Egyptomania! Past and Present

Syllabus and Reading Guide

Instructor:
Dr. Emily Cole
E-mail: ec124@nyu.edu
Office: TBD
Office hours: Thursday 2-5

Time: Thursday 11-1:30
Place: TBD

From early explorers, Napoleon’s expedition, and curious tourists to the modern pop recreation by Katy Perry and the Assassin’s Creed videogame franchise, the land and cultures of Egypt have held a fascination for millennia. The backdrop of the Nile and its seemingly timeless monuments have provided a source of inspiration and mystery since the Greeks and Romans encountered Egyptian culture in the 6th and 7th centuries. But why do we remain so intrigued by this culture? What are the sources of this interest? And what can be learned about modern historical practice and prejudice from the phenomenon known as “Egyptomania”?

This course will introduce students to issues that relate to how we interpret, write, and portray historical facts over time. We will read original historical sources that span the range from Ancient pharaonic Egypt through to the present day. Students will be asked to consider how contemporary issues of cultural appropriation, media portrayal, and stereotype are reflected in the obsession that has surrounded Egyptian culture, from Classical authors discussing the Egyptian queen Cleopatra to modern Egyptian scholars arguing for the repatriation of Egyptian objects. We will explore what “Egyptomania” means for our modern understanding of history and its place in society.

By the end of this course, students will be able:

- To understand the roots of Egyptomania and its defining features
- To discuss social concepts related to studying past cultures
- To evaluate modern approaches in scholarship of past cultures
- To articulate their ideas in a concise manner in short written work
- To interact and respond to their peers in a group-learning situation
- To write a thoughtful and articulate paper on a comparative topic of their choosing
Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attendance and Participation</th>
<th>20%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Reading Responses</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response Papers (x2)</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term Paper</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Topic</td>
<td>2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Outline</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Presentation of Topic</td>
<td>13%</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Final Paper</td>
<td>25%</td>
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**Attendance:**
Attendance will be taken each class. Students are expected to be on time and ready for discussion. Absences will be counted for any students without a valid medical excuse. If you will have to miss class for some reason, please tell me at the beginning of the semester.

**Participation:**
The format of this class is a seminar, which means that discussion of the readings and your thoughts are crucial to getting the most out of the course. Students will be expected to listen to and respond to their peers in a thoughtful and clear way. Contributions may include thoughts on the assigned readings, topics related to the class, or questions regarding the theories that are presented. Simply agreeing with your fellow student does not constitute a reasonable addition unless it is qualified or somehow adds to the discussion.

*Laptop Policy:* Students are not permitted to have their laptops in class except for when class assignments require it. Students who have learning requirements should come and discuss their situation with me.

**Readings and Weekly Responses:**
All required course readings will be available on the class website. There will be between 40-80 pages of reading a week that must be completed before class. With difficult articles or materials, a reading guide will be provided. Good notetaking practices are necessary. These include identifying the main argument made by the author, questioning the evidence he or she uses to support the argument, and noting down your own questions that come up as you do the reading.

In order to ensure that the readings are clear and are being completed on time, students will be required to submit a weekly reading report to the course website. The reports will be short responses that will highlight the argument or content of the reading, the main points raised by the author(s), and difficulties encountered within the text. Responses will be due by 5pm on the day prior to class.

**Response Papers:**
Students will have to complete two response papers during the semester, which will each be worth 5% of their grade. These papers will be 3-4 pages in length and examine an example of Egyptian revival from the 18-19th centuries and 20th-21st centuries, respectively. Specifics of the assignment will be provided in class.
Term Paper:
The long paper (10-12 pages) will be developed over the course of the semester and will involve identifying a topic of cultural revival and investigating its significance in contemporary society. Students are encouraged to come to office hours to discuss the paper topic early in the quarter so that issues can be avoided later on. Each stage of the paper writing will be graded in order to keep you on track to finish by the end of the semester. A handout with a full breakdown of the paper requirements and deadlines will be provided in the first week of classes.

Extra Credit:
New York has some great examples of Egyptian revival architecture and décor. As an extra credit assignment worth up to 3% on top of your grade, you can submit a report on one example of this architecture to the course website. To get the credit, you must visit the location and take a selfie there. Post the picture to the course website along with a few paragraphs of description (at least 8-10 sentences) of how it is reviving Egyptian architecture, when it was built or made, and how it fits into the history of New York. References are not required, but you are welcome to include them.

Calendar of Due Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February 22\textsuperscript{nd} (Week 5)</td>
<td>Response paper 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 8\textsuperscript{th} (Week 7)</td>
<td>Paper topic</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 22\textsuperscript{nd} (Week 8)</td>
<td>Response paper 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 5\textsuperscript{th} (Week 10)</td>
<td>Paper outline</td>
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<td>May 3\textsuperscript{rd} (Week 14)</td>
<td>Paper presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 11\textsuperscript{th} (Exam week)</td>
<td>Final paper</td>
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Grading Scale:
Final grades are non-negotiable. Please come and discuss any problems with me as they occur rather than at the end of the course.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Achievement Level</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-100</td>
<td>Student has an excellent knowledge of the history of Egyptomania. He or she has contributed regularly in class with well-thought out and relevant comments or questions. Student has written an excellent and articulate research paper with a strong thesis and evidence to support the argument.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-93</td>
<td>Student has a good knowledge of the history of Egyptomania. He or she has contributed regularly in class with well-thought out and relevant comments or questions. Student has written a good and articulate research paper with a thesis and evidence to support the argument.</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>Student has a satisfactory knowledge of the history of Egyptomania. He or she has contributed regularly in class with some relevant comments or questions. Student has written a decent paper research paper with a thesis and some evidence to support the argument.</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84-86</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-83</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>74-76</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-73</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>64-66</td>
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<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60-63</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-59</td>
<td>Student has failed to complete the requirements for this class.</td>
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Academic Policies:
If you are ill or unable to make it to class for any reason, please email as far in advance as possible. Any missed assignment must have a written medical excuse in order to be made up, otherwise a zero grade will be given. Late assignments will be marked down by one letter category (A → A-) per day they are late up to a total of 7 days at which point an F grade will be given. This policy is also non-negotiable.

Cheating and/or plagiarism will result in an “F” grade for the entire course and will be reported to university officials as outlined by the university (https://www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/policies-and-guidelines/academic-integrity-for-students-at-nyu.html).

Student Accommodations:
Students with disabilities have the legal right to access disability-based support services designed to facilitate successful completion of their academic program. They are responsible for making use of what Disabilities Resources for Students are available (https://www.nyu.edu/life/safety-health-wellness/students-with-disabilities.html), and I will gladly accommodate whatever is suggested by that office. Please be sure to talk to me at the beginning of the semester if you are going to make use of these services.

Cover Images: Foire du Caire (1828), Paris and Katy Perry, “Dark Horse”
Reading Guide

***All readings subject to change at instructor’s discretion***

I – Egyptian Antiquity

Week 1 (January 25th):
Introduction – What is Egyptomania?

Week 2 (February 1st):
Short Introduction to Egypt and Egyptian History

Readings:

Paper Preparation:
- What is a research paper and what will it require?

Week 3 (February 8th):
Egyptian Concepts of Race, Ethnicity, and History

Primary Sources:

Readings:

Paper Preparation:
- Visit to Bobst Library and introduction to reference sources
II – Chronological Development of Egyptomania

Week 4 (February 15th):
Greek Historians and Egypt

Primary Sources:

Readings:

Paper Preparation:
- Coming up with a paper topic: brainstorming, reference hunting, and refining

Week 5 (February 22nd):
Cleopatra and the Legacy of Rome

Primary Sources:
- Cleopatra in contemporary cinema

Readings:

Paper Preparation:
- Working with primary source material: close readings and analysis

Assignment:
- Response paper 1 due. Please bring a printed copy of your paper to class.
**Week 6 (March 1st):**
Lost to the West, Found in the East: Medieval Knowledge of Egypt

**Primary Sources:**
- Horapollo, *Hieroglyphica* (selections)

**Readings:**
  - Review: [http://www.egyptologyforum.org/reviews/Missing1000.html](http://www.egyptologyforum.org/reviews/Missing1000.html) [Accessed 2017-10-06]
- Westerfeld, Jennifer. Forthcoming. *Fantastic Images: Reading Hieroglyphs in Christian Late Antiquity*.

**Paper Preparation:**
- What is a thesis sentence? What is an argument? Creating a research question.

**Week 7 (March 8th):**
Renaissance Rediscovery of Classical Viewpoints and Early Travelers

**Primary Sources:**
- Shakespeare, *Anthony and Cleopatra* (selections)

**Readings:**

**Assignments:**
- Term paper topic due. Please bring a printed copy to class.

**No Class March 15th – Spring Break**
Week 8 (March 22nd):
Napoleon’s Expedition and the Decipherment of Hieroglyphs

Primary Sources:
- Jean-François Champollion, “Lettre à M. Dacier relative à l'alphabet des hiéroglyphes phonétiques” (1822) and Précis du système hiéroglyphique des anciens Égyptiens (1824) in translation

Readings:

Paper Preparation:
- Drafting an outline

Assignment:
- Response paper 2 due. Please bring a printed copy of your paper to class.

III – Themes of Egyptomania

Week 9 (March 29th):
Orientalism: Art and Architecture of the 19th-20th Centuries

Primary Sources:
- Selection of art historical sources and 18th-19th century travel diaries

Readings:

Paper Preparation:
- Choosing appropriate sources – the pitfalls of online research
Week 10 (April 5th):
Mysticism and the Occult: Alchemy, Rosicrucian, and Masonic Orders

Primary Sources:
- “The Emerald Tablet” translated

Readings:

Assignment:
- Term paper detailed outline due. Please bring a printed copy to class.

Week 11 (April 12th):
Mummies: King Tutankhamun as Social Phenomenon

Primary Sources:
- “Old King Tut” by Leo Fitzpatrick, Roger Lewis, and Lucien Denni (1923)
- The Mummy (1932), The Mummy (1999); Saturday Night Live (April 22, 1978) “King Tut” by Steve Martin and the Toot Uncommons

Readings:

Paper Preparation:
- Writing effective topic sentences, transitions, and road-mapping your argument

Week 12 (April 19th):
Museums and Collecting: Visit to the Metropolitan Museum of Art

Readings:
**Week 13 (April 26th):**
**21st Century Responsible History: Who does the past belong to?**

**Primary Sources:**
- Selection of newspaper articles about canceled Egypt-themed party at the University of Michigan from August 2017 (Michigan Daily, New York Post, etc.)

**Readings:**

**Paper Preparation:**
- Editing Strategies
- How to give an effective presentation of your research

**IV – Conclusion and Paper Review**

**Week 14 (May 3rd):**
**Paper Presentations**

**Assignment:**
- Create a 5 minute presentation with 5 slides of your paper topic

**Exam Week (May 7th-11th)**

Term paper due: May 11th