Roman Wall Painting
CLAS/FA 145B, Topics in Greek and Roman Art and Archaeology
Syllabus
(to be updated, version of Jan. 7, 2014)
Brandeis University, Spring 2014
Tues. and Thurs., 5:00 - 6:20 p.m., Block V, Location TBA
Instructor: Professor Ann Olga Koloski-Ostrow,
Chair, Department of Classical Studies
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appointment in Mandel Center for the Humanities, rm. 213.

CA (Course Assistant): Camille Reynolds, Graduate M.A. Student in Ancient
Greek and Roman Studies
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This course satisfies the requirement for either the School of Creative Arts (CA)
or the School of Humanities (HUM), but not for both.

If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis
University and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in
this class, please see Professor Koloski-Ostrow immediately.

Rationale of Course:

This course is about Roman wall painting—the history of its development, the
techniques and technologies necessary to implement it, its distribution and the
state of preservation of its corpus across the Mediterranean, the best examples
across Roman time (2nd c. BCE to 4th c. CE), its meaning, especially of its
mythological content, and its context (whether private houses, palaces,
temples, public buildings, baths, or tombs). As a principal learning goal,
students will become familiar with a substantial number of what we can call
the most famous examples of Roman wall paintings, understand them in some
detail, learn how to analyze and “read” them, and see the influence they had
on later paintings and styles after the Roman period. The principal primary
source we consult in the course, apart from the wall paintings themselves, will
be Pliny the Elder’s Natural History, especially his chapters on the history of
art, Books XXXIII through XXXVII. This work, divided into 37 libri, or “books,”
was completed, except for finishing touches, in 77 CE. The work was
dedicated to the Emperor Titus, who became emperor just about two months
before Pliny’s death, which occurred during the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in
August, 79 CE.

The subjects of Books XXXIII through XXXVII include minerals, precious stones, and metals, especially those used by Roman craftsmen in the production of art. In describing their uses, Pliny the Elder referred to famous artists and their creations, including wall paintings, and to Roman architectural styles and technology.

With the decline of the ancient world and the loss of the Greek texts on which Pliny the Elder had so heavily depended, the *Natural History* became a substitute for a general education. We shall use him as an overarching guide for the history of wall painting. In the European Middle Ages many of the larger monastic libraries possessed copies of his work; these and many abridged versions ensured Pliny the Elder’s place in European literature. His authority was unchallenged, partly because of a lack of more reliable information and partly because his assertions were not and, in many cases, could not be tested.

**Required Texts:**
4. A variety of other articles, parts of ancient texts, and book chapters will be posted in LATTE over the course of the semester.

**Course Requirements:**
1. Students must be present (in mind and body) and participate as actively as possible during lectures, discussions, and any out-of-class activities or fieldtrips. Questions are always welcome and encouraged. Class attendance will be taken on a regular basis, especially at the beginning of the term so that your professor can get to know you. In every class students will receive a sign-in sheet for attendance. Please note that it quickly becomes apparent who is present and who is not from class sign-in sheets.
2. Students must complete all assigned readings (from required texts and from books on reserve or articles posted on LATTE). Appreciation and understanding of lectures and discussions will be greatly enhanced if reading assignments are finished by their due dates. This syllabus contains assignments from required texts and from various books on the reserve for the semester. Since lectures
are original creations, you are advised *not* to miss them. Many points made in them cannot be found in the required or reserve reading.

3. Students will complete one take-home midterm essay exam on Tuesday, March 18. (If you must request an extension, it must be only for a valid MEDICAL or other SERIOUS reason, approved by your professor, preferably in ADVANCE.)

4. Before the final research paper is due, you must also write a prospectus for the final paper and present a working bibliography (directions forthcoming, but due Thurs., March 27). The final project requires a sustained effort to be done well, hence this early due date for the prospectus. The final research paper on Roman wall painting (7-8 pages for undergraduates and 8-10 pages for graduate students) is due on the last day of class, Tues., April 29, 2014. You will have ample opportunities to consult with your professor or our CA about this project and possible topics for it. You will lose one grade step for every day that your prospectus or final project is late (A+ to A to A- to B+-unless you have a medical or other truly valid excuse, presented IN ADVANCE, if at all possible). This final paper assignment replaces a final exam.

**Course Requirements with Approximate Grade Determination:**
1) Class attendance, class participation, field trips, and completion of reading assignments (20%)
2) Midterm Take-Home Exam Essay (due Tues., March 18, 2014) (30%)
3) Prospectus for final paper/ Advance Bibliography (due Thurs. March 27, 2014) (20%)
4) Final Research Paper/Analysis of Mythological Wall Painting, 7-8 pages/ 8-10 pages (due Tues., April 29) (30%)

Total: (100%)

**Academic Honesty (last, but hardly least!):**
You are expected to be honest in all of your academic work. Brandeis University policy on academic honesty is contained in your Student Handbook in section 5 under “Rights and Responsibilities.” Instances of cheating, plagiarism, or other alleged dishonesty will be reported to the Office of Campus Life for possible referral to the Student Judicial System. The adjudication process is also outlined in your Handbook. Potential consequences of academic dishonesty include (in addition to an “E” on the assignment) failure in the course, disciplinary probation, and suspension from the University. A record of any offense will remain in a student’s disciplinary file in the Office of Student Affairs throughout his or her career at Brandeis. Please know that I take this code very seriously. If you have any questions about my expectations, please ask me.

Lecture topics for the entire semester are listed by date below, along with due dates for assignments, field trips, special events, and special lectures.
Readings are included, but may change slightly in the syllabus handed out on the first day of class. Please contact me if you have questions about the readings.

LECTURE AND/OR DISCUSSION TOPICS WITH READINGS:

Tues., Jan. 14 Introduction to the Course, Readings, and to each other
Social significance of wall painting: examples from Etruria, Lucania, and Magna Graecia, origins of wall paintings (Greeks and before)

Thurs., Jan. 16 The Corpus—where and why?
Pompeii and the Bay of Naples: An Introduction
Pompeii: The Roman House as a Context for Painting


[[Pictures: Vallet 42-44]]

WEEK 1

Tues., Jan. 21 Techniques of Wall Painting and Pompeian Decoration from Samnites to Sulla; Introduction to Pliny the Elder
Film in class.

Source Reading: Pliny the Elder

Suggested Graduate Reading: Additional Pliny the Elder

Thurs., Jan. 23 Major Workshops of the Pompeian Second Style: “The Porticus Style”; Early Mosaics

Assigned Reading: Ling, RP, Chapter 2, pp.12-22; Chapter 10; Ling AM, Chapters 2-3; Clarke, pp. 79-93.

Source Reading: Vitruvius De Architectura 7.5.1-7 (Perseus website or Pollitt, pp. 127-12; Pliny the Elder, NH 36.48-50; 36. 109-110 (Pollitt, pp. 81-84).

Suggested Graduate Reading: Bruno, V.J. 1969. “Antecedents of

[[Pictures: Anderson; Vallet 105-121; website “House of the Faun”; House of L. Albucius Celsus and “Casa del Cenacolo”; “House of the Labryinth”]]

**WEEK 2**

**Tues., Jan. 28**

Major Workshops of the Pompeian Second Style
Roman Public Buildings: Temples, Baths, Administrative Buildings, Tombs

**DISCUSSION TOPIC:** Stage Front Paintings

**Source Reading:** Vitruvius 7. 5. 1-5; 5. 6. 6-9; Pliny the Elder, *NH* 36. 4-8; 36. 113-115 (Pollitt, pp. 80-85).

**Assigned Reading:** Ling, *RP*, pp. 23-31; Maxwell Anderson, 1988 "Boscotrecase"; Clarke, pp. 94-123; Davis, Chs. 49-53.


**Thurs., Jan. 30**

"The Stage Front Style and Second Style Megalographies (Villa of the Mysteries, etc.)
Grappling with Chronology of Wall Painting

**TOPIC:** Second Style Megalographies

**Assigned Reading:** Ling, *RP*, pp. 101-107; Anderson 1987.

**Suggested Graduate Reading:** Lehmann. 1953. Chapter 2. pp. 23-81; Sauron. 1984; Andreae 1975.

[[Pictures: Anderson; Vallet 148-155; website, “Villa Oplontis”; website C414: Domestic interiors, Villa of the Papyri.]]

**WEEK 3**

**Tues., Feb. 4**

From Second Style to Third
Augustus and Egyptianizing Style

**Source Reading:** Vitruvius. 7. 5. 1-7.
**Assigned Reading:** Ling, *RP*, Chapter 3, pp 31-51; Chapter 4, pp. 51-57; Clarke, pp. 125-144.

**Suggested Theoretical Reading:** Bryson 1990, Chapter 1.

**Thurs., Feb. 6**  
The Picture Gallery Room and Augustan Culture, including Tiberius' Villas

**Source Reading:** Cicero. Selections from the Letters concerning art collecting (Pollitt, pp. 76-79)

**Assigned Reading:** Richardson, L. 1988, Chapter 15, pp. 221-241; von Blanckenhagen 1962 or 1990, Introduction and Ch. I. pp. 9-16; Ch. 3. pp. 38-51.


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**WEEK 4**

**Tues, Feb. 11**  
Luxury Real and Simulated: Imperial Pleasure Palaces from Caligula to Nero and from Domitian to Hadrian

**Source Reading:** Selections from Tacitus, Suetonius, Pliny in Pollitt. pp. 140-148.


**Suggested Graduate Reading:** Elsner, 1994, Chapter 7; La Rocca 1986. pp. ??; Stroka 1988; Dacos. 1968; Bastet. 1971; 1972; Peters. 1982a; Moorman 1986.

[[website C414: Domestic interiors: House of M. Lucretius Fronto; House of the Vettii]]

**Thurs., Feb. 13**  
More on Chronology and Content; Problems of Third/Fourth Style Chronology. Film and Discussion

**Assigned Reading:** Same as for Tues., Feb. 11

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**WEEK 5**
Mid Winter Recess:  No University exercises Saturday, February 15 to Sunday February 23

Tues., Feb. 18  No class, Mid Winter Recess
Thurs., Feb. 20  No class, Mid Winter Recess

WEEK 6

Tues., Feb. 25  Analysis of the Pompeian Fourth Style; The Via di Mercurio Neighborhood; Magistrates of the 70's and their Houses.

DISCUSSION TOPIC: Pompeian Fourth Style

Assigned Reading: Mau. 1904. Chs. 54-55. pp. 456-484; Ling, RP, Chapter 5, pp. 71-100; Clarke, pp. 208-233; Bulwer-Lytton, Chapter 3.

Suggested Reading in Social History: Jongman "The Dimension of Social Inequality," pp. 207-273; Wallace-Hadrill 1995, "Honor and Pleasure in the City".


[[Pictures: Vallet 53-70; website: House of the Dioscuri; House of C. Julius Polybius.]]

Thurs., Feb. 27  Images and Spectacles  Villas, Gardens, Theaters, and Ampitheaters


[[Pictures: Vallet 10-11; 23-31; 162-164; Jashemski 1994]]

WEEK 7

Tues., March 4  Mythological Landscapes: The Odyssey Frieze and Continuous Narrative
DISCUSSION TOPIC: The Odyssey Landscapes (plates in Die Kunstsammlungen der Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana Rom. 1969.)


Thurs., March 6  More Mythology: Other Stories in Continuous Narratives

Source Reading: Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 3. 138-252; more TBA.


Tues., March 11  More Mythology: Popular Third Style Subjects

DISCUSSION TOPIC Popular Third Style Mythological Subjects


Suggested Graduate Reading: Dawson. 1944. Chapter 4. pp. 116-179

Thurs., March 13  Mythological Ensembles

DISCUSSION TOPIC: Third and/or Fourth Style Mythological Ensembles

Source Reading: Petronius, *Satyricon*

Assigned Reading: Thomson. 1961: pp. 36-77;


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WEEK 8
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*Tues., March 18  MIDTERM TAKE-HOME ESSAY DUE  
Mythological Landscapes in Paint and Mosaics  
More Fourth Style Mythology; Mythology in Mosaics

DISCUSSION TOPIC: Fourth Style Paintings and Programs

**Theoretical Reading:** Elsner 1995. Chapter 1, pp. 49-70.


[[Pictures: website: House of the Vettii; House of M. Lucretius]]
**Syllabus, Roman Wall Painting, CLAS 145B**

**Source Reading:** Pliny *NH* 36.189 (Pollitt. p. 107).

**Assigned Reading:** Whitehouse. 1976. pp. 1-10.

**Suggested Reading:** Phillips. 1972. (on microfilm?).

**Thurs., April 3**

Post-Pompeian Decorations in Rome, Ostia and the Provinces; Late Roman Wall Paintings

**DISCUSSION TOPIC:** Post Pompeian Painting

**Assigned Reading:** Ling, *RP*, Chapters 8 and 9; Clarke, pp. 267-319.

**Suggested Graduate Reading:** Joyce, 1983.

**WEEK 12**

**Tues., April 8**

Painters, Workshops and The Question of “Greek Originals” in Fourth Style Mythology; Philostratus and Literary Viewing

**DISCUSSION TOPIC:** Fourth Style Originals and Copies:

**Assigned Reading:** Ling, *RP*, pp. 128-144; Chapter 11; Bianchi Bandinelli. pp. 110-116

**Source Reading:** Philostratus *Imagines*.


**Thurs., April 10**

The Discovery of the Golden House and its Importance to Renaissance Decoration; Seventeenth Century Discoveries and Descriptions

**Assigned Reading:** Gombrich, *The Sense of Order*, Chapter 10, "The Edge of Chaos,"

**Suggested Graduate Reading:** Dacos 1969

**Spring Passover Recess:**

No University exercises Tuesday, April 15 through Tuesday, April 22
Tues., April 15  No class, Spring Passover Recess

Tues., April 22  No class, Spring Passover Recess

Thurs., April 24  The History of Campanian Excavation; Publishing Pompeii: The Development of the Museo Borbonico, Le antichità di Ercolano and the Influence of Pompeii in European Art


*Tues., April 29  LAST DAY, FINAL PAPERS Due

[[Wed., April 30, and Thurs., May 1, are STUDY DAYS]]

Possible topic ideas for Final Student Papers on Roman Wall Painting
(Mostly utilizing Third and Fourth Style wall paintings from Pompeii, Herculaneum, and the Villas of the Bay of Naples)

Portraits (male and/or female)

Specific Myths  (Some classic examples: Abandonment of Ariadne, Armor of Achilles, Perseus and Danae, Europa, Narcissus, Mars and Venus, Rape of Cassandra and Return of Helen, Trojan Horse or Trojan War, Theseus and Minotaur, Pasiphae and the Bull, Medea and her Children, Helle and Phrixus and Golden Ram, Hero and Leander (IX 5, 14), Rescue of Andromeda by Perseus (VII 16, 2, Casa del Marinaio and VI 10, 2, Casa dei Cinque scheletri), Death of Niobe’s Children, Amazons fighting Greeks (VI 8, 3, Casa del Poeta tragico), Leda and the Swan (IX 2, 7, Casa della fontana d’amore)

Carpet patterns/ border designs/ grand panoramic architectural designs with perspectives and columns

Animals (dogs, cats, fish, birds, donkeys, horses, or exotic animals from Africa)

Mythological Monsters (especially in story of Andromeda and Perseus)

External and Internal Audience Perspective (Robing and Disrobing, for example)
Clothing (for women, men, children, slaves, shop keepers, prostitutes, *et al.*)

Hairstyles and/or Jewelry

Musical Instruments (tambourines, drums, flutes, lyres)

Objects from Daily Life (kitchen pots, baskets, looms, candelabra, household furnishings, perfume dispensers, theatrical masks, coins, sacks, coin counters, styluses, *tabellae*, mirrors, dice, hairpins, and the like)

Military Themes and/or Dress

Religious Themes (altars, fires, religious instruments, gods and goddesses, ritual practices)

*Lararia* (genii, snakes, altars)

Food (fruits, meats, fish, bread, drinks)

Street scenes or scenes from commerce (fullers, bakers, shop keepers, scenes inside bars or *thermopolia*)

Precious gems and other indicators or wealth (columns, crowns, ancestor masks, precious weapons)

Gladiators

Bath Life

Theatrical Life (actors, masks, stage sets)

Winged or flying women and/or Cupids—decoration or some other significance?

Architectural elements, meanders, floral patterns, geometric patterns

Scenes of Love-making (brothel and Suburban Baths and private houses)

Sacro-idyllic Landscapes

Dionysus and Satyrs and Menads