CLAS/HIST 429-500: The Roman Empire

Spring 2014  TR 3:55-5:10  PETR 106

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Hours: TR 2:30-3:30 and by appointment
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Course Information and Syllabus

Subject: A survey of Roman History from the late 1st century BC to the 6th century AD, with emphasis on the imperial period from the consolidation of the Principate to the disintegration of the Empire in Late Antiquity. Topics given special attention: the consolidation of autocracy; Roman Government and Imperial Administration; Roman Religion and the rise of Christianity; Family, Law, and Society; the Army; Popular Culture; the Caesars; Geography of the Empire.

Prerequisites: Junior or Senior classification, or approval of instructor.

Learning Outcomes: On completion of this course, students will be able to:

1) Demonstrate expanded knowledge of the human condition and of human cultures in the context of the Ancient World;

2) Reason logically and respond critically, in speech and writing, to historical evidence, with regard both to ancient sources and modern scholarship;

3) Appreciate Roman society, government, politics, and culture in their historical context, and demonstrate awareness of the scope and variety of historical issues and interpretations;

4) Discuss how the beliefs and values of the Romans differed widely from our own on a variety of important topics (e.g., the role of religion in government and public life, the best form of government, the use of war as a means of conflict resolution, the role of women in law and society) and explain why these beliefs were so widely accepted.

Core Objectives:

Critical Thinking Skills: This course enhances critical thinking by requiring students to analyze, interpret, and synthesize materials from lectures, ancient historiographical and biographical sources, and modern scholarly literature dealing with the social, political, cultural, and military history of ancient Rome from the late 1st century BC to the end of the 6th century AD. Class discussion as well as written work are exercises in which students demonstrate critical thinking skills.

Communication Skills: This course enhances communications skills by requiring students to summarize and explain the importance of assigned readings in class discussions and written work, and to investigate, defend, and critique Roman values, attitudes, and practices with regard to a variety of issues. The geography and iconography of the Roman world will be closely considered through visual images and maps, both on display during each lecture and made available to students as part of a course packet. Students will examine and explore visual representations of themes from Roman life (e.g., buildings, dress, portraits) and follow the geographic setting of historical events on maps of Rome, Italy, and the Mediterranean.
**Social Responsibility:** This course enhances social responsibility by requiring students to consider how historical experiences and cultural differences shaped the identity and self-expression of the Romans, with regard both to their interaction with others inside and beyond the Empire (e.g., Germans, Dacians, Huns, Parthians/Persians) while maintaining world power and to the challenge posed to the Roman State by a fundamentally different form of religion such as Christianity. This will allow and encourage students to examine Roman views on a number of vexing issues such as war, ethnicity, slavery, violence, gender, religion, and social welfare, and to explain why some of these views are seen as foundational to our own while others have come to be considered abhorrent.

**Personal Responsibility:** This course offers students the opportunity to reflect on topics conducive to the promotion of personal responsibility, including but not limited to: how we form and defend ethical judgments, the degree to which freedom of religion serves the interests of society, how different cultures define in different ways the responsibilities of the individual to the community, and how the study of ancient cultures and their alien belief systems puts our own beliefs in sharper perspective, thereby prompting personal reflection and growth.

**Grading Policy:**

- 3 Midterm Essays (take-home) = 60%
- Final Examination (comprehensive) = 40%

Essays will be judged by a letter grade converting to a Term Point value as follows:

- A = 8
- B = 6
- C = 4
- D = 2
- F = 0
- A- = 7
- B- = 5
- C- = 3
- D- = 1

The Final Examination will consist of ca. 80-90 short questions graded by percentage of correct answers, and converted to Term Points as follows:

- 100-95 = 8A
- 99-90 = 7A
- 94-90 = 7A-
- 89-85 = 6B
- 84-80 = 5B-
- 79-75 = 4C
- 74-70 = 3C-
- 69-65 = 2D
- 59-0 = 0F

The final exam will consist of 80-90 short questions graded by percentage of correct answers, and converted to Term Points as follows:

- Term Grade: A = 8.0-6.6; B = 6.5-4.6; C = 4.5-2.6; D = 2.5-0.6; F = 0.5 and less.

**Term Grade Computation (example):**

- \( M_E, B = 6, M_E, C = 3, M_B = 5 \)  
- \( M_I = 14 + 3 = 4.66 \times 0.6 = M_I 2.8 \)
- \( F_{EX} = 92 - A = 7 \times 4 = 2.8 \)
- \( \text{Term Score and Grade: } M_I + F_{EX} = 5.6 = B \)

**Attendance:** Important. This course covers a large amount of unfamiliar material. Be advised that exams will include items discussed in class but not easily extracted from your readings alone. **You are responsible for signing your name on the attendance sheet circulated during each class.** You will be allowed 1 (one) unexcused absence. For each additional absence without a valid excuse, one-half (0.5) term point may be subtracted from your Term Score. A perfect attendance record (zero absences other than with documented University-approved excuse) will add one-half (0.5) term point to your Score. Please see [http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule07](http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule07) for current policy on University-excused absences. For illness- or injury-related absences of fewer than three days, an Explanatory Statement of Absence or a note from a health care professional confirming the date and time of your visit will be required in order to count the absence as University-excused; for absences of three days or more, a note containing a medical professional’s confirmation that absence from class was necessary will be required (see Rule 7.1.6.1). Make-up tests will be given in accordance with University Regulations (7.3).
Disabilities: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe that you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact Disability Services, B-118 Cain Hall (845-1637). For additional information, visit http://disability.tamu.edu.

Academic Integrity: "An Aggie does not lie, cheat, or steal, or tolerate those who do." You are expected to be aware of the Aggie Honor Code and the Honor Council Rules and Procedures, stated at <http://www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor>.

Required Texts: You may use an electronic version of the texts below if it contains the same pagination or book/chapter/section division as the editions ordered for this class.

CP = Course Packet. Will be posted on eLearning.
Amm. = Ammianus Marcellinus, The Later Roman Empire. Assignments are by book and chapter numbers.
Euseb. = Eusebius, The History of the Church. Assignments are by book and chapter numbers.

Optional Reading:

CRE = R. MacMullen, Christianizing the Roman Empire.
DRR = S. Williams, Diocletian and the Roman Recovery.
RWom = E. D'Ambra, Roman Women.

Course Packet and Handouts: These are chiefly intended for review and exam preparation. Be advised that the material contained in them is selective and that a large amount of important information appears only in class lectures and assigned readings. Unless indicated otherwise, all items in bold or bold italics are expected to be known for a passing performance on exams. Terms in regular italics (mostly Latin words) are primarily for your information. Roman names and Latin terms which appear in the Course Packet or in class handouts are to be learned. This includes their correct spelling.

Maps: You are expected to study with care the maps contained in the Course Packet. Be prepared to answer geographical questions or fill in blank maps in exams.
Lectures: A considerable amount of names and terms will appear on the overhead projection screen or the blackboard during lectures. All items spelled in CAPITAL letters are expected to be known for a passing performance on exams; items written ‘normally’ are primarily for your information. Overhead text for each lecture will be posted on eLearning, usually during the night before each class. The following color scheme will be employed to help you distinguish certain aspects of the material:

Emperors: the name by which an Emperor is commonly known appears in red; however, Emperors mainly active in only one region of the Empire appear in the appropriate regional color (e.g., blue, green, purple; West = red).
black: Names of Roman individuals, of all ranks.
red: (a) Roman/Latin events, terms, and institutions, including offices/appointments held by men of Senatorial Rank (SenR). (b) Place names in Italy and the central part of the Empire.
orange: Offices/appointments held by individuals of Equestrian Rank (EqR).
yellow: (a) Offices/appointments held by men of neither Senatorial nor Equestrian Rank.
(b) Items (persons, places, events, etc.) relating to Africa.
gray: (a) Offices/appointments held by Freedmen. (b) Items (persons, places, events, etc.) relating to Spain.
green: Items relating to the northern frontier of the Empire (Gaul, Rhine, Germany, Britain).
blue: Items relating to the Danubian frontier (Illyricum, Greece, Thrace).
purple: Items relating to the Near Eastern frontier of the Empire (Asia Minor, Syria, etc.).
brown: Items in the Near East outside the Empire (Egypt until 30 BC, Parthia, etc.).

Abbreviations: The following standard abbreviations for Roman officials and titles will be used on screen and in the Course Packet:

Cos. = Consul
Des. = Designate
D. N. = Dominus Noster
Imp. = Imperator
Leg. = Legate
Leg. Pro Pr. = Legatus pro praetore (Propraetorian Legate)
Mag. Mil. = Magister Militem (Master-of-Soldiers)
Mag. Mil. Praes. = Magister Militem Praesentalis
Pont. Max. = Pontifex Maximus
Pr. = Praetor
Praef. = Prefect
Praef. Praet. = Praetorian Prefect
Pro Cos. = Proconsul
Pro Pr. = Propraetor
Q. = Quaestor
Tr. Pot. = Tribunician Power (tribunicia potestas)
Part I. The First Man in Rome: 30 BC–AD 68

1. T Jan. 14: Empire without End
   The Roman Republic: origins and government

2. R Jan. 16: Ties that Bind: RW 3-28; CP 6-42, 73-74;
   Roman religion and society; Fides; ideology of ruling elite

   Creation of the Empire; crisis of the Late Republic; The Second Civil War (all). Optional: CP 43-73.

   Constitutional and political foundations of the Principate; government & provincial administration

   The Roman Army; Pax Augustea and the Wars of Augustus Opt’l: RWom 1-91.

   State security services; law, family, and marriage Opt’l: RWom 94-180.

   Arts, buildings, propaganda; the search for a successor Suet. Tiberius 39-76, Gaius (all).

8. R Febr. 6: Dynasty, AD 14-41: RW 49-53; Suet. Claudius (all); Nero 1-19.
   Tiberius and Caligula

   Claudius, Agrippina, and Nero

Part II. The Limits of Empire: AD 68–251

    1st Essay assigned
    The Third Civil War

    Consolidation of the Principate: the Flavians

    1st Essay due Suet. Domitian.
    Blood sports in the arena; Germany and the Danube

    Dacia and Parthia: greatest extent of the empire


    The Fourth Civil War; the changing empire; the House of Severus
The New Persian (Sassanid) Empire; Alamanni, Franks, and Goths

March 10 – March 14: SPRING BREAK

Part III. *Novus ordo saeculorum*: AD 251–395

The Crisis of the Third Century

18. R March 20: Emperors Four, AD 293-305: LRE 46-62; CP 105, 112; Amm. pp. 13-38;
Dioscletian and the Tetrarchy: reinventing the Empire 91-139; XV.8-9, 12. Opt’l: DRR 91-139.

19. T March 25: Defenders of the Faith, AD 250-304: RW 338-360; Euseb. 7.1-13; 8 (all);
Christianity and the Roman State

20. R March 27: Sign of the Cross, AD 305-324: LRE 62-70, 225-255; Amm. XXII.1-14;
2nd Essay assigned

XIV; Euseb. 9 and 10; CP 113. Opt’l: DRR 186-219.

21. T April 1: The Thirteenth Apostle, AD 325-337: LRE 256-300; Amm. XXV(all);
The New Empire of Constantine

XXVI.1-5; XXVII.6-8; XXVIII.1-4. Opt’l: CRE 1-42.

22. R April 3: Imperial Echoes, AD 337-378: LRE 70-84, 155-173; CP 105-109, 114; Amm.
2nd Essay due

XXIX (all); XXX.5-10; XXXI (all). Opt’l: CRE 43-73.
The Later Roman Empire; the beginning of barbarian invasions

The suppression of the ancient religion


Part IV. The Waning of the Ancient World: AD 395–602

The divided Empire in East and West; the Visigoths and the first sack of Rome; loss of Spain and Britain

The Vandal conquest of Africa; the Huns; the second sack of Rome

3rd Essay assigned
The fall of the Roman Empire in the West; the Germanic successor kingdoms in Italy, Spain, and Gaul

Consolidation of the Eastern Empire; Justinian’s re-conquest of Africa and Italy

3rd Essay due
Outlook: the Greek transformation of the Roman Empire in the East; the rise of the Islamic Arab empire

Tuesday, May 6, 1:00 pm: FINAL EXAMINATION