

ARHS 5304: Seminar on Ancient Art
Postcolonial Approaches to Hellenistic Art
Professor Langin-Hooper
Wednesday, 2-4:50pm



Course Description:

Although more often applied to contemporary art, postcolonial theory is also a particularly useful lens through which to view ancient artworks – especially those produced by the cultures, such as Greece and Rome, which were thought by more modern, colonialist nations to be historical precedents for (and therefore justifications of) their colonizing efforts. Archaeological study of the Hellenistic world – a discipline born under, and often sponsored by, the British Empire and its contemporaries – is still rife with biases towards seeing “European” ancient cultures (such as the Greeks) as the civilizing colonizers of “Oriental” cultures living in the Ancient Near East and Egypt. Our project in this class is to investigate these biased interpretations, understand the Orientalist and Colonialist attitudes that lie at their foundations, and then create new, postcolonial approaches to the cross-cultural arts of the Hellenistic period.