HIST 332: History of Ancient Rome.

Instructor: Bruce O'Brien

Day, time & place: TR, 9:30-10:45, Monroe 112

Monroe 215; 654-1477; bobrien@umw.edu; office hours TR 11-12, 2-3:30, or by appointment.

Course description and goals

This upper level course on the history of Rome (which counts as an elective for History and Classics majors) covers Rome from the earliest settlement and myths of origin to the crises of the fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries that led to the collapse of the Western Roman Empire and the survival and transformation of the eastern half of the empire. Students will acquire a framework for Roman history in the broadest sense and study key aspects of Roman culture. The assignments measure students' knowledge as well as bring them into close contact with Roman writers and teach them the basic methods of interpreting different kinds of primary source evidence. In general terms, students will gain an:

- ability to read critically primary sources and modern authorities
- ability to write with clarity about the past
- ability to utilize technological resources in research
- understanding of the discipline's methods and processes

Required Readings

David Potter, *Ancient Rome: A New History*, 2nd edition (2014)

Additional readings will be available on the course website or distributed by email.

Written work

The course is writing intensive and has three writing assignments including an essay on the final exam. There is also a group source collection assignment, which will involve a modicum of focused descriptive writing. The formal writing assignments are: 1. An essay assessing two of the primary sources collected by the group (5-6 pages, 15%). 2. A short research paper on a set question related to the group project (10-12 pages, 25%). 3. An essay on the final exam (which will count for 25% of the final exam grade).

Group Project

Students will contribute to a group blog that identifies and lists relevant primary source selections related to one of two regions of the Roman Empire (Britannia and Gaul/Oriens and Syria). This group grade will count for 15% of each group member's course grade.

Tests

There will be a geography quiz (3%), a midterm (10%) and a final exam (20%).

Participation

The grade for participation, which counts for 12% of the course grade, will be based on short informal writing submitted in some classes as well as on attendance and contributions to discussions. In order to make a contribution, it is imperative that you keep up on the reading. You will be called on to engage on issues throughout the term. At times you will be assigned a question for the following day's discussion, and will be expected to be able to speak on the subject or start a class discussion. You may want, then, to write down your answer to these questions to help you organize your thoughts.

Grading Principles

In this class, an A (93–100) or A- (90–92) mean that the work done is of excellent quality. B+ (88–89), B (83–87) and B- (80–82) mean that the work was well done, competent, even excellent in some ways, but that there is room for improvement. C+ (78–79), C (73–77), and C- (70–72) signify that the work was satisfactory in most respects, even good in some ways, but that there was much room for improvement. D+ (68–69) and D (60–67) are passing grades, but mean that much more could be done in most if not all areas of the work, but that it was not missing *in toto* any key aspect of the assignment. I assign grades based on a number of variables which, if they can be named (e.g., style, argument, research, etc.), cannot in reality be separated from each other. Each variable affects the others. Deficient style will vitiate argument; poor research will undermine argument, and so on. Students earning less than a C by mid semester will receive a notice of unsatisfactory performance.

As with all courses at UMW, this class will abide by the honor code. In particular, students must not commit plagiarism. Inappropriate collaboration is also forbidden. Any questions concerning the boundary between legitimate and illegitimate appropriation and citation of sources should be brought to the professor before assignments are turned in.

Students with Disabilities

The Office of Disability Services has been designated by the University of Mary Washington as the primary office to guide, counsel, and assist students with disabilities. If you receive services through that office and require accommodations for this class, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible to discuss your approved accommodations. I will hold any information you share with me in strictest confidence unless you give me permission to do otherwise.

If you have not made contact with the Office of Disability Services and have reasonable accommodation needs, I will be happy to help you contact them. The office will require appropriate documentation of a disability.

Other Resources

If you are depressed or stressed out and finding it hard to cope with school, the people around you, or life in general, I recommend visiting the UMW Counseling and Psychological Services Center: the Center can be reached at (540) 654-1053 (M-F 8-5), or you can stop by Lee 106.

For events and announcements from the History Department, as well as useful pages on research and writing, see the Department's News and Resources website: http://cas.umw.edu/historyamericanstudies/

Warning on Electronic Devices

You cannot use a laptop in class unless you have a specific accommodation for this. I have had to institute this ban because too often laptops have become distractions for users as well as for those around them. Phones must be turned off completely and not just set to vibrate. They must not be visible to either the student or the professor. They cannot be used in any way during class. It follows, then, that there will be no texting during class. To text at any point shows you do not respect me or your classmates, let alone the hard work of some who may be paying your tuition. If I see you texting, you will be asked to leave class that day.

Note: This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.

Calendar

January

17 Course introduction

19 Origins: myths and reality

Read: Potter, pp. 8–47

Selection of groups will take place in class on this day.

24 A troubled source: Livy

Read: For a recent introduction to Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, book 1., read this version in Google Books (the maps on pp. xxxvi-xliii are very useful). Here is a pdf of Book 1 from the same edition (but without introduction or maps).

Question for discussion: What are we to do with Livy? How do we make use of his 'evidence'?

26 The early republic

Read: Potter, pp. 47–56; The Twelve Tables.

31 Rome and its neighbors

Read: Potter, pp. 58–73

Geography quiz

February

2 The Punic wars

Read:Potter, pp. 73-82; Polybius and Livy on the Battle of Cannae: What actually happened on the battlefield?

7 Polybius and his *Histories*

Read: Polybius, *Histories*, book 6.

9 Causes and consequences of empire

Read: Potter, pp. 82-104

14 Reform

Read: Potter, pp. 105-116

16 Rise of the *imperatores*

Read: Potter, pp. 117-35; Plutarch, *Lives of Marius and Sulla*

Question: Can we distinguish Marius from Sulla on the basis of their principles?

21 Civil wars

Read: Potter, pp. 135-78

23 Augustus and the first emperors

Read: Potter, pp. 178-208; Suetonius, *Life of Augustus*; *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*;

28 Growing up Roman

Read: Selections from various sources.

March

2 Midterm exam

4—12 Spring Break

14 Snow day

16 Review of work

21 The East

Read: Potter, pp. 210-217; Josephus, selections from *The Jewish War,* books I-III and books IV-VII

Here are the selections to read: Book 1, pp. 1-17; book 2, pp. 483-505; book 6, pp. 495-505; and book 7, pp. 583-619.

23 The West

Read: Tacitus, *Agricola*.

28 The 'good' emperors

Read: Potter, pp. 217-41.

Visit the digital *Villa Hadriana*

30 Civic life

Read: Read: Potter, pp. 241–58; Selections from the *Inscriptions of Aphrodisias*

April

1 **First Essay Due (by Sat., 11:59 PM)**

4 Third-century problems

Read: Potter, pp. 258–83; *Historia Augusta*, selections: Lives of Elagabalus, Septimius Severus, and the Thirty Pretenders.

6 The Tetrarchy

Read: Potter, pp. 284–95; The Price Edict of Diocletian

8 Group website completed as of 11:59 PM

11 Christianity and its competitors

Read: Potter, pp. 295–310; Celsus, selections; Origen, selections

13 Defending the empire from Huns and Goths

Read: Potter, pp. 311–20; Anonymous, *De rebus bellicis*: English translation and Latin edition.

Read: Potter, pp. 316–20; Ammianus Marcellinus, *Histories*, selection

14 Review of Individual Contributions to Group Project due.

18 The collapse

Read: Potter, pp. 322–32; Anonymous Velasianus, *Life of Theodoric*

Be prepared to answer this question: What are Theodoric's principle qualities as a leader?

20 Justinian's dream

Read: Potter, pp. 332–37; Procopius, *Wars*, selections from the Gothic War and the Secret History.

21 Draft of paper sent by authors to peer reviewers.

22 Peer review sent to authors.

25 The transformation of the Roman world

Read: Potter, pp. 337–54; Robin Fleming, *Britain After Rome*, selection.

26 Email by noon on the 26th questions, issues, etc., which you would like us to deal with in class tomorrow (27th).

27 Forum for final papers (issues, notes, questions)

28 *Department Symposium (you must attend one session of the Symposium)*

30 **Final research paper due (by 11:59 PM)**

Final exam: Thursday, May 4, 8:30-11:00 AM