Lecture and Recitation Sections:
M-W 9:30 – 10:45 am  Silver 520  Ann Macy Roth
F  9:30 – 10:45 am  Waverley 433  Jennifer Babcock
F  11:00 am – 12:15 pm  Waverley 433  Jennifer Babcock
F  12:30– 1:45 pm  Waverley 433  Emily Smith
F  2:00 – 3:15 pm  Waverley 433  Emily Smith

Course Faculty:
Professor: Ann Macy Roth – ann.macy.roth@nyu.edu
  Office Hours: Mondays 11–12:15, Wednesdays 12:30–1:45; and by appointment
  Office Location: Silver 303-A8; Office Telephone: (212) 998-8991

Recitation Instructor: Jennifer Babcock – Jennifer.Babcock@nyu.edu
  Office Hours: Fridays 12:30–1:45, and by appointment
  Office Location: Silver 303-A8; Office Telephone: (212) 998-8991

Recitation Instructor: Emily Smith – egs314@nyu.edu
  Office Hours: 11:00–12:15, and by appointment
  Office Location: Silver 303-A8; Office Telephone: (212) 998-8991

Course Aims:
Cultures & Contexts courses are intended to teach students about cultures that differ from their own, to demonstrate that there are many different but equally valid systems of beliefs and ideas that people construct to live in the world. The Egyptians of the Old Kingdom, or Pyramid Age, developed one of the first human high cultures. From roughly 2700-2150 BCE, in a community of comparative stability and isolation, they developed traditions of sophisticated art and literature, clearly marked social and political hierarchies, monumental architecture, a complex system of religious and cosmological beliefs, and ideologies of kingship.

Such an ancient culture must be reconstructed from what it has left behind. In this course, we will examine the character of early Egyptian culture, using a variety of primary sources—texts (literature, religious writings, letters, and administrative documents) and material culture (works of art, architecture, archaeological remains). Students will learn how scholars analyze this material to reconstruct Old Kingdom cultural life and use these methods themselves to gain insight into the Egyptians' religious beliefs, social forms and organizations, and the conventions and achievements of their literature, art, and architecture, as well as to critically evaluate the interpretations and reconstructions in the secondary scholarship.
Course Requirements and Grading:
All grades will be assigned on a 100 point scale and calculated according to the weight of the grade. Attendance at all lectures and section and all assigned readings are required. According to Core Guidelines, no more than 10% of students will receive As, and no more than 15% will receive A-s. (The official NYU grading scale is reproduced at the end of this syllabus.)

Attendance (5%): You will be asked to sign an attendance sheet for each lecture. Initially, your grade is 100%. Once your unexcused absences have exceeded a (low) threshold, your total absences will be multiplied by 5% and subtracted from this. (Religious holidays and documented medical emergencies are excused absences.)

Section Grade (15%): This grade will be assigned by your section instructor, based on section attendance and participation and completion of section assignments. See your section syllabus for details.

Essays (35%): You will be asked to write four short essays on assigned topics, due February 12th, March 19th, April 11th, and May 7th. The first essay will be at least 3 pages (1000 words) and worth 5% of your grade; the remaining essays will be at least 6 pages (2000 words) and be worth 10% of your grade. Spelling, grammar, writing style, organization, and argumentation are important for these essays. Your section instructors will explain and help you practice the analysis necessary.

Midterm Exam (15%): There will be a midterm exam given in class on Monday, March 26th. It will include objective and essay components, and it will cover material from the readings, lectures, and sections up to that point, including primary sources, interpretations, and a map. Make-up exams can only be taken with a verified medical or similarly serious excuse approved by Prof. Roth.

Final Exam (30%): A final exam, of the same format as the Midterm Exam but slightly longer, will be given in our regular classroom on Wednesday, May 9th, 8:00 – 9:50 a.m. This is the scheduled exam time for this class, and it cannot be changed. As with the Midterm Exam, any make-ups must be approved by the instructor, and they will only be approved for a very pressing, usually medical, reason. DO NOT make (or let your parents make) airline reservations to leave town before the exam. This will not be regarded as a valid reason to take the exam early.

Required Books:
Course readings will be from the following four books. The first three are available at the NYU bookstore and elsewhere. The fourth can be downloaded or read on-line at its Metropolitan Museum website page. The readings assignments are indicated in this syllabus using the headings given here.

Lichtheim: Miriam Lichtheim, Ancient Egyptian Literature I. Berkeley: Univ. of Calif., 1973

Readings will be assigned from these books and from additional texts posted on NYU Classes. To keep the reading coherent, not all readings will exactly match the lecture. Note: Recitation Instructors may assign additional readings.
Schedule of Lectures & Reading Assignments

Reading assignments may be done before or after the lecture or both

Week 1
Monday, January 22 – Course Overview & Egyptian Geographical Concepts
  MMA: xvi-xvii
Wednesday, January 24 – Egyptian Kingship & History
  Málek: 7-11; MMA: xix-xx, 3-11; Lehner: 6-9; Lichtheim 3-11

Week 2
Monday, January 29 – Egyptian Hieroglyphic Writing
  PDF: Gardiner, Nature...
Wednesday, January 31 – Egyptian Art and Artistic Conventions
  MMA: 56-71; 102-116

Week 3
Monday, February 5 – Egyptian Religion and Cosmogony
  Lehner: 20-31, 34-35; Lichtheim 51-57
Wednesday, February 7 – The Nagada Culture and the Unification of Egypt
  Málek: 13-29

Week 4
Monday, February 12 – Abydos and Saqqara: The Earliest Kings – Essay #1 Due
  Málek: 30-37; Lehner: 72-8
Wednesday, February 14 – The Step Pyramid Complex of Djoser
  MMA: 12-20; 168-188; Lehner: 82-96

Week 5
Monday, February 19 – PRESIDENT’S DAY – NO CLASS
Wednesday, February 21 – King Snefru and the Invention of Public Relations
  Lehner: 12-19, 59-70, 97-105; MMA: 139-165; PDF: Roth: Social Change

Week 6
Monday, February 26 – Giza: the Plateau and Problem of Hetepheres I
  PDFs: MFA, Boston, reports on the discovery of Hetepheres’ tomb, Lehner’s views
Wednesday, February 28 – Giza: the Pyramids, the Sphinx, and the Khufu Boats
  Lehner: 106-139; MMA: 20-25, 50-55, 252-279

Week 7
Monday, March 5 – The Egyptian Administration and the Organization of Labor
  Lehner: 202-225, 230-237; MMA 280-282; PDF: Strudwick Admin
Wednesday, March 9 – Giza South and the Red Sea Ports
  PDFs: Lehner Lost City; Lehner Lost City Update 2-3, 7-9, 16;
  Tallet Marouard Harbor of Khufu; Tallet Marouard Harbor Facilities

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SPRING BREAK (March 12 & 14) ♫♪ ♫
Week 8
Monday, March 19 – The Sun Kings of the Fifth Dynasty – Essay #2 Due
Wednesday, March 21 – Old Kingdom Literature: Instructions
Lichtheim: 58-80 (Hardjedef, Kagemni, Ptahhotep); Málek: 87-101

Week 9
Monday, March 26 – Midterm Exam
Wednesday, March 28 – Law and Economics in the Old Kingdom
Málek: 65-85; PDF: Strudwick Law & Econ

Week 10
Monday, April 2 – Old Kingdom Officials and their Tombs
Málek: 103-115; MMA 26-49, 56-81
Wednesday, April 4 – Analyzing Old Kingdom Autobiographies
Lichtheim: 15-27; PDF Strudwick Biographies

Week 11
Monday, April 9 – Decorating Tomb Chapels
MMA: 229-251, 362-417, 456-475; Strudwick Tomb Chapels
Wednesday, April 11 – Gender in the Old Kingdom – Essay #3 Due
PDFs: Reeder: Queer Egyptologies; Tyldesley: Old Kingdom Queens

Week 12
Monday, April 16 – The Abu Sir Papyri & Royal Mortuary Cults
MMA: 348-351; Lichtheim: 28; PDF: Strudwick Abu Sir
Wednesday, April 18 – The Pyramid Texts
Lehner: 31-33, 153-163; Lichtheim: 29-50; PDFs: Allen PT Sample; Allen Reading a Pyramid

Week 13
Monday, April 23 – Houses and Towns
MMA: 418-431, 446-455
Wednesday, April 25 – Wen of Abydos and the Rise of the Provinces
PDF: Richards; Lichtheim: 18-23 (re-read)

Week 14
Monday, April 30 – The End of the Old Kingdom
Málek: 117-123; MMA: 434-455; Lichtheim 83-93
Wednesday, May 2 – The Afterlife of the Old Kingdom
Lichtheim: 139-145 (Neferti), 215-222 (Westcar); PDF: Pepi II & the General; Setne I

Week 15
Monday, May 7 – The Pyramid Age in the Western Tradition – Essay #4 Due
Lehner: 36-58, 240-243

Final Exam: Wednesday, May 9th, 8:00 - 9:50 a.m.
Outline of Assignments:
These are very summary descriptions of the short essay assignments that will be required for this class. **You will be given handouts for each assignment that include essential information for completing it, suggestions about specific questions to address, guidance in the required format, and possible systems of organization.**

**Essay #1** – (3 pages, 1000 words) – The King and his Officials
*Due February 12th*
In a very brief essay, discuss some of the letters that King Izezi, King Pepi II, and King Neferkauhor wrote to their officials. These six letters were inscribed in the tomb chapels of their recipients or, in the last case in a local temple. You will be asked to use short excerpts from the texts to illustrate what these letters tell us about the king and his officials, applying some of the Egyptian cultural concepts introduced during the introductory lectures. Descriptions of the position of these texts in the tombs and images of them will be posted to help you with your interpretation.

**Essay #2** – (6 pages/2000 words) – The Mystery of Queen Hetepheres: A Critique
*Due March 19th*
George Andrew Reisner and Mark Lehner have both tried to make sense of a rather mysterious burial that Reisner excavated in 1925 east of the Great Pyramid of Khufu. This burial has been identified as tomb equipment belonging to Hetepheres I, Khufu's mother, and therefore probably Snefru's wife. In addition to readings about the burial and its interpretation, the problem will be presented in lecture on February 26th, discussion the various different reconstructions. In your essay, you will evaluate these reconstructions, based on the evidence, and explain which you think is the most convincing and why.

**Essay #3** – (6 pages/2000 words) – Egyptian-Western Comparison: Texts
*Due April 11th*
Old Kingdom Egyptian texts sometimes fulfilled purposes that are familiar to western readers. The wisdom of old men advised young men how to succeed in life, the biographies of the dead are recounted to memorialize them, and official texts made the rulers look good. For this assignment, you are asked to choose an example of these types of literature and to compare it to a corresponding example from the western tradition, pointing out similarities and differences, and discussing what is distinctly Egyptian about the Egyptian example. You will be given a list of likely Egyptian texts and suggestions about where to look for comparative examples.

**Essay #4** – (6 pages 2000 words) – Egyptian-Western Comparison: Art & Artifacts
*Due May 7th*
Like texts, objects created by the Old Kingdom Egyptians are often similar in the purpose or function to those used in western cultures. As with the texts, a comparison of similar objects can be used to bring out the distinctive characteristics of Egyptian culture. To do this assignment, you will choose an object or artwork from the Old Kingdom Egyptian galleries at the Metropolitan Museum and an object with the same function in the from a western culture and write a comparison of the two objects, explaining what their differences tell you about the differences in the cultures that created them. (Suggestions about possible pairings will be given.)
Course Policies:

Attendance at lectures and sections is required. If you find it necessary to be absent, you must present documented excuses. A small (and undisclosed) number of unexcused absences will be allowed before a grade is affected, but if there is a good (i.e., medical or similarly dire) reason for your absence, you would be better off documenting it. Documentation should be shown to the section instructor if your recitation section was missed, or to Prof. Roth if a lecture was missed.

Students are responsible for the material and information presented in lectures and sections, whether they are present or not. This includes excused absences.

Students are expected to show consideration for their fellow students in lectures and sections. Cell phones should be turned OFF during all your classes. If you are using a computer (allowed only for taking notes) during a lecture, sit at the back of the class so the light from your screen does not prevent the students behind you from seeing the PowerPoint slides. You may not eat in class. You may not drink sugary drinks that might be spilled and attract vermin. You may not leave trash on the floor or in the seats. This should all be obvious.

No electronics at all may be used in your discussion sections. The recitation sections are for discussion only. It is suggested that you use notes in lectures as well, but electronics are not forbidden there. However, no recording of lectures will be allowed. PDFs of lecture PowerPoints will be given out only for the introductory lectures.

Essays will not be accepted after the due date without excellent excuses. Papers must be submitted through NYU Classes. Extensions will not be granted unless there are genuinely exceptional circumstances that warrant them. (Poor planning is not, alas, exceptional.) If you see an exceptional circumstance on the horizon, e-mailing us about it before the paper is late (or the exam is missed) will make the acceptance of your excuse more likely.

Papers may be submitted for comments in advance of the due date. Papers may be submitted to Prof. Roth or your recitation instructor at least a week before the paper is due. Note that your paper will not necessarily be graded by the same person who offered preliminary comments, and therefore that fixing the flaws pointed out does not guarantee you a grade (or even a B), although it will most likely improve your grade.

The grade of A is given only for papers and exams that exceed the requirements of the assignment are essentially flawless in content and presentation. If you feel a grade is unfair and you would like to re-submit the paper or exam to Prof. Roth, be aware that your grade can be lowered as well as raised.

Plagiarism and other forms of cheating will not be tolerated. They will be result in at least a significant reduction of your grade and the circumstance will be reported to the deans, as the faculty handbook requires. In extreme cases, students will fail the course. Students are strongly advised to avoid even the appearance of cheating during exams and to be extremely careful about their use of sources. Changing around the words of a source does not “make it your own.”

Grading Scale: A 95-100; A- 90-94; B+ 87-89; B 83-86; B- 80-82; C+ 77-79; C 73-76; C- 70-72; D+ 67-69; D 63-66; F 62 or below