Using the foundation of ancient imagery from the Ancient Near East, Greece, and Rome, this course will examine that process of visual communication with special attention to the question: How is time represented? While the reading of imagery often seems a natural one to us, the ancient world offers a moment in the history of art when artists were wrestling with—and innovating—ways of telling a narrative that unfolds at different moments over time. We will look, for instance, at narrative programs like the ones displayed on the walls in Neo-Assyrian palaces (which both serve as a record of the king’s accomplishments and symbolically reflect the Empire’s geography) and the victory columns of Rome. We will look at single images that conflate pivotal moments of ritual movement or mythological episodes, and at images that juxtapose moments that seem to have no direct sequential relationship. The following questions, among others, will guide our investigation: How do audiences learn to recognize an abstract concept like “time”? How does narrative imagery in architectural settings shape the audience’s movement through and relationship to space? To what extent do the “reading” of text and image correspond? How does the study of narrative intersect with and impact other concerns in the study of ancient imagery, including political and social functions and cross-cultural exchange? We will make use of objects in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Readings may include K. Weitzmann, Illustrations in Roll and Codex; T. Todorov, Grammar of Narrative; R. Barthes, “An Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative”; G. Genette, Narrative Discourse; Homer, Odyssey; Virgil, Aeneid; Theocritus; Aristotle, Poetics; and Res Gestae Divi Augustus.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

- **Class attendance and participation [20% of final grade]**
  Both are essential to the success of the class and to your success in the class. Persistent unexcused absences or late arrivals to class will adversely affect your final grade. Class work may only be made up in cases of excused absences, which are limited to documented medical and family emergencies.

- **Weekly responses [5% of final grade]**
  These short discussion board posts in response to specific questions are designed to focus your preparation for class on themes and questions that will be relevant in our discussions.

- **Four written assignments [65% of final grade]**
  - Assignment 1 due by 5:00 pm Sept. 30 = 15%
Assignment 2 due by 5:00 pm Oct. 28 = 15%
Assignment 3 due by 5:00 pm Nov. 18 = 20%
Assignment 4 due by 5:00 pm Dec. 9 = 15%

These assignments can be found on the course wiki on the Syllabus and Assignments page. For the grading criteria, please see the “Grading” section, under “Course Policies,” below.

- In-class presentation of Assignment 3 [10% of final grade]

READINGS
This course does not require the purchase of texts. Assigned readings will be available on the course wiki.

COURSE WIKI
Find readings, announcements, assignments, and more on our course wiki!
https://sites.google.com/a/nyu.edu/visual-narrative/

And our discussion board (you can also access it from the wiki)...  
https://atlas.nyu.edu/~IDSEM-UG1647_1_001_FA11  
(Click on “Discussion board” on the left side of the page)

COURSE POLICIES
Electronics
Under no circumstances are calls, texting, email, social networking, online shopping, or web surfing acceptable during class. Your phone should be turned off and put away. You may use your laptop for accessing readings and taking notes only; I trust you to stay engaged with class discussion, and will ask you to put your computer away if it becomes distracting to you or others.

Grading
Grading of all written assignments (including weekly responses) will be based on the following criteria:

- Content (direct and focused engagement with the assigned topic; delineation of a coherent thesis; relevant engagement of primary material and, where relevant, secondary scholarship in support of your thesis)

- Structure (presentation of argument and supporting discussion in a clear and logical way)

- Grammar, punctuation, spelling, and word choice

Late policies
Papers are due on the day assigned at the beginning of class. A paper turned in at any point after they have been collected will be considered one day late. Late papers unaccompanied by written documentation of an excused absence will be reduced 2/3 letter grade per day after the deadline has passed (ie, a B+ will become a B- after one day late, a C after 2 days, and so on). Please note that notification of an absence does not automatically qualify as an excused absence.
Because the weekly responses are designed to stimulate discussion and to raise questions in class, late responses will not be accepted.

**Incomplete**
Grades of Incomplete will only be given in cases of documented medical or family emergencies that interfere with your ability to complete coursework in a timely manner. Before requesting an Incomplete, please familiarize yourself with Gallatin’s school-wide policies at [http://www.gallatin.nyu.edu/academics/policies/policy/grades/incompletePolicy.html](http://www.gallatin.nyu.edu/academics/policies/policy/grades/incompletePolicy.html)

**Citation of sources**
As a Gallatin student you belong to an interdisciplinary community of artists and scholars who value honest and open intellectual inquiry. This relationship depends on mutual respect, responsibility, and integrity. Failure to uphold these values will be subject to severe sanction, which may include dismissal from the University. Examples of behaviors that compromise the academic integrity of the Gallatin School include plagiarism, illicit collaboration, doubling or recycling coursework, and cheating. Please consult the Gallatin Bulletin or Gallatin website [www.gallatin.nyu.edu/academics/policies/policy/integrity.html](http://www.gallatin.nyu.edu/academics/policies/policy/integrity.html) for a full description of the academic integrity policy.

If you have any questions about proper citation or about what constitutes plagiarism, *please feel free to ask me!*

Be careful of using the internet as a source: there is a great deal of misinformation out there, particularly about the ancient world. As a general rule, it is best not to use websites ending in .com or .net, and it is in your interest to check with me before citing any information found online for your research in this class. You will be held responsible for the integrity of any information gleaned from internet sources. Use the internet, but use it to find dependable sources.

**COURSE CALENDAR**
While I do my best to stay on schedule, the calendar is subject to change at any point during the semester, in order to accommodate the needs and interests of the class.

Readings should be completed for Monday’s class each week, unless otherwise indicated.

**Week 1**
W. Sept. 7: Introduction

**Week 2**
M. Sept. 12: Orienting you historically ... the periods and media we’ll encounter
W. Sept. 14: Narration and reception

Read for this week:


**Week 3**
M. Sept. 19: The challenges of visual narrative  
W. Sept. 21: Narrative terminology

Read for this week:
• Read **one** of the following articles from the online journal *Image [&] Narrative*:
  o Narration in Comics:  
  o The Burden of Coherence:  
  o The Semiotics of Music Videos:  

Post to the discussion group (by 9:00 am on Monday, Sept. 19):
• What are the challenges or difficulties of representing narrative visually, as discussed in your *Image [&] Narrative* article?

**FRIDAY, SEPT. 23. Trip to the Metropolitan Museum of Art.**
There are two options for times: 5:30 pm or 7:00 pm.  
Classes will be held in the Near Eastern, Greek, and Roman galleries and will last approximately one hour. We will meet in the main lobby.  
The Met is located at 1000 Fifth Avenue at East 82nd Street; get directions at [www.metmuseum.org](http://www.metmuseum.org).  
This trip is a required component of the course, and will contribute to your Attendance and Participation grade.

**Week 4**
M. Sept. 26: Myth, history, genre: Determining subject  
W. Sept. 28: Image and text  
**F. Sept. 30, 5:00 pm: Assignment 1 due**

Read for this week:
• Homer, *Odyssey* Books 9-10 (for Wednesday).

**Week 5**
M. Oct. 3: Chronological sequence: Heroic deeds  
W. Oct. 5: Geographic sequence: Shalmaneser's bronze gates

Read for this week:

Post to the discussion group for this week (by 9:00 am on Wed., Oct. 5):

• Who do you think is the intended audience of the monuments discussed in the Winter and Marcus articles? How might our reaction to these monuments differ from the intended audience’s?

**Week 6**
M. Oct. 10: NO CLASS, University-wide.
W. Oct. 12: NO CLASS, Museum trip 1 held in lieu of this class

**F. Oct. 14, 5:00 pm: Annotated bibliography for Assignment 3 due**

**Week 7**
M. Oct. 17: Time and landscape: Sennacherib’s reliefs
W. Oct. 19: Time and landscape: Te-Umman’s head

Read for this week:

Post to the discussion group for this week (by 9:00 pm on Wed., Oct. 19):

• How do Sennacherib’s and Assurbanipal’s reliefs differ visually from one another? How might these visual differences affect the audience’s relationship to the narrative?

**Week 8**
M. Oct. 24: Reading stories in space
W. Oct. 26: Reading stories in space

Read for this week:

Post to the discussion group (by 9:00 am, Monday, Oct. 24):

• Each of these articles discuss how architecture and architectural decoration contribute to a visitor’s orientation in and movement through space. Think of a parallel example from your own experience, and compare it to one of the examples described in this week’s readings.

**FRIDAY, OCT. 21. Trip to St. Ann and the Holy Trinity [tentative]**
We will meet at noon at the main entrance to the Cathedral. The Cathedral is located at 157 Montague Street in Brooklyn. It is easily accessible by a number of trains, including the R; get directions at [http://www.saintannandtheholytrinity.org/contact-us/](http://www.saintannandtheholytrinity.org/contact-us/).
Week 9
M. Oct. 31. Cosmological narratives: Hellenistic Pergamon
W. Nov. 2. Cosmological narratives: Imperial Rome
F. Oct. 28, 5:00 pm: Assignment 2 due

Read for this week:
• *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* (for Wednesday).
• Virgil, *Aeneid* Book 8 (for Wednesday).

Week 10
M. Nov. 7. Cosmological narratives: Imperial Persia
W. Nov. 9. Cosmological narratives: Imperial Persia

Read for this week:
• Inscriptions of Darius I from the tomb at Naqshi-Rustam and Bisitun.

Post to discussion group (by 9:00 am on Monday, Nov. 7):
• Are the imperial images discussed in Briant images of narratives? What are some of the ways in which the images seem to be organized?

Week 11
M. Nov. 14. Narrating ritual
W. Nov. 16. House of the Mosaics, Eretria
F. Nov. 18, 5:00 pm. Assignment 3 due

Read for this week:

Week 12
M. Nov. 21. NO CLASS, Museum trip 2 held in lieu of this class.

HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

Week 13
M. Nov. 28. Student presentations
W. Nov. 30. Student presentations

**FRIDAY, DEC. 2. Trip to the Metropolitan Museum of Art**
There are two options for times: 5:30 pm or 7:00 pm.
Classes will be held in the Near Eastern, Greek, and Roman galleries and will last approximately one hour. We will meet in the main lobby.
The Met is located at 1000 Fifth Avenue at East 82nd Street; get directions at www.metmuseum.org.
This trip is a required component of the course, and will contribute to your Attendance and Participation grade.
**Week 14**
M. Dec. 5. Student presentations
W. Dec. 7. Student presentations
F. Dec. 9, 5:00 pm: Assignment 4 due

**Week 15**
Dec. 12. Student presentations
Dec. 14. Conclusion