BARRIANS!: Ancient Conceptions of the Outsider
IDSEM UG-1593
The Gallatin School of Individualized Study
New York University
Spring 2012
MW 9:30-10:45 AM (1 Washington Pl., room 601)

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Office hours: Tuesdays 10:00-noon; Wednesdays 11-noon
Please make an appointment during my office hours by following the link available on the course wiki.

COURSE DESCRIPTION
The conceptions of people outside of one’s own culture are complex and multi-layered, and this was as true in the ancient world as it is today. From the conquered Elamites that were depicted on the palace walls of the Neo-Assyrian Assurbanipal, to the mythical Ethiopians of Homer’s epics, to the Gauls with whom Julius Caesar did battle, descriptions and representations of other kinds of peoples not only acknowledge what is different about the world, but also serve as a backdrop against which a distinctive sense of cultural identity is clarified and reinforced. This seminar will explore the representation of those foreign peoples in the visual arts and literature of the ancient Near Eastern, Greek, and Roman worlds. Using ancient visual (reliefs, vase-painting, sculpture, mosaics, and wall-painting) and written (inscriptions, epic poetry, drama, histories, novels) sources, we will engage the following issues: What role do local ideals play in the construction and definition of another culture? What are the political or social motivations for the appearance of foreigners in ancient art and literature? To what extent does the definition of “other” reflect definition of “self”?
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance and Participation (20%)
Reading notes (10%)

For every reading that you complete for this course, you should prepare a series of notes that describes the argument, evidence, and/or perspective of that reading, and that includes three questions or themes that the reading raises for you (see attached worksheet). For each day that we discuss a new reading, you should submit your notes to me either in hard copy at the start of class or electronically before class begins.

Assignments [3 written assignments] (60% total)

- Paper 1 (20%), due Wednesday, Feb. 29 in class. 7 pages.
- Paper 2 (20%), due Wednesday, Apr. 4 in class. 7 pages.
- Paper 3 (20%), due Friday, May 4 by 5 PM. 7 pages.

Presentations [two in-class group presentations] (10%)
Given in Weeks 7 (15 minutes) and 14 (30 minutes)

GRADING

Grading of assignments 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

READINGS

The following texts have been ordered and are available at Shakespeare & Company bookstore (716 Broadway @ Washington Place):


Other readings are available via the course wiki under the “Readings” link.

COURSE WIKI

Find readings, announcements, assignments, and more on our course wiki!
https://sites.google.com/a/nyu.edu/barbarians/
(Not findable online: log in to NYU home and then type in the link)
COURSE POLICIES

Electronics
Electronics, including laptops and cell phones, should be turned off and put away during class.

Late policies
Papers are due on the day assigned and at the time assigned. Late papers will not be accepted except in cases of documented medical or family emergency, and with prior written permission from the instructor.

Because the reading notes are designed to stimulate discussion and to raise questions in class, late notes will not be accepted under any circumstances.

Incompletes
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

Expectation of Academic Integrity
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. Such behaviors are subject to sanction regardless of intent; in other words, accidental violations are still violations, and will be treated as such. For a full description of the academic integrity policy, please consult the Gallatin Bulletin or Gallatin website [www.gallatin.nyu.edu/academics/policies/policy/integrity.html].

If you have any questions about how to cite properly or about what constitutes plagiarism, please feel free to ask me!

In addition, please know that the internet is not a reliable source for papers written for this class: there is a great deal of misinformation out there, particularly about the ancient world. Websites ending in .com, .net, or .org are not acceptable sources for your papers, 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. If you are having trouble locating information in other media, please let me know and I'll be happy to help you.
YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES
A syllabus serves not only as a layout for the semester, but also as a contract between the instructor and you as a student. By remaining enrolled in this class, you agree to uphold your responsibilities as outlined here.

Attend class. The core of this class is our discussion in the classroom, and so your presence is essential to the success of the class and to your success in the class. More than two unexcused absences or persistent late arrivals to class will severely affect your final grade; excused absences are limited to documented medical and family emergencies and religious holidays.

Come to every class prepared and ready to participate. When class begins, you should have completed the assigned readings and your reading notes, and you should have in front of you a hard copy of the text(s) under discussion that day. You should also come with the expectation that you will fully engage in class discussion: Attendance does not constitute participation, and participation should be informed by the readings. Further, you are expected to stay awake during class, to give the discussion your full attention, and to refrain from the use of electronics.

Turn in your assignments completed, proofread, and on time. This means budgeting your time carefully, starting on the first day of class, and giving yourself time to reflect upon and proofread everything that you turn in. This also means that your assignments should be completed in accordance with NYU/Gallatin’s policy on academic integrity (see Course Policies).

Be respectful. Everyone comes to this class from a different background, with different kinds of knowledge, and with different questions. Because of this, it is especially important that every student be responsible for helping to create and maintain a classroom environment in which everyone else feels comfortable asking questions and contributing to discussion. Any behavior that diminishes the contribution of another student—including comments, gestures, and attitudes in class, as well as any comments about class, class discussion, or other students in a public forum or online—is unacceptable and will be severely sanctioned.

This does not mean that we all have to agree all the time: I invite debate, in fact, both between students and with me, but disagreement should be expressed in productive and respectful ways.
COURSE CALENDAR
We will do our best to stay on schedule, but the calendar is subject to change at any point during the semester, in order to accommodate the needs and interests of the class.

Each week’s readings should be completed for Monday, unless otherwise indicated.

Week 1
M. Jan. 23. Introduction, review of syllabus, mapping the ancient world
W. Jan. 25. A brief overview of the Neo-Assyrians, Persians, Greeks, and Romans

Week 2
M. Jan. 30. Sovereign power and conquered peoples in Mesopotamia
W. Feb. 1. Representing the Empire in Neo-Assyria

Read for this week:

Week 3
M. Feb. 6. The Persian Empire
W. Feb. 8. Representing the Empire in Persia

Read for this week:
The Bisitun Inscription (Parts 1 and 2)

Friday, Feb. 10. Trip to the Metropolitan Museum of Art.
There are two options for times: 4:30 pm or 6:00 pm. The tours will cover the same material, so you only have to attend one. Classes will be held in the Ancient 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 4
M. Feb. 13. The Persian Wars
W. Feb. 15. *The Persians*

Read for this week:
Aeschylus, *The Persians*.

Week 5
M. Feb. 20. President’s Day: No class
W. Feb. 22. Said’s Orientalism and *The Persians*

Read for this week:

Week 6
M. Feb. 27. 300
W. Feb. 29. 300

Read for this week:

*Wednesday, Feb 29 in class. Paper 1 due.* Using specific examples from Aeschylus’ *The Persians* and from the Persian material (visual and textual) we have covered in class, compare the characterization of the Persian king as it is presented in the respective Greek and Persian sources. 7 pages.

Week 7
M. Mar. 5. Prep for Wednesday’s presentation
W. Mar. 7. **In-class presentations:** Propaganda program (15-minutes/group)

**SPRING BREAK, MAR. 12-16**
**Week 8**

**M. Mar. 19.** *The Bacchae*
**W. Mar. 21.** Voltaire’s *Mahomet*.

**Special guest: Prof. Christopher Cartmill. Please plan to stay, if possible, for extended discussion from 11:00-12:15.**

Read for this week:
Euripides, *The Bacchae*

**Week 9**

**M. Mar. 26.** *Medea*
**W. Mar. 28.** *The Aethiopika* and Ethiopians

Read for this week:
Euripides, *Medea*
Heliodorus, *Aethiopika*, chapters 1, 9-10.

**Week 10**

**M. Apr. 2.** Herodotus’ Scythians
**W. Apr. 4.** Herodotus: Historian or ethnographer?

Read for this week:
Herodotus, Book 7 [selection].

**Wednesday, Apr. 4 in class.** Paper 2 due. There are 2 options for this paper; choose one.

**Option 1:** Choose an object from the images posted on the course wiki on the page “Paper 2 images.” Describe the image. How is the “barbarian” recognized and depicted in this image? Compare the “barbarian” figure(s) to one of the visual examples of “the Greek norm” that we encountered during our Feb. 10 trip to the Met. How does the image of the barbarian illuminate or complicate expectations about “the Greek norm”? 7 pages.

**Option 2:** Euripides’ *Bacchae* and *Medea* blur various boundaries between Greek and foreigner, male and female, human and divine. Choose either Medea or Dionysus as s/he is represented in the tragedy. Using specific examples from the text, write an analysis of the character. How does s/he complicate “the Greek norm” in the play? 7 pages.

**Week 11**

**M. Apr. 9.** The Gauls
**W. Apr. 11.** NO CLASS (our trip to the Met on Feb. 10 held in lieu of this class)

Read for this week:
Caesar, *The Gallic Wars* [selection].

**Week 12**

**M. Apr. 16.** The Egyptians  
**W. Apr. 18.** Cleopatra, the barbarian queen

Read for this week:  
Juvenal 15.  
Plutarch, *Life of Antony* [selection].  
Shakespeare, *Antony and Cleopatra* [selection].

**Week 13**

**M. Apr. 23.** The Triumphal Procession  
**W. Apr. 25.** Prep for next week's presentations

Read for this week:  
One article or source for your Roman Monument presentation (for Wednesday).

**Week 14**

**M. Apr. 30.** In-class presentations: Column of Trajan, Arch of Titus  
**W. May 2.** In-class presentations: Arch of Septimius Severus, Column of Marcus Aurelius

**Friday, May 4, 5:00 pm.** Paper 3 due. There are 2 options for this paper; choose one.  
**Option 1:** On our wiki (under the Paper 3 Images link) are three early modern images of Roman enemies (Vercingetorix, Jugurtha, Thusnelda). Choose one, identify this individual, and briefly situate him/her in his/her ancient historical context (including the circumstances under which he or she came into contact with the Romans). Then discuss the painting in its historical context: Why might this ancient individual have been a meaningful subject in this early modern context? How has the image adopted or adapted the ancient subject? This paper will require research; you should include a minimum of one primary source and 6 secondary sources. 7 pages.  
**Option 2:** In conversation with me, design your own research topic based on a text or image you’ve encountered this semester. This paper should involve research; you should include a minimum of one primary source and 6 secondary sources. 7 pages.

**Week 15**

**M. May 7.** Wrapping up.