

Course Syllabus
American University of Central Asia
Anthropology department

ROCK ART IN EURASIA
ANT 258
Fall 2011

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Office hours: by appointment

Class time and venue:

Course Purpose and Goals:

Art is one of several features that distinguish humans from other species. Rock art is one of the most important, highly visible, and long-lived forms of human aesthetic expression, emerging at least 40,000 years ago in the famous cave paintings of France and Spain and newly discovered paintings and engravings on the territory of whole Eurasia.

Rock Art research helps us to understand and reconstruct symbolic, mental, ideological and religious systems of ancient peoples. This course offers basic knowledge in the rock art studies. We will study questions of the origin of art and belief, classification of imagery, chronology and methods of analysis.

This course explores rock art studies as an important line of archaeological evidence for prehistoric life ways the world over. We will study rock art with reference to human aesthetic and religious expression, scientific investigation, interactions with landscape including economic activities, expression of ethnic identities and boundaries, and its significance to local peoples, researchers and Heritage Tourism. Also this course requires students to see rock art in its landscape context.

Course objectives:

Students will read and discuss a series of books and articles that provide humanistic, scientific, aesthetic, management-oriented points of view about rock art, and write critical responses – reviews

Students will be able to accurately record and effectively display visual imagery using digital photography, mapping, and image analysis, and communicate results via hypertext with integrated graphics (use of technology) or via professional quality brochures that integrate graphics and text.

Students will be able to create their own interpretations of ancient imagery using visual media or creative writing, and critique creative reinterpretations of others (creative thinking).

Students will be able to compare and contrast theoretical frameworks used to interpret ancient imagery and religious practice, including insights from structuralism, neuropsychology, critical theory and ethnoaesthetics.

Course structure/approach: weekly lecture/discussion/active learning activities/working with images in the field

Textbook and required materials:

- 1). *Introduction to Rock Art Research*, by David S. Whitley. Left Coast Press. 2005.
- 2). Selected articles, projects and book chapters. All readings are available in digital form

Recommended:

Окладников А.П. Утро искусства. Л., 1967.
Дэвлет Е.Г., Дэвлет М.А. Мифы в камне. Москва, 2005.
Формозов А.А. Памятники Первобытного искусства на территории СССР. Москва, 1980
Шер Я.А. Петроглифы Средней и Центральной Азии. Москва, 1980.

Optional (books to purchase if you get serious about doing rock art work):

- 1) AURA Newsletters
- 2) Richard Bradley. *Rock Art and the Prehistory of the Atlantic Europe*, New York, 1997

Requirements:

ACADEMIC HONESTY: Cheating, plagiarism and other academic dishonesty are dealt with severely, according to AUCA policy. Respectful behavior in the classroom is required: do your errands, phone calls, and pit stops before class; turn off cell phones; do not arrive late, leave early, or otherwise disrupt the class.

CLASS PARTICIPATION: Attendance is mandatory. Each student is expected to come to class prepared and to contribute to class all discussions and activities. You can expect to lose some participation points if you miss more than one class for any reason.

PRESENTATION: present a five to ten minute to the whole class. You can choose any topic in the limits of Rock Art (sites, methods of the research, new discoveries). Keep in mind that chosen topic should be narrow and concrete. If you worked with a partner, work out a way to share the work so you both get experience giving a presentation.

REVIEW: Review should be written for one article by student's choice.

PROJECT: describe and interpret at least one panel from the site you have visited. Design and/or build a short a one page color brochure as a part of catalog. Interpretation in this context means making the site or panel accessible and comprehensible to others; it does not imply "reading" the meaning of the rock art imagery. You might focus on age, style, function, or cultural affiliation and context of the art.

Grading Policy:

Midterm Exam	20%
Catalog Project	20%
Presentation	15%
Review	20%
Active participation	15%
Attendance	10%
Total	100%

Grading Scale:

A	96-100%
A-	88-95%
B+	84-87%
B	77-83%
B-	74-76%
C+	70-73%
C	64-69%
C-	61-63%
D+	56-60%
D	51-55%
D-	46-50%
F	<45%

COURSE OUTLINE

- Week 1. Introduction. Definitions, and brief survey of world rock art.
- Week 2. History of investigations.
- Week 3. The Origin of Rock Art. Main Hypotheses
- Week 4. Classification, identification
- Week 5. Recording, documentation, image manipulation
- Week 6. Genesis of Paleolithic Art.
- Week 7. The Figure of Women during Upper Paleolithic Age
- Week 8. Mid-term Exam
- Week 9. Fall break (no class)
- Week 10. Symbols and Signs
- Week 11. Rock Art Dating. Chronologies
- Week 12. Rock Art research methods
- Week 13. Symbolic and Ethnographic Interpretation

Week 14. Neuropsychology and Rock Art
Week 15. The Management and Conservation
Week 16. close the gap
Week 17. Final Exam