Ancient Egypt's image world reveals the fundamental dynamics of a 5000 year long civilization (from prehistoric to Roman times) with an intensity and scope that parallels the certainly important textual records that document the Egyptians' world view. Egyptians were prolific image makers, creating abundant statuary and a multitude of painted or relief compositions, often on an enormous scale. Architecture was also imagistic; the forms of temples, palaces and royal and elite tombs visually evoked features of the cosmic landscape, to signify that rituals and ceremonies were played out in accord with cosmological processes. In the Egyptian image world, societal and political issues were important, but its fundamental energy and richness arose from a creative tension deeply meaningful to all Egyptians. They and their gods celebrated a positively charged cosmos (universal order) yet ceaselessly had to resist its potential annihilation by chaos (infinite destructiveness). Monsters and demons threatened the sun god who created, and endlessly renewed cosmos; the king or pharaoh defended with extreme aggression the world order against destructive foreign foes; and the dead feared the loss of eternal life. Yet paradoxically, the Egyptians also had to transform the anarchic energy (the potential for life) of chaos into the actual life upon which the order of the universe depended. In this course, we shall explore via selected imagery in both art and architecture the impact of these beliefs upon Egypt's image world, which was itself deployed to defend cosmos and repel chaos, yet also to draw on the latter's energy; images embodied divine beings and forces actively involved in these events, and linked them to the realm of human action. We will also see that understanding Egyptian imagery depends upon the sometimes spectacular discoveries of archaeology, which reveal yet further forms of materiality involved in the image world; city plans mimic cosmic structures, households and social practices conform to cosmological processes, and even cosmetic items, such as combs and makeup kits, display imagery evocative of the transformational patterns generated by the endless conflict yet paradoxical cooperation between cosmos and chaos.
In this course we explore the many forms of varied, yet interrelated images which convey the ancient Egyptians’ powerful and culture-shaping concerns about the interactions between Order (Egyptian Maat) and Chaos (Egyptian Isfet). It was fervently believed that these interactions profoundly affected the cosmos and its stability, and hence also impacted, for good or ill, upon the individual and communal lives of the Egyptians and indeed all humankind. These beliefs shaped what was distinctively Egyptian about this ancient culture of the Nile Valley, much as, for example, the essential features of medieval European civilization were generated by the then dominant religious beliefs prevalent throughout the western Christian world.

The initial lecture (Week 1) presents the vividly expressed Egyptian myths as to how the cosmos was created and how, as a result, dramatic patterns of conflict, yet also cooperation developed between Order and Chaos. Lectures through Weeks 1-3 provide important contextual material about Egyptian art, architecture and the several versions of the hieroglyphic script (itself made up of recognizable images) and also include discussions of Egyptian history, its dynastic structure and important historical events.

Thereafter, lectures are structured thematically, in terms of the several image worlds the Egyptians created not only to express their conceptions of the significance of Order and Chaos, but also to make use of in the Egyptians’ own involvement in the processes that defended Order, yet also drew on the energy of Chaos that provided life to the cosmos. Weeks 4-9 lectures focus on the complex image world built around kingship and involving the private, as well as the public life of the king, the powerful defender of world order who nevertheless seeks to protect himself against the chaotic incursions of personal failure, aging and ultimately death. The lectures in Weeks 10-12 cover the images and architecture which honored Egypt’s many gods and goddesses, but also reflect the Egyptians’ anxieties about them; Egyptians hoped for divine benevolence but also feared divine anger, which one myth describes as almost resulting in the extermination of humankind on the orders of the enraged sun god. Lectures through Weeks 12-15 explore multiple forms of images, and imagistic architecture, that related to the lives, experiences and desires of Egyptians in general, from elite to commoners. This last image world involves not only mortuary art, a highly developed genre in ancient Egypt, but also the art and architecture associated with mansions and houses; towns, villages and their local temples and chapels; and even the implements and furniture utilized in daily life.

**Required Reading**

**Set Texts**

Katherine Bard; *An Introduction to the Archaeology of Ancient Egypt*. Blackwell, 2008
Erik Hornung; *History of Ancient Egypt An Introduction*. Cornell University Press, 1999


Emily Teeter; *Ritual and Religion in Ancient Egypt*. Cambridge University Press, 2011

Readings Posted on Course Website (NYU Classes)

Okasha el Daly, “What do tourists learn of Egypt?” in Sally MacDonald and Michael Rice (eds.), *Consuming Ancient Egypt*, UCL Press, 2003, 139-150


Miriam Lichtheim; *Ancient Egyptian Literature* Volume II. The New Kingdom. University of California Press, 2006 (selections)


Note; additional readings may be added to the NYU Classes course website as needed
Requirements

Attendance and participation (recitations): 10%

Midterm exam: 15%

1st essay (4-5 pages): 15%

2nd essay (6-8 pages): 20%

Final exam: 40%

Attendance is required at all classes. Students missing more than one class risk lowering of their grade; only a note from a medical doctor certifying illness will be considered appropriate as an excuse for missing class. Papers turned in late will be marked down, unless accompanied by a medical excuse signed by a doctor.

Academic Integrity

NYU describes plagiarism in the following way:

Academic honesty means that the work you submit - in whatever form - is original. Students are expected - often required - to build their work on that of other people, just as professional researchers and writers do. Giving credit to someone whose work has helped you is expected; in fact, not to give such credit is a crime. Plagiarism is the severest form of academic fraud. Plagiarism is theft. Obviously, bringing answers into an examination or copying all or part of a paper straight from a book, the Internet, or a fellow student is a violation of this principle. But there are other forms of cheating or plagiarizing which are just as serious, for example:

• presenting an oral report drawn without attribution from other sources (oral or written);
• writing a paragraph which, despite being in different words, expresses someone else’s idea without a reference to the source of the idea;
• submitting essentially the same paper in two different courses (unless both instructors have given their permission in advance);
• giving or receiving help on a take-home examination or quiz unless expressly permitted by the instructor (as in collaborative projects);
• presenting as your own a phrase, sentence, or passage from another writer's work without using quotation marks;
• presenting as your own facts, ideas, or written text gathered or downloaded from the Internet;
• submitting another student’s work with your name on it;
• purchasing a paper or "research" from a term paper mill;
• "collaborating" between two or more students who then submit the same paper under their individual names.
Term paper mills (web sites and businesses set up to sell papers to students) often claim they are merely offering "information" or "research" to students and that this service is acceptable and allowed throughout the university. THIS IS ABSOLUTELY UNTRUE. If you buy and submit "research," drafts, summaries, abstracts, or final versions of a paper, you are committing plagiarism and are subject to stringent disciplinary action. Since plagiarism is a matter of fact and not intention, it is crucial that you acknowledge every source accurately and completely. If you quote anything from a source, use quotation marks and take down the page number of the quotation to use in your footnote.

When in doubt about whether your acknowledgment is proper and adequate, consult your instructor. Show the instructor your sources and a draft of the paper in which you are using them. The obligation to demonstrate that work is your own rests with you, the student. You are responsible for providing sources, copies of your work, or verification of the date work was completed. While all this looks like a lot to remember, all you need to do is to give credit where it is due, take credit only for your original ideas, and ask your instructor or adviser when in doubt.

Consult the APA, MLA, or Chicago style guides for accepted forms of documentation. You can access these resources, as well as additional information on proper citations on the NYU Libraries Citation Style Guide.

The penalty for academic dishonesty is severe. Please review the full policy in the College Bulletin.

Schedule of Lectures and Reading Assignments

Reading assignments should be done before the class for which they are assigned. All lecture Powerpoints will be posted to the NYU Classes course website following class.

Week 1
Tuesday, September 3- Order, Chaos and Creation; Egyptian Myths about the Birth of the Cosmos
   Quirke, 21-51
Thursday, September 5- Egyptian History and its Images; Dynasties, Politics and Empire
   Hornung, 1-47

Week 2
Tuesday, September 10- Order (Maat) and Chaos (Isfet); A Creative Tension
   Hornung, 48-97
Thursday, September 12- Carving, Painting, Building; Creating Image Worlds in Ancient Egypt
   Robins (2000), 12-29; Hornung, 98-157

Week 3
Tuesday, September 17- Script and Picture; Egyptian Hieroglyphs as an Image World
   Bard, 23-40; 45-65
Thursday, September 19- Art as Text; What do Egyptian Representations Communicate, and to What Audience?  
   Lichtheim, 35-39 (Poetical Stela of Tuthmosis III); 86-88 (Hymn to the Sun-god); 197-199 (Destruction of Mankind)

Week 4
Tuesday, September 24-Images of Royalty; Solar Defender and Earthly Champion  
   Teeter, 16-55
Thursday, September 26- Royal Pyramids; Stairways to Heaven or Mounds of Creation?  
   Bard, 104-117; Robins (2000), 40-51; 58-67

Week 5
Tuesday, October 1- Imaging the Royal Afterlife; The Hidden Valley and its Archaeology  
   Teeter 119-147; Robins (2000), 166-175; Bard, 217-220; 240-250
Thursday, October 3- The Royal Palace; Images on the Frontier between Order and Chaos  
   Bard, 220-229; Robins (2000), 136-137; Lichtheim, 73-74 (Poetical Stela of Merneptah- the Israel Stela)

Week 6
Tuesday, October 8- Imagery of Royal Private Life; Royal Family and Harem  
   Robins (1993), 21-55; Johnson, 175-186
Thursday, October 10  
   Midterm Exam

Week 7
Tuesday, October 15  
   Class Break
Thursday, October 17- City and Cosmos; Order and Chaos in Royal Display  
   Lichtheim, 48-51 (Boundary Stela of Akhenaten); O’Connor (2005), 55-66

Week 8
Tuesday, October 22 (First essay due)-“everywhere the glint of gold”; The Image World of Tutankhamun’s Tomb: Part I  
   Bard, 229-235; James, 146-171
Thursday, October 24- The Image World of Tutankhamun’s Tomb: Part II

Week 9
Tuesday, October 29- Order or Chaos? King Akhenaten Reshapes the Image World  
   Teeter, 182-197; Robins (2000), 149-165; Lichtheim, 96-100 (Great Hymn to the Aten/ Sun-disc)
Thursday, October 31- Chaos Transformed; Via Art, Pharaohs of Foreign Origin are Absorbed into the World of Order  
   Robins (2000), 195-198; 20-218; 231-241
Week 10
Tuesday, November 5- Divine Shapes, Demonic Forms; Imaging the Pantheon and its Foes
   Teeter, 56-118
Thursday, November 7- Gateways Between Heaven and Earth; Temples as Cosmos
   Bard, 217-220; 235-240; 303-307; Robins, (2000), 131-136; 177-181;
   214-216; 232-241

Week 11
Tuesday, November 12- The Origins of the Temple; a Case-history at Abydos, Realm of Osiris
   Bard, 117; 152-153; 178-182; Robins (2000), 62-63
Thursday, November 14- Revealing the Hidden; The Unique Temples of the "Heretic"
   King Akhenaten and Their Archaeological Recovery
   Robins (2000), 152-156; Bard, 221-229; Lichtheim, 92-96 (Hymns and a Prayer of Ay)

Week 12
Tuesday, November 19- The People of Egypt; Order and Disorder in Egyptian Society
   Teeter, 148-181
Tuesday, November 21, A Community and its Images; Deir el Medineh, the Unique Village of the Artists of the Royal Tomb
   Bard, 256-261; Robins (2000), 181-192; Lichteim, 109-110 (stela of Neferabu)

Week 13
Tuesday, November 26-The Dead: Chaos and Order in the Netherworld
   Teeter, 119-147
Thursday, November 28
   Thanksgiving

Week 14
Tuesday, December 3 (2nd essay due)- The Image World of the Dead: Part I (Old and Middle Kingdom
   Robins, (2000), 51-55, 67-75, 101-106; Lichtheim, 81-86 (Amenmose’s Great Hymn to Osiris)
Thursday, December 5-The Image World of the Dead: Part II (New Kingdom and Later)

Week 15
Tuesday, December 10- Readings and Misreadings; Modern Perceptions of the Ancient Egyptian Image World
   Meskell, 177-220
Thursday, December 12- Fostering, Integrating, Questioning; Modern Egypt and its
Ancient Image World
Fayza Haikal, in Sally MacDonald and Michael Rice (eds.), 23-138; Okasha el Daly, in Sally MacDonald and Michael Rice (eds.), 139-150

Tuesday, December 17, 2:00-3:50
Final Exam