

# **HISTORY 1011: THE WORLD OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE**

**Fall 2012, Tuesdays and Thursdays 12-1; weekly section TBD**

**Professor Emma Dench;**

**Teaching Fellows: Rowan Dorin, Christopher Gilbert and Monica Park**

**(Prof. Dench's office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 1-2 pm in Boylston 224;**

**Teaching fellows' office hours: TBD)**

## **1. Description**

The Roman empire was a very big place: contemporaries were already talking about world rule as early as the second century BCE. Networks of roads emphasized a closely connected world, and left nobody who used them in any doubt about the centrality of Rome and the power of the Roman state. The majority of Roman subjects whose views we can trace today could identify correctly the current emperor most of the time. But there was nothing inevitable about Roman supremacy, and this sense of unity is only part of the story. In this survey class, we acknowledge the importance of the big events of the Roman state, especially the creation and maintenance of imperial power, and the transformation of the Republic into a dynastic monarchy. We will cover a broad chronological range, from the later third century BCE to the mid-third century CE. But we also emphasize the multiple different cultures and social groups of the Roman empire and their diverse involvement in, and perspectives on, Roman conquest and rule. Case-studies, based on materials ranging from ancient historical and fictional accounts to archaeological studies, will bring to life some of these different perspectives, highlighting the voices and experiences of rulers and subjects alike.

All students with an interest in learning more about Roman society and history are welcome to join the course, and no prior knowledge is assumed.

**Note: This course, when taken for a letter grade, meets the General Education requirement for Societies of the World or the Core area requirement for Historical Study B. This course fulfills the requirement that one of the eight General Education courses also engages substantially with Study of the Past.**

There will be two one-hour lecture sessions per week; you should also anticipate a weekly one-hour section, to be confirmed.

Course-requirements and grading system are indicated at the end of this syllabus.

## **2. Syllabus**

### **Week One**

1. Introduction: Roman worlds (9/4)
2. World city and world empire (9/6)

## Week Two

3. Towards Roman world conquest: a 3<sup>rd</sup>- to 2<sup>nd</sup>-century perspective (9/11)
4. The Greek world and 'Hellenization' (9/13)

Reading: D.S. Potter, *Ancient Rome: a New History* ch. 2, 'War and Empire', pp. 55-98

Section: Polybius of Megalopolis between Greece and Rome:

Polybius Bk 6, ch. 2-4; 11-58

Find out about Polybius' life and work by looking him up in the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, online via Hollis

## Week Three

5. The world of the Carthaginians (9/18)
6. Back home in Rome: the long 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE (9/20)

Reading: D.S. Potter, *Ancient Rome: a New History* ch. 3, 'The failure of the Roman Republic', pp. 99-131 (skipping over pp. 117-122).

Section: Vergil's Carthaginian Dido

Vergil (P. Vergilius Maro), *Aeneid* Book 1, lines 12-33; 297-756, and Book 4 (whole)

James N. Davidson, 'Domesticating Dido: History and Historicity', in Michael Burden (ed.), *A Woman Scorn'd: Responses to the Dido Myth* (1998), pp. 65-88

## Week Four

7. The world of Roman Italy (9/25)
8. Roman-style 'Democracy' (9/27)

Reading: D.S. Potter, *Ancient Rome: a New History* ch. 3, 'The failure of the Roman Republic', pp. 117-122

Section: Dual identities in Italy

Livy Book 1, chapters 9-13 (on the legend of the rape of the Sabine women), and chapters 34-35 (a fictional account of the arrival of Lucumo's arrival from Etruria, and his naturalization as Lucius Tarquinius Priscus)

Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, *Rome's Cultural Revolution* (2008), chapter 3, 'Roman Italy: between Roman, Greek and local'

## Week Five

9. The horizons of Pompey and Caesar (10/2)
10. The empire of Augustus (10/4)

Reading: D.S. Potter, *Ancient Rome: a New History* ch. 3, 'The failure of the Roman Republic', pp. 132-138, and ch. 4, 'The transition from Republic to principate', pp. 139-162.

Section: Julius Caesar and Gaul

Julius Caesar, *Gallic War*, Book 6, chapters 11-28

Greg Woolf, *Becoming Roman: the origins of provincial civilization in Gaul* (1998), ch. 2, 'The civilizing ethos'

**Week Six** -

10. NO LECTURE 10/9

11. Continuity and disruption from Tiberius to Trajan (10/11)

Reading: D.S. Potter, *Ancient Rome: a New History* ch. 3, 'The failure of the Roman Republic', pp. 162-194, and ch. 4, 'The age of stability', pp. 195-207

Section: Modeling the Roman Emperor

Suetonius, *Life of Nero*

F. Millar, 'State and Subject: the Impact of Monarchy', in F. Millar and E. Segal (eds.), *Caesar Augustus: Seven Aspects* (1984)

**Week Seven** -

12. Midterm exam (10/16)

13. Roman imperial interfaces 1: Roman structures of rule (10/18)

Reading: P. Garnsey and R. Saller, *The Roman Empire: Economy, Society and Culture* (1987), 'Government without Bureaucracy', pp. 20-40.

**No section this week**

**Week Eight**

14. The emperor in the Roman world (Hadrian to the Severans) (10/23)

15. Roman imperial interfaces 2: elites and communities of the Roman empire (10/25)

Reading: D.S. Potter, *Ancient Rome: a New History*, pp. 207-250; Janet Huskinson, 'Elite culture and the identity of empire', Richard Miles, 'Communicating culture, identity and power', and Phil Perkins, 'Power, culture and identity in the Roman economy', in J. Huskinson (ed.), *Experiencing Rome*

Section: Becoming Roman, staying Greek

Plutarch, *Precepts of Statecraft* ([http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Moralia/Praecepta\\_gerendae\\_reipublicae\\*.html](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Moralia/Praecepta_gerendae_reipublicae*.html))

R.R.R. Smith, 'Cultural choice and political identity in honorific portrait statues in the Greek East in the second century AD', *Journal of Roman Studies* vol. 88, 1998, pp. 56- 93

## **Week Nine**

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16. Inside Romulus' asylum: the world of Roman citizens (10/30)

17. The 99% in the Roman world (11/1)

Reading: Valerie Hope, 'The city of Rome: capital and symbol', and 'Status and identity in the Roman world', in J. Huskinson (ed.), *Experiencing Rome*

Section: Freedmen represented and in their own words

Petronius, *Satyricon* chapters 26-78 (Trimalchio's Dinner)

Jo-Ann Shelton, *As the Romans Did*, pp. 201-205 (numbers 213-224)

## **Week Ten**

18. The Egyptian world and 'Egyptianization' (11/6)

19. Jews in the Roman world (11/8)

Reading: M. Williams, 'Jews and Jewish communities in the Roman empire', in J. Huskinson (ed.), *Experiencing Rome*

Section: Perspectives on the siege of Jerusalem, 70 CE

Tacitus, *Histories*, Book 5, chapters 1-13

Josephus, *Jewish War*, Book 1, preface; Book 6.

## **Week Eleven**

20. The Roman world of early Christianity (11/13)

21. Women's worlds (11/15)

Reading: Dominic Montserrat, 'Reading gender in the Roman world', and J. Rives, 'Religion in the Roman Empire', in J. Huskinson (ed.), *Experiencing Rome*

Section for week 10: The Passions of Perpetua and Felicity

*The Passion of Saints Perpetua and Felicity*

B.D. Shaw, 'The Passion of Perpetua', *Past and Present* 139, 1993, pp. 3-45.

## **Week Twelve**

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22. The world of the Roman army (11/20)

Reading: O. Stoll, 'The religions of the Roman armies', in P. Erdkamp (ed.), *A Companion to the Roman Army* (2007)

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### Week Thirteen

23. The ends of the earth I: Britain (11/27)

24. The ends of the earth II: Dura Europus, Arabia, and Babatha's dossier (11/29)

Reading: M. Henig, 'Roman Religion and Roman Culture in Britain', in M. Todd (ed.), *A Companion to Roman Britain* (2004), 220-41

Section: Rome, India and China

Strabo, *Geography* Book 15

L. Ying, 'Ruler of the treasure country: the image of the Roman Empire in Chinese society from the first to the fourth centuries AD', *Latomus* 2004 63 (2): 327-339

### Week Fourteen

25. Towards an ending: cohesion, fracture and the 'third-century crisis' (12/4)

Reading: D.S. Potter, *Ancient Rome: a New History*, pp. 252-266; D.S. Potter, *The Roman Empire at Bay*, ch. 6, 'The failure of the Severan empire'.

### 3. Books, articles and primary sources

Each week, required background reading is specified under 'Reading'. Case studies are chosen to focus on primary evidence, textual and material, with some attention also to modern discussions. We are always happy to guide you to more detailed bibliographies, whether in connection with a paper you are writing, or just for interest. Remember that the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* is your friend: get in the habit of using it early and often! You will find it free and easy to use via the Hollis on-line catalogue.

We would strongly encourage you to buy two books to maintain regular access (although I have also put them on reserve in Lamont Library). They are available at the Harvard Coop:

D.S. Potter, *Ancient Rome: a New History* (Thames and Hudson, 2009)

J. Huskinson (ed.), *Experiencing Rome: Culture, Identity and Power in the Roman Empire* (Routledge, 1999)

You may also like to buy one or more of the 'recommended' books to deepen your knowledge and understanding of the ancient Roman world. These are also available at the Harvard Coop:

Michael Crawford, *The Roman Republic 264-44 BC* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Harvard University Press, 1993)

M. Goodman, *The Roman World 44 BC-AD 180* (Routledge, 1997)

D.S. Potter, *The Roman Empire at Bay, AD 180-395* (Routledge, 2004)

#### **4. Class requirements**

Attendance/participation in sections, including participation in discussions, regular one-page response papers and mini-quizzes: 25%

In class mid-term exam (**16 October 2012**): 20%

2 Brief papers (1000-1500) each analyzing and discussing one or more primary sources (chosen from an assigned list) that illuminate perspectives on the Roman empire (**first due on or before 30 September; second due on or before 9 December**): 15% each, 30% in total

Final exam: 25%

#### **5. Collaboration statement**

**Please read carefully Harvard's statement on plagiarism in addition to this collaboration statement:**

**<http://usingsources.fas.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=k70847&pageid=icb.page355322>**

An important part of doing history is discussion: this is of course encouraged in class, and we hope that you continue discussions outside class! It is equally important to acknowledge the thoughts and ideas of others, whether you have received them in a formal setting (e.g. by reading scholarship) or in an informal setting (e.g. in class or in discussions outside of class). All your written work should be your own: you should research and write it independently, although you are welcome to discuss ideas and work in progress with any of the class teachers or with other class members.

Historians usually date the beginning of the Roman Empire from 27 bc when the Roman Senate gave Gaius Octavius the name Augustus and he became the undisputed emperor after years of bitter civil war. At its peak the empire included lands throughout the Mediterranean world. Rome had first expanded into other parts of Italy and neighboring territories during the Roman Republic (509-27 bc), but made wider conquests and solidified political control of these lands during the empire. Roman Empire overview Rome was once a world power. The Roman Empire lasted from 23B. C. To About 476 A. D.. It was the brilliant political system, senators, and laws of Rome. Ancient Rome had the best political system for that time. Rome's political system was According to literature, Rome was founded in 753 BC by the twins named Romulus and Remus. They built their settlements on the Palatine and Aventine hills respectively. (Rome sits on seven hills.) Remus grew jealous of Romulus and mocked the size of the walls he had built, so Romulus killed him. He then named the city after himself and was crowned king. Whether or not this story is true, it highlights the warlike origins of Rome. Around 753 BC the foundations of one of the most powerful empires in By a coincidence of history the Roman empire, at its start, has recently achieved a new geographical completeness. The campaigns of Pompey have led to the annexation of Syria in 64 BC and the capture of Jerusalem in 63. With Octavian's defeat of Cleopatra at Actium in 31 BC, Egypt too becomes a province. Just in time for the start of the empire, the eastern pieces of the jigsaw are in place. The Mediterranean, centre of the known world (as its name states), has become what it will remain for the next four centuries - a Roman sea. And during the same period, until Constantine gives the cit