

HIS 355: THE ROMAN EMPIRE

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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 B.C. to the sixth century A.D. 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 (Heichelheim, Yeo, and Ward), 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.

Books required

Heichelheim, Yeo, and Ward, A History of the Roman People
Suetonius, The Twelve Caesars
Pliny, Letters
Apuleius, Golden Ass
Marcus Aurelius, Meditations
Augustine, Confessions

Schedule of Lectures/Reading Assignments

1/14	Introduction	
1/16	To Gaius Julius Caesar	HYW 198-208
1/18	Octavian's Early Career	HYW 209-216
1/21	No Class—MLK Holiday	
1/23	Struggle with Antony	HYW 216-223

1/25	The Principate	HYW 246-265; Suetonius, <u>Augustus</u> , 51-108
1/28	The Empire under Augustus	HYW 265-294
1/30	Julio-Claudians I	HYW 295-306; Suetonius, <u>Tiberius</u> , 101-145
2/1	Julio-Claudians II	HYW 307-317; Suetonius, <u>Nero</u> , 209-214
2/4	Year of the 4 Emperors	HYW 318-320
2/6	Flavians	HYW 320-328; Suetonius, <u>Domitian</u> , 243-309
2/8	City of Rome	
2/11	The Provinces and the Army	
2/13	FIRST EXAM	
2/15	Romans and Jews	
2/18	The Jewish Revolt	Tacitus, handout
2/20	Jesus in Historical Context	
2/22	Primitive Christianity	
2/24	Good Emperors, Good Times	HYW 329-344
2/27	Roman Law and Legal Practices	
3/1	Roman Culture	HYW 345-372; Pliny, <u>Letters</u> , Books 1, 3, 5, 6, 9, 10
3/4	Stoicism	M. Aurelius, <u>Meditations</u>
3/6	Religions in the Roman Empire	Apuleius, <u>Golden Ass</u> , 33-104, 148-164, 234-255
3/8	Evolution of Christianity	HYW 359-361
3/11-3/15	No Class: Spring Break	
3/18	Septimius Severus	HYW 373-380
3/20	Later Severans	HYW 380-383
3/22	Third-century Crisis	HYW 384-391
3/25	SECOND EXAM	
3/27	Recovery	HYW 391-395
3/29	Social and Political Consequences	HYW 396-414
4/1	Diocletian	HYW 415-426
4/3	Constantine	HYW 426-430
4/5	Autocracy of Late Empire	
4/8	Constantine as Christian Emperor	HYW 430-437
4/10	Persistence of Paganism: Julian	HYW 438-444
4/12	Theodosius	
4/15	Social/Economic Developments	HYW 445-463
4/17	Augustine	HWY 464-488; <u>Confessions</u> , 43-228

4/19 Barbarian Settlements	HYW 489-498
4/22 Culture of the Late Empire	HYW 529-541
4/24 Decline of Empire in West	HYW 499-505
4/26 No Class—Spring Holiday	
4/29 Age of Justinian	HYW 506-523
4/30 Legacy of the Roman Empire	HYW 541-546
5/6 THIRD EXAM 12-3	