Themes in Roman Imperial Art. Faces Bodies Spaces (Classics 478)

Meet: twice a week (mon/wed)

Instructor: Alessandro Celani (celani@ualberta.ca - +39 333 8986592)

Course description

Courses and handbooks on Roman Art usually proceed by chronological units. The chronological scheme is certainly useful and comfortable for both teachers and students. This course focuses on themes instead. Roman art has been innovative and original in some fields, it has been built by repetition and emulation in others. The course will go through the major areas of Roman visual vocabulary: the face, the body, the space. Roman portraits belong both to the intimate dimension of the house and to the public sphere of the political appearance. The exposed human body emerges late in the Roman art, catalyzing war, entertainment, slavery, sexuality. It is a permanent form of celebration and oppression. In Roman art nature and space appear as the perfect complements to civilization and power. Symmetry and proportions migrate from the realm of the built up reality to the reality itself. Long after the end of the Roman era the Roman art is still at work: it makes leaders gain consensus and provides populations with illusions of liberty.

Course aims and objectives

Students will acquire:

- Familiarity with the main themes of Roman Imperial Art
- Awareness of the main theoretical discussions about Roman Art
- Knowledge of major and minor artifacts and works of art produced in the Roman Imperial period

Final Exam:
Test on arguments covered during the entire course.

Assessment Policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Term Test</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Test</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ATTENDANCE TO ALL CLASSES IS ESSENTIAL AND MANDATORY. ATTENDANCE TO DISCUSSIONS AND VISITS DURING FIELD TRIP IS ALSO MANDATORY, AND WILL BE AN ESSENTIAL PART FOR THE INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION.
### Outstanding: Superior performance showing understanding and knowledge of the subject matter far exceeding expectations

### Excellent: Superior performance showing comprehensive understanding of the subject matter

### Very good: Clearly above average performance with complete knowledge of the subject matter

### Good: Average performance with knowledge of the subject matter generally complete

### Satisfactory: Basic understanding of the subject matter

### Minimal Pass: marginal performance generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the subject matter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Grade Points</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>95-100</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Outstanding: Superior performance showing understanding and knowledge of the subject matter far exceeding expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90-94</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Excellent. Superior performance showing comprehensive understanding of the subject matter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>86-89</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>Very good: Clearly above average performance with complete knowledge of the subject matter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>82-85</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Very good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>75-81</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Good: Average performance with knowledge of the subject matter generally complete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>70-74</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>66-69</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Satisfactory: Basic understanding of the subject matter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>61-65</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>58-60</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>55-57</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Minimal Pass: marginal performance generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the subject matter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>54-50</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Minimal pass: Marginal performance, generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the subject matter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-49</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Fail: Failure to meet course requirements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Selected Bibliography

Wood, Susan, *Imperial women: a study in public images, 40 BC-AD 68* (Boston 2000);
Bartman, E. *Portraits of Livia: imaging the imperial woman in Augustan Rome* (Cambridge 1999);
Hallett, C., *The Roman nude: heroic portrait statuary 200 BC-AD 300* (Cambridge 2006);
J. Breckenridge, *Likeness; a conceptual history of ancient portraiture* (Evanston IL 1968)
MacDonald, W., *The Architecture of the Roman Empire I* (New Haven 1965);
Ward-Perkins, J., *Roman architecture* (NY 1977);
Jensen, R., *Understanding early Christian art* (London and NY 2000);
Ling, R., *Roman Painting* (Cambridge 1991),  
Bergmann, B., *Roman frescoes from Boscoreale: the Villa of Publius Fannius Synistor in reality and virtual reality* (Yale 2010);  
S. Walker, S., *Ancient faces: mummy portraits from Roman Egypt* (NY 2000);  
Hannestad, N., *Roman Art and Imperial Policy* (Aarhus 1988);  
Torelli, M., *Typology and Structure of Roman Historical Reliefs* (Ann Arbor 1982);  
L. Richardson, *Pompeii: an architectural history* (Baltimore 1988),  
J. Clarke, *Art in the lives of ordinary Romans: visual representation and non-elite viewers in Italy, 100 B.C.-A.D. 315* (Berkeley 2003);  

**Course Syllabus**

**Week 1**

**Class 1** - Intro to the course, maps, chronology, materials  

**Class 2** - Greek and Roman Art in comparison -  


**Week 2**

**Class 1** - Late Republican and Early Imperial Portraits  


**Class 2** - Portraits of Augustus and Vespasian in comparison  


**Week 3**

**Class 1** - The Imperial face: Hadrian  

Class 2 - The Christian Imperial face: Constantine and his followers


FIELD TRIP TO SPOLETO

Week 4

Class 1 - The body in Ancient Art: Greece and Rome

Reading from: Ch. Hallett, The Roman nude: heroic portrait statuary 200 BC-AD 300 (Cambridge 2006)

Class 2 - Exposed and covered body: the Augustus from Prima Porta and the Augustus from Via Labicana


Midterm test

Week 5

Class 1 - The toga in the Roman Imperial Art: shape and style


Class 2 - The Christian body: a reflection on Peter Brown


Week 6

Class 1 - Sacred spaces: columns, walls, pedestals


Class 2 - The open nature: landscapes in Roman paintings

Reading from: B. Bergmann, Roman frescoes from Boscoreale: the Villa of Publius Fannius Synistor in reality and virtual reality, Yale University Press, 2010
FIELD TRIP TO ROME

Week 7

Class 1 - Animals in Roman Imperial Art: style and symbology


Class 2 - Minorities and genders: women, slaves, foreigners


Week 8

Class 1 - Papers presentation and review session

Class 2 - Final test