis Essay:
Length: 10-15 pages (double-spaced)
Draft Due: 12/2
Peer review: 12/6
Conferences: 12/6
Final due: Final Day of reading period
Total grade percentage: 25%
## Course Schedule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Day</th>
<th>Class Agenda</th>
<th>Reading DUE</th>
<th>Assignment DUE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday 9/13</td>
<td>Welcome Syllabus Overview of writing skills</td>
<td>White Article – to be handed out in class</td>
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<td><strong>Writing Workshop:</strong> Outlining I Narrativity</td>
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<td>Tuesday 9/20</td>
<td>No Class; Visit Museum</td>
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<td>Tuesday 9/27</td>
<td>Mesopotamia Lecture</td>
<td>Mesopotamia General Reading</td>
<td>Museum Narrative Response Assignment: Mesopotamia</td>
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<td><strong>Writing Workshop:</strong> Audience Introduction</td>
<td>Winter Article</td>
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<td>Class Discussion: Winter Article</td>
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<td>Hand out Museum Narrative to peer group.</td>
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<td>Handbook exercise</td>
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<td>Tuesday 10/4</td>
<td>Egypt Lecture</td>
<td>Egypt General Reading</td>
<td>Response Assignment: Egypt</td>
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<td><strong>Writing Workshop:</strong> Thesis/Topic Body/Evidence Outline I</td>
<td>Palette Article</td>
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<td>Class Discussion: Palette Article</td>
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<td>Discuss each other’s Museum narrative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday 10/11</td>
<td>Aegean Lecture</td>
<td>Aegean General reading</td>
<td>Response Assignment: Aegean</td>
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<td><strong>Writing Workshop:</strong> Conclusion and Outline II</td>
<td>Aegean Article</td>
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<td>Class Discussion: Aegean Article</td>
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<td>Discuss Museum narrative</td>
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<td>Tuesday 10/18</td>
<td><strong>No Class; Fall Break</strong></td>
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<td>Event</td>
<td>Reading/Assignment</td>
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<td>10/25</td>
<td>Mesoamerica Lecture</td>
<td>Mesoamerica General reading</td>
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<td><strong>Writing Workshop:</strong> Arguments</td>
<td>Mesoamerica Article</td>
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<td>Description</td>
<td>Read Barnett, Formal Analysis Chapter</td>
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<td>Class Discussion: Mesoamerica Article</td>
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<td>Discuss each other’s Museum narrative</td>
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<td>Formal Analysis</td>
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<td>10/30</td>
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<td>Draft of Formal Analysis due to peer groups, and me</td>
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<td>11/1</td>
<td>Class Discussion: Written narratives in Ancient Cultures: Mesopotamia and Egypt</td>
<td>Written Narratives readings: Mesopotamia and Egypt</td>
<td>Peer review I</td>
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<td><strong>Writing Workshop:</strong> Peer Review I</td>
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<td>Response Assignment: Written Narratives</td>
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<td>Style</td>
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<td>Essay topic due</td>
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<td>Peer review: Discussion of topics</td>
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<td>11/8</td>
<td>Class Discussion: Written narratives in Ancient Cultures: Aegean and Mesoamerica</td>
<td>Written Narratives readings: Aegean and Mesoamerica</td>
<td>Formal Analysis due, final draft</td>
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<td><strong>Writing Workshop:</strong> Comparison – Use Formal analysis objects, then use the narrative texts</td>
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<td>Response Assignment: Written Narratives</td>
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| Tuesday 11/15| Special Topic: Presentation of Sennacherib’s Lachish Narratives and Bonampak  
Comparison – Compare Lachish Narratives and Bonampak   
Russell Article                                      |
| Tuesday 11/22| Topic Presentations I  
**Writing Workshop:**  
Drafting  
Peer review: Outlines  
Final Essay Outline Due                                 |
| Tuesday 11/29| Topic Presentations II                                                |
| Friday, 12/2 | Draft of Final Essay due. Email to your peer groups, and digital dropbox version to me by 5:00 PM. |
| Tuesday 12/6 | Peer review II  
**Writing Workshop:**  
Revising                                                  |
| 12/15        | Final Essay due to Blackboard; peer reviews and early drafts due in my mailbox. |
Supplementary Reading List

Mesopotamia


Egypt


Aegean


**Mesoamerica**


