

## CLAS 345: The Roman Empire

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Fall, 2009  
TTh 1:45-3:00 (late start: 9:45)  
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### COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GOALS

The Roman Empire is characterized by the shift from the oligarchy of the Senate to the virtual monarchy of the emperor – and enormous change that was hidden in plain view at its beginning after Actium in 31 BCE. This course will pay special attention to the first two hundred years of the Empire, from its origins to the death of Marcus Aurelius; the crisis of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century and the rise of Christianity we will cover briefly at the end of the course. We will study this period not only in terms of its political, military, social, and economic shifts, but also in terms of its literature, its art and architecture, its philosophy, and its citizenry.

The goals for this class are: 1) to know the basic timeline and personalities of the imperial dynasties; 2) to learn the significant political and cultural changes that took place; 3) to read several Roman authors in translation and consider their political and social significance; 4) since this is a WI course, to focus on the process of writing and rewriting and to use writing as another means of learning.

### TEXTS

Required:

§H. H. Scullard, *From the Gracchi to Nero* (Routledge, 1982)

§C. Starr, *The Roman Empire, 27 BCE-476 CE* (Oxford, 1982)

§Virgil, *Aeneid*, trans. R. Fitzgerald (Vintage, 1990)

§Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars*, trans. R. Graves, rev. M. Grant (Penguin, 2003)

§Petronius, *Satyricon*, trans. S. Ruden (Hackett, 2000)

§Pliny, *The Letters of Pliny the Younger*, trans. B. Radice (Penguin 1963)

§Juvenal, *Sixteen Satires*, trans. P. Green (Penguin 3rd edition 1999)

§Tacitus, *Annals*, trans. M. Grant (Penguin 1956)

Other readings will be available online. These appear in the syllabus below.

### Websites

#### Requirements of the course:

1. **Preparation:** This course will combine lecture and discussion in most meetings. Both the lecture and the discussion will usually presuppose your familiarity with the

readings assigned. At the beginning you should make a commitment to complete the assignments and to think about what you have read. The reading will take 1-2 hours a day every day. There can be no set limit on the time you spend digesting and contemplating and appropriating the material. The more it becomes a part of you, the more successful the class will be. **Being prepared for class means having the appropriate book(s) in class.** Bring the book under discussion to class **every day**.

2. **Attendance:** Attendance is absolutely necessary for a successful class; absences should not occur except in extraordinary circumstances, that is, in true emergencies. Two absences will not be penalized, but after that, the following penalties accrue: for your third absence, your course grade will fall by 2 points; for your fourth, by 4 points; for your fifth, by 7 points, for your sixth, by 10 points; at your seventh absence, you will fail the course. Documented legal or medical emergencies *may* be an exception. **If it snows:** Either classes will be cancelled or operate on a delayed snow schedule (you can find this out by calling the Snow Line (828) 259-3050) or they will operate on a normal schedule. If you cannot attend, try to notify me *prior* to missing class. Weather may or may not be a legitimate excuse; however, if you live remotely and you do not feel safe to drive, do not drive. I'll work with you. Tardiness is frowned upon, and if excessive or chronic (i.e. more than 30 minutes late, or late repeatedly) will affect your participation grade and may be counted as an absence.

3. **Participation:** Most classes will be shaped by lecture or presentation, but it is vital that we share our questions, ideas, and insights with each other. Never be afraid to ask a question, offer a comment, take a stand on an issue, or disagree with the professor or anyone else. It is through free and lively exchange that we refine our skills and our views. Several guidelines can help govern this exchange: enter this class intending to learn a great deal; bring an open and critical mind; a sense of humor; an interest in people of other times and places; a willingness to offer your own ideas and to comment respectfully on the ideas of others. You will be assigned a grade on your participation, which necessarily involves your attendance and preparation.

4. **Journal** (Strongly recommended): I recommend that each of you write out thoughts, ideas, responses, or, perhaps best, questions about the texts read each day. Keep this material collected in one notebook, designated specifically for that purpose. Write as much as you can; include reasons why you have your ideas or why you are interested in your questions. I encourage you to collect material, if it helps you, into particular interpretive approaches like those below. Bring your journal to class – it can provide the springboard for class discussions – and it is the source for your paper.

5. **WRITING:** Writing intensive classes are characterized less by the number of pages assigned, and more by the attention paid to the various stages of writing. That process will be privileged in our approach to writing in this class. Rather than write multiple shorter papers, you will write one paper in various stages, due at different

points during the semester. Each stage will receive a grade. Some of the ways I will characterize these stages are completely idiosyncratic, and I will explain more fully as due dates near.

- 1) **Broad Subject Area.** The first step is surprisingly difficult: what would you like to learn this semester? I recommend a few criteria in selecting: think carefully about something that you will enjoy working on all semester; choose something that we will not cover in detail in class; but choose something that you can present to your colleagues in class. Broad subject areas might include things political (informers, exile, provincial government); economic (grain dole, banking, interest rates, ship trade); legal (jury duty, marriage laws, wills); social (slavery, freedmen, public games, guilds, women's hairstyles); architectural (imperial fora, construction methods, roads, aqueducts); literary or artistic (satire, epic, history, letters, wall painting, sculpture, patronage, publication, declamation); philosophical or religious (Stoicism, Cynicism, Judaism) – this is meant as a very partial list.
- 2) **Source Paper.** After you have chosen your broad area, begin to collect passages significant for understanding and interpreting it, and scholarly approaches to it. I am calling this a "Source Paper," since it is more an exercise in gathering material than in interpreting it. You should gather at least 20 passages from original sources (though this may be difficult for some areas – we'll discuss it if necessary) and survey at least five different works of scholarship.
- 3) **Specific Focus.** Out of all the material you've collected, focus on one aspect of your work that will allow you to produce a final 10-12 page paper that is reasonably thorough and well-documented.
- 4) **Choice of Paper.** This is simply a decision: will your paper primarily be a research paper that compiles and digests original and scholarly material, or will it be driven by your own interpretive question? The two types of papers are different and require different approaches, though both are excellent means of learning. For this stage, you will submit the specific sources and a brief outline or summary of your paper, or the interpretive question that you will pursue and the sources that you will use to draw your conclusions.
- 5) **First Draft.** A 5-8 page draft that includes an introduction, a clear description of the paper's focus or question, and tentative conclusion(s), along with a treatment of the source material. Organization and clarity are key. The class after these drafts are due will include time for peer review.
- 6) **Second Draft/Response to Peer Criticism.** The second draft must include a paragraph (at the beginning or end) discussing what you did with the reviewers' comments – even if you did not use them, you need to explain why.
- 7) **Final Draft.** The final draft will be not only eloquent and thorough, but free from errors of spelling and grammar.

6. **Presentation.** After the papers have been completed, each student will **read** a condensed version of her paper to the rest of the class. Unless exceptions are requested, these presentations will **not** include PowerPoint slides.

7. **Special Needs:** If anyone has a disability that requires special accommodation for quizzes, writing, or tests, please be sure that you are registered with the Advising and Learning Support Center, 219A University Hall; Ethan S. Fesperman is the Asst.

Director and the phone is 232-5050. You should let me know **at the beginning of the semester** what accommodations you will need.

8. We will have quizzes on the readings, lectures, and presentations, i.e. factual material. There will be one a cumulative final exam; a general format of the final will be discussed in class prior to exam time. There will be one paper, stages of which will be due at different points during the semester. In addition to your written work, grades will be given for your participation. Letter grades represent the following averages: 100-92.5=A, 92.5-90=A-, 90-87.5=B+, 87.5-82.5=B, 82.5-80=B-, 80-77.5=C+, 77.5-72.5=C, 72.5-70=C-, 70-67.5=D+, 67.5-60=D, 60-0=F

All of you will be held to the standards of academic honesty as described in the 2009-2010 catalog, which can be found on UNC-A's website as Catalog, under the heading "Academic Regulations and Procedures" and subheading "Student Responsibilities", where academic misconduct is discussed. A breach of academic honesty will result in, at the very least, the unacceptability of the work under question; and at the very most, expulsion from the university. A breakdown of the grade distribution appears thus:

quizzes	- 10%
source paper (due 10/8)	- 10%
first draft (due 11/3)	- 10%
second draft (due 11/17)	- 10%
final draft (due 11/24)	- 15%
presentation	- 5%
final exam (12/10)	- 15%
preparation/participation	- 25%

**Syllabus:** This syllabus is intended as a guide, not a straitjacket. You are responsible for every reading listed below, whether it is fully discussed in class or not. You are to read and prepare each passage thoroughly by the date beside which they appear.

### **Wk. I: The End of the Republic**

8/18: Intro to course: syllabus, material, assignments. From 60-42 BCE.

8/20: The Second Triumvirate and Actium. Scullard, chap. 8

### **Wk. II: After Actium: The Augustan Settlement(s)**

8/25: *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* (*The Achievements of the Divine Augustus* – [www.skidmore.edu/classics/courses/1999spring/hi361f/resgestae.html](http://www.skidmore.edu/classics/courses/1999spring/hi361f/resgestae.html)) and Suetonius, *Life of Augustus*.

8/27: Scullard, chaps. 11-12

**Wk. III: The Aeneid**

9/1: *Aeneid* 1-6

9/3: *Aeneid* 7-12

**Wk. IV: The Augustan Legacy**

9/8: From Brick to Marble: Augustan Art and Architecture

9/10: The Problem of Dynasty: Tacitus, *Annals* ch. 1 (1.1-15); Suetonius, *Life of Tiberius*; Starr, ch. 2.

**Wk. V: The Julio-Claudians Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius**

9/15: Tiberius, Sejanus, and the Senate: Tacitus, *Annals* chs. 6-8 (3.18-6.52)

9/17: Scullard ch. 13; Suetonius, *Life of Caligula*

**Wk. VI: The Julio-Claudians Claudius and Nero**

9/22: Scullard ch. 14      **Broad Subject Area Due.**

9/24: From the New Golden Age to Opposition and Decline: Lucan, *Pharsalia* 1 (handout); Tacitus *Annals* chs. 11-16 (13-15)

**Wk. VII: Early Imperial Society and Literature**

9/29: Scullard, ch. 15; Starr, ch. 3.

10/1: Provinces, Citizenship, Laws, and Roads: Starr, Ch. 6; *Acts of the Apostles* in New Testament  
([www.biblegateway.com/passage/?book\\_id=51&chapter=1&version=31](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?book_id=51&chapter=1&version=31))

**Wk. VIII: Petronius**

10/6: Petronius, *Satyricon* (pp. 1-60)

10/8: Petronius, *Satyricon* (pp. 61-127) **Source Paper Due.**

**Wk. IX: The Flavians**

10/13: **Fall Break**

10/15: Tacitus, *Agricola* ([www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/tacitus-agricola.html](http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/tacitus-agricola.html))  
**Specific Focus/Choice of Paper Due.**

**Wk. X: Rome and the Provinces**

10/20: Starr, ch. 4: Governing the Empire

10/22: Starr, ch. 5: Cities of the Empire

**Wk. XI: Literature in the Early Second Century**

10/27: Juvenal, *Satires* 1-5, 9, 10, 15

10/29: Pliny the Younger, selected letters on oratory (1.20; 2.14), past 'tyranny' (1.5, 17; 4.11, 22; 5.5; 6.27; 8.6; 9.13), trials (2.11; 3.9; 4.9), literature/literary activity (1.13; 3.5; 4.27; 5.3; 6.21; 7.4), Vesuvius (6.16, 20), slaves (8.1, 16).

**Wk. XII: The "Five Good Emperors"**

11/3: Pliny the Younger, Letters Book 10 **First Draft Due.**

11/5: Religions in the Roman Empire. Read epitome of Cassius Dio's *Roman History* bk. 69 on Hadrian  
([http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Cassius\\_Dio/69\\*.html](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Cassius_Dio/69*.html))

**Wk. XIII: Daily Life in the Empire**

11/10: Peer Review of First Drafts. Imperial Fora, Markets, Cities.

11/12: Houses, Women, Children, Slaves...

**Wk. XIV: The Crisis of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century/ Constantine and Christianity**

11/17: Starr, ch. 7 **Second Draft/Peer Review Response Due.**

11/19: Starr, ch. 8

**Wk. XV: Student Presentations**

11/24: Student presentations **Final Draft of Paper Due.**

11/26: **Thanksgiving Break**

**Wk. XVI: City of Man, City of God**

12/1: Student presentations

12/3: Student presentations. Last day of class; final remarks; preview of final.

**Final exam:** Thursday, December 10, 11:30-2:00