

## HIS 355: THE ROMAN EMPIRE

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Hours: TTH 11-12  
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This course concerns the history of the Roman Empire--that vast region extending from Britain to the Sahara and from the Atlantic to Syria--from the mid-first century BC to the sixth century AD. We shall consider the evolution of the system of government which made possible the administration of the empire, the economic activities and social patterns which characterized the empire, and the beliefs and values motivating individuals and groups within the empire. The world of the Roman Empire appeared to contemporaries of the second century A.D. stable, prosperous, and everlasting--the final stage in the history of human society. It was not, as it turned out, and we shall consider the fundamental changes, including the spread of Christianity, which transformed the empire by the early fourth century. Finally, we shall examine the factors responsible for the decline of the empire in the west during the fifth and sixth centuries.

In addition to the continuous narrative history provided by the textbook (Boatright et al., *The Romans*), students will read various ancient works as assigned. Discussions are integrated into the lecture format, and students are expected to have completed the readings for a given class by the class meeting.

There will be two one-hour examinations, a final (non-cumulative examination), and two 4-6 page papers on assigned topics.

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### Books required

Boatright, et al., *The Romans* (= B)  
Suetonius, *The Twelve Caesars*  
Pliny, *Letters*  
Apuleius, *Golden Ass*  
Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*  
Augustine, *Confessions*

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### Schedule of Lectures/Reading Assignments

8/15 Roman Republic: Achievements and Problems  
8/17 Gaius Julius Caesar B 217-256  
8/22 44-30 BC B 257-276;  
<http://www.colorado.edu/classics/clas1061/Text/RFHO14.htm>  
8/24 The Principate B 276-294, 299-308; Suetonius, *Augustus*,

51-108;

*Res Gestae*: <http://classics.mit.edu/Augustus/deeds.html>

- 8/29 The Empire under Augustus B 294-299; Ara Pacis:  
<http://honorsaharchive.blogspot.com/2007/01/ara-pacis-augustae.html>  
<http://cdm.reed.edu/ara-pacis/contents.php>; Roman army:  
<https://www.realmofhistory.com/2016/03/28/animation-demonstrates-superb-organization-roman-army/>
- 8/31 Tiberius to Nero B 309-327; Suetonius, Tiberius, 101-145;  
Suetonius, Nero, 209-214
- 9/5 Year of the 4 Emperors and Flavians B 327-329, 347-359; Suetonius,  
Domitian, 243-309; *Lex de Imperio Vespasiani*: [http://droitromain.upmf-grenoble.fr/Anglica/vespas\\_johnson.html](http://droitromain.upmf-grenoble.fr/Anglica/vespas_johnson.html)
- 9/7 City of Rome Tour: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MF9\\_CNi2IDg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MF9_CNi2IDg)
- 9/12 The Provinces and the Army B 329-346
- 9/14 FIRST EXAM
- 9/19 Romans and Jews  
<https://clas-pages.uncc.edu/james-tabor/the-jewish-world-of-jesus-an-overview>  
<http://preteristarchive.com/JewishWars/gs-siege.html>
- 9/21 Jesus and the Beginning of the Jesus Movement <https://clas-pages.uncc.edu/james-tabor/ancient-judaism/messianic-and-apocalyptic-biblical-texts>  
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/apocalypse/primary/white.html>  
<https://clas-pages.uncc.edu/james-tabor/christian-origins-and-the-new-testament/the-gospel-according-to-q;>  
[http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Journals/CJ/27/4/Conflagrations\\*.html](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Journals/CJ/27/4/Conflagrations*.html)  
<http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/rome.htm>  
<http://legacy.fordham.edu/Halsall/ancient/diocassius-nero1.asp>  
<http://www.csun.edu/~hcfl1004/xtians.html>
- 9/26 Good Emperors, Good Times B 359-400; Pantheon:  
<http://honorsaharchive.blogspot.com/2007/01/pantheon-and-hadrians-building-program.html>  
<http://jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/2471-bar-kokba-and-bar-kokba-war#762>
- 9/28 Roman Law and Legal Practices B 411-421
- 10/3 Aristocratic Culture B 374-400; Pliny, Letters, Books 1, 3, 5, 6, 9, 10  
M. Aurelius, *Meditations*
- 10/5 Religions in the Roman Empire B 386-387; Apuleius, *Golden Ass*, 33-104, 148-164, 234-255
- 10/12 Christianities in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century  
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/first/paganism.html>

<http://www.gnosis.org/library/marcion/Mead.htm>  
[http://www.gnosis.org/library/ter\\_marc4.htm](http://www.gnosis.org/library/ter_marc4.htm)

10/17 The Severan Dynasty: Militarizing Government B 400-411

10/19 Third-century Crisis B 427-435;  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barracks\\_emperor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barracks_emperor)  
<http://legacy.fordham.edu/Halsall/ancient/246philip-pet1.asp>  
<http://legacy.fordham.edu/Halsall/ancient/vopiscus-aurelian1.asp>  
[http://en.museodellemuraroma.it/sede/mura\\_aureliane](http://en.museodellemuraroma.it/sede/mura_aureliane)

10/24 SECOND EXAM

10/26 Recovery B 434-435;

10/31 Diocletian B 435-441; Edicts Against Christians:  
<http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/source/persec1.asp>

11/2 Constantine B 441-465; Toleration Edicts:  
<http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/source/edict-milan.asp>; Arch of  
Constantine: read Elizabeth Marlowe, "Framing the Sun: The Arch of Constantine and the  
Roman Cityscape", *The Art Bulletin* 88.2 (June, 2006): 223-242 (access through Jackson  
Library Journal Finder);  
<http://www.churchhistory101.com/century4-p8.php>  
<http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/source/nicea1-sel.asp>  
<http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/source/const1-laws2.asp>

11/7 Persistence of Paganism: Julian B 465-475; Julian, *Against the Galileans*  
[http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/julian\\_apostate\\_galileans\\_1\\_text.htm](http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/julian_apostate_galileans_1_text.htm)

4/13 Theodosius: Orthodoxy and Intolerance B 475-478;  
<http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/source/theodcodeXVI.asp>

4/15 Social/Economic Developments B 478-482

4/17 Augustine *Confessions*, 43-228

4/20 Barbarian Settlements B 487-495

4/22 Decline of Empire in West B 495-500; Sidonius Apollonaris:  
<http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/source/sidonius1.asp>

4/24 Culture of the Late Empire B 505-515

4/27 The Eastern Roman Empire B 500-505  
[http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Journals/HSPH/30/Coronation\\_Ceremonies\\*.html](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Journals/HSPH/30/Coronation_Ceremonies*.html)

4/28 Fall and Future of the Empire B 515-518

5/4 THIRD EXAM 8-11