

## Term Information

Effective Term Spring 2024  
*Previous Value* Autumn 2023

## Course Change Information

**What change is being proposed? (If more than one, what changes are being proposed?)**

Adding TCT theme to this course

**What is the rationale for the proposed change(s)?**

This class is a good fit for the theme.

**What are the programmatic implications of the proposed change(s)?**

**(e.g. program requirements to be added or removed, changes to be made in available resources, effect on other programs that use the course)?**

N/A

**Is approval of the request contingent upon the approval of other course or curricular program request? Yes**

**Please identify the pending request and explain its relationship to the proposed changes(s) for this course (e.g. cross listed courses, new or revised program)**

This class is cross-listed with Classics, so they have a parallel submission.

**Is this a request to withdraw the course? No**

## General Information

Course Bulletin Listing/Subject Area	History
Fiscal Unit/Academic Org	History - D0557
College/Academic Group	Arts and Sciences
Level/Career	Undergraduate
Course Number/Catalog	3223
Course Title	The Later Roman Empire
Transcript Abbreviation	Late Roman Empire
Course Description	An advanced survey of Rome's history in the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries with focus on themes of decline, fall, and transformation.
Semester Credit Hours/Units	Fixed: 3

## Offering Information

Length Of Course	14 Week, 12 Week, 8 Week, 7 Week, 6 Week, 4 Week
Flexibly Scheduled Course	Never
Does any section of this course have a distance education component?	No
Grading Basis	Letter Grade
Repeatable	No
Course Components	Lecture
Grade Roster Component	Lecture
Credit Available by Exam	No
Admission Condition Course	No
Off Campus	Never
Campus of Offering	Columbus, Lima, Mansfield, Marion, Newark, Wooster

## Prerequisites and Exclusions

<b>Prerequisites/Corequisites</b>	Prereq or concur: English 1110.xx, or completion of GE Foundation Writing and Information Literacy Course, or permission of instructor.
<b>Exclusions</b>	Not open to students with credit for Clas 3223.
<b>Electronically Enforced</b>	Yes

## Cross-Listings

<b>Cross-Listings</b>	Cross-listed in Clas.
-----------------------	-----------------------

## Subject/CIP Code

<b>Subject/CIP Code</b>	54.0103
<b>Subsidy Level</b>	Baccalaureate Course
<b>Intended Rank</b>	Sophomore, Junior, Senior

## Requirement/Elective Designation

Required for this unit's degrees, majors, and/or minors  
General Education course:  
Historical Study; Traditions, Cultures, and Transformations  
The course is an elective (for this or other units) or is a service course for other units

### **Previous Value**

*Required for this unit's degrees, majors, and/or minors*  
*General Education course:*  
*Historical Study*  
*The course is an elective (for this or other units) or is a service course for other units*

## Course Details

<b>Course goals or learning objectives/outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students will be introduced to some of the major questions historians ask about the period of the later Roman empire.</li><li>• Students will be introduced to some of the primary tools and techniques historians use to understand the period of the later Roman empire.</li><li>• Students will explore some of the social, religious, political and cultural changes that characterize this transformative period in European history.</li></ul>
---	--

**COURSE CHANGE REQUEST**  
3223 - Status: PENDING

Last Updated: Vankeerbergen,Bernadette  
Chantal  
05/01/2023

**Content Topic List**

- History of the late Roman Empire with focus on themes of decline
- Fall and transformation
- War and invasion
- Social history of the period
- Political and economic crisis
- Transformation and decline
- Religion and the rise of Christianity
- Emergence of barbarian kingdoms
- Consolidation of imperial power in the East
- Re-conquest and the beginnings of the Early Middle Ages

**Sought Concurrence**

No

**Attachments**

- 3223 GE Form.docx: GE Form  
*(Other Supporting Documentation. Owner: Getson, Jennifer L.)*
- 3223 Syllabus GE TCT Revised AJR.docx: Revised Syllabus 5.1.2023  
*(Syllabus. Owner: Getson, Jennifer L.)*

**Comments**

- Uploaded revised syllabus in response to committee feedback. *(by Getson, Jennifer L. on 05/01/2023 09:19 AM)*
- Please see feedback email sent 04-19-2023 RLS *(by Steele, Rachel Lea on 04/19/2023 02:59 PM)*

**Workflow Information**

Status	User(s)	Date/Time	Step
Submitted	Getson, Jennifer L.	02/17/2023 02:10 PM	Submitted for Approval
Approved	Soland, Birgitte	02/17/2023 08:00 PM	Unit Approval
Approved	Vankeerbergen, Bernadette Chantal	03/01/2023 01:25 PM	College Approval
Revision Requested	Steele, Rachel Lea	04/19/2023 02:59 PM	ASCCAO Approval
Submitted	Getson, Jennifer L.	05/01/2023 09:19 AM	Submitted for Approval
Approved	Soland, Birgitte	05/01/2023 09:24 AM	Unit Approval
Approved	Vankeerbergen, Bernadette Chantal	05/01/2023 09:56 AM	College Approval
Pending Approval	Jenkins, Mary Ellen Bigler Hanlin, Deborah Kay Hilty, Michael Vankeerbergen, Bernadette Chantal Steele, Rachel Lea	05/01/2023 09:56 AM	ASCCAO Approval

**Class/Hist 3223 – GE Theme *Traditions, Cultures and Transformations***

**The Later Roman Empire**

**\* GE Proposal by Tina Sessa (History) and Alan Ross (Classics) \***

**Course Info**

History 3223

The Later Roman Empire

Semester ##

Lecture, 3 Credit Hours

Day, Time, Location ####

**Instructor Info**

Instructor: ####

Email Address: ###

Phone Number: ###

Office Hours: ###

**Land Acknowledgement**

We acknowledge that the land The Ohio State University occupies is the ancestral and contemporary territory of the Shawnee, Potawatomi, Delaware, Miami, Peoria, Seneca, Wyandotte, Ojibwe and Cherokee peoples. Specifically, the university resides on land ceded in the 1795 Treaty of Greeneville and the forced removal of tribes through the Indian Removal Act of 1830. As a land grant institution, we want to honor the resiliency of these tribal nations and recognize the historical contexts that has and continues to affect the Indigenous peoples of this land.

**Course Description**

This upper-level History and Classics course introduces students to transformations in the political, religious, and artistic cultures of the late Roman Empire between the third and sixth centuries CE, a period when the definition of what it meant to be Roman fundamentally shifted. Through detailed study of ancient sources and the interrogation of modern scholarship, students will trace the political and military events that led to the empire's geo-political fragmentation, and to the consolidation of imperial power in the East and to the transformation of the West into new so-called barbarian kingdoms. They will also explore some of the social, religious, and cultural changes that also characterize this transformative period in European history, such as the emergence of the Christian church as a public institution and the development of new forms of urban and rural life, as well as new artistic forms. Specific attention will be given to the changing composition of society as various subgroups ('barbarians', provincials, Christians, Greeks) rose to positions of cultural and societal dominance.

## Course Goals and Expected Learning Outcomes

This course fulfills the goals and expected learning objectives for the Theme **Traditions, Cultures and Transformations** in three primary ways. First, it requires the students to engage with advanced scholarly writings. From those, the student will learn the history and development of ideas, notions and beliefs, with an eye to their present experience and how such topics such as societal decline or cultural transformation are discussed in the current national and international discourse. Second, the students are asked to reflect and communicate, through regular class discussion, written, and multi-media assessments, what they have learned about the pervasiveness of ideas and models from antiquity and how those are relevant not only across disciplines but – most importantly – for their personal experience outside of the classroom. Third, by studying the particular case of the late Roman Empire, and its complex history of cultural transformation and continuity, students will be able to analyze how any culture (ancient or modern) is a combination of mainstream and sub-cultures, acceptance and resistance, and the product of constant negotiation and change.

### *Goals and ELOs for Theme in Traditions, Cultures and Transformations*

**GOAL 1:** Successful students will analyze an important topic or idea at a more advanced and in-depth level than in the Foundations component. [Note: In this context, "advanced" refers to courses that are e.g., synthetic, rely on research or cutting-edge findings, or deeply engage with the subject matter, among other possibilities.]

**GOAL 2:** Successful students will integrate approaches to the theme by making connections to out-of-classroom experiences with academic knowledge or across disciplines and/or to work they have done in previous classes and that they anticipate doing in future.

**GOAL 3:** Successful students will engage in a systematic assessment of how cultures and sub-cultures develop and interact, historically or in contemporary society.

**GOAL 4:** Successful students will engage in a systematic assessment of differences among societies, institutions, and individuals' experience within traditions and cultures.

**ELO 1.1:** Engage in critical and logical thinking about the topic or idea of the theme.

**ELO 1.2:** Engage in an advanced, in-depth, scholarly exploration of the topic or idea of the theme.

**ELO 2.1:** Identify, describe, and synthesize approaches or experiences as they apply to the theme.

**ELO 2.2:** Demonstrate a developing sense of self as a learner through reflection, self-assessment, and creative work, building on prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts.

**ELO 3.1:** Describe the influence of an aspect of culture (religious belief, gender roles, institutional organization, technology, epistemology, philosophy, scientific discovery, etc.) on at least one historical or contemporary issue.

**ELO 3.2:** Analyze the impact of a “big” idea or technological advancement in creating a major and long-lasting change in a specific culture.

**ELO 3.3:** Examine the interactions among dominant and sub-cultures.

**ELO 3.4:** Explore changes and continuities over time within a culture or society.

**ELO 4.1:** Recognize and explain differences, similarities, and disparities among institutions, organizations, cultures, societies, and/or individuals.

**ELO 4.2:** Explain ways in which categories such as race, ethnicity, and gender and perceptions of difference, impact individual outcomes and broader societal issues.

You will analyze a wide range of primary sources (textual, material) and how to use them to build arguments about the political, cultural, social, and religious trajectories of the late Roman Empire (ELO 1.1). You will discuss the major scholarly narratives about the late Roman Empire (ELO 1.2). You will be asked to compare your experiences of in your own lives and/or what you’ve have studied in other courses to aspects of the later Roman empire (including the pandemic – Justinianic plague) (ELO 2.1) and reflect on those issues (ELO 2.2)

You will be introduced to debates between pagans and Christians, and to intra-Christian hostilities and the formation of ideas of orthodoxy and heterodoxy, which become fundamental for western history (ELO 3.1; 3.2). The course routinely requires students to evaluate not just the ways that groups and subgroups differ from one another, but also how groups rhetorically use difference to construct or enhance their own identity (ELO 3.3), how those change over time (ELO 3.4), and how to examine and explain the differences between those groups (ELO 4.1). You will examine the role of gender in the early Church, and ethnicity in the context of Goths and Vandals (ELO 4.2).

**This course will fulfill the current GE Theme: Traditions, Cultures, and Transformations in the following ways:**

The course requires students to evaluate the ways in which the entire period of the Later Roman Empire can be defined as a period of transformation (as opposed to older historiographical models of decline and fall). They will address how the tension between tradition and transformation differs in various aspects of Late Roman culture: political, religious, and social. Additionally, students will trace the emergence of Christianity as a dominant political institution and of heresy and orthodoxy as discursive and legal categories/tools of exclusion; they will examine Roman cultural continuities between the early and late Roman empire with regard to social relations (elites, slavery); geo-political fragmentation of the Roman Empire and

emergence of post-Roman barbarian regimes in North Africa and northwestern Europe, and rise of Persia as dominant superpower in the East.

### Legacy Goals and ELOS from Pre-2022 GE

*This course fulfills the Historical Study requirements in General Education from the Pre-2022 General Education requirements.*

Course Goal for Historical Study: Students recognize how past events are studied and how they influence today's society and the human condition.

### Learning Outcomes:

- Students construct an integrated perspective on history and the factors that shape human activity.
- Students describe and analyze the origins and nature of contemporary issues.
- Students speak and write critically about primary and secondary historical sources by examining diverse interpretations of past events and ideas in their historical contexts.

*Goals of the course that fulfill the GE Learning Outcomes in Historical Study:* History and Classics courses develop students' knowledge of how past events influence today's society and help them understand how humans view themselves through the following ways:

1. Critically examine theories of history, and historical methodologies. **Theories of History:** This course examines the various theories seeking to account for the fall of the western Roman empire, the creation of successor states, and the eastern Byzantine empire. **Historical Methods:** The course proceeds by a theoretically informed empirical study combined with a close, analytical reading of the ancient sources.
2. Engage with contemporary and historical debates on specific regions, time periods and themes of the human past. **Historical Debates:** The causes of the western empire's fall and the benefits of Imperial government were both subjects of historical debate in the past and are still the subject of lively debate among both scholars and the general public.
3. Through reading in primary and secondary sources and in-depth class discussion, students will access and critically examine social, political, economic, military, gender, religious, and ethnic/racial/national movements in a wider socio-cultural context. The course presents students with a variety of sources and asks them to analyze how the sources illustrate the themes of the course. The course has been designed to take a "whole history" approach, including politics, economics, society, and culture.

4. Students will carry out in-depth analysis in a final paper comparing distinct historical moments, social movements and their effects. The essay exams and the final paper address these points explicitly.

### Required books

- Harries, Jill 2012. *Imperial Rome AD 284-363: The new empire* (Edinburgh history of ancient Rome). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. [On reserve at Thompson; eBook coming soon]. ISBN: 9780748620531
- Lee, A. 2013. *From Rome to Byzantium AD 363 to 565* (The Edinburgh history of Ancient Rome). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. [eBook]. ISBN: 9780748627912
- Maas, M. 2010 *Readings in Late Antiquity: a Sourcebook*. (Second edition). London: Routledge. ISBN: 9780415473378.

### Course Requirements

#### Attendance and in-class participation: 10 %

Participation is coming to class regularly **ready to discuss the materials** and contribute to a healthy classroom discussion. There is no option to zoom in synchronously and the lectures are not recorded. If a student cannot attend class for any reason (illness, job interview, family emergency, etc.), the student is responsible for communicating with the instructor in advance of the class meeting. Students are allowed a maximum of **THREE** absences per semester (unless specific medical or personal issues require long absences). After three absences, their participation grade will be curbed.

#### Quizzes (3): 5% each (15% Total)

There will be three in-class quizzes in this course. Each quiz will consist of a series of terms, names, and/or dates, which students will be asked to identify from their lecture notes and readings.

#### Reflections (2): 10% each (20% total)

At the end of each module, students must submit a short reflection (200-400 words) on what they have read, learned and discussed during the past few weeks. Students can choose to focus on one



particular thing they learned, or issue they now see differently or whether learning about the past is changing how they perceive similar ideas and approaches in the present.

### Take-Home historical commentary midterm: 25%

Students will be asked to write one historical commentary of approximately 3-4 pages in length on a choice of two ancient sources. The choice of sources will be released at **12pm on October X**. Students can consult their lecture notes and their readings to complete this exam.

Commentaries must be typed in 12 pt. font. Students must upload their completed commentary onto Carmen by **Wednesday October X+1, 5pm**. Students who fail to submit their exam electronically by 5 pm will be penalized for a late paper (see above). If you cannot upload your commentary onto Carmen for some reason, you may email it to me.

A commentary analyzes the content, the context and the significance of the passage/object of which you are asked to comment.

1. *Context*. This can have two parts. The first (always relevant) is where you locate the passage in terms of the work in which it appears (e.g. who is the author, date, genre of text, why those details are important for analyzing this particular passage). The second (relevant if an event is at issue) is where you locate the episode in its historical context, with attention to chronology, geography, and the like.
2. *Content*. This is where you explain details necessary to the understanding of the passage, e.g.: identify (briefly) named individuals, anyone or anything referred to by pronouns, any interesting places; explain political/social details referred to and the like.
3. *Significance*. This is where you explain why and how this particular passage is interesting/important. The passage might reveal something about the method of the historian; it might offer interesting comparison with one or more other ancient accounts, inscriptions, monuments, or artifacts; it might contain material central to the understanding or interpretation of the actions/policy of some or all of the characters involved; it might contain a chronological problem; it might well do more than one of the above or other similar things besides. In any case, what *difference* does this passage and its interpretation make to our understanding of something?

### Final Project: Late Roman Research Report (essay, podcast or webpage): 30%

For this project, you will research and write a report on an object that was produced during Late Antiquity. You may choose any object you like from the period covered in this course, ca. 250-650 CE so long as its provenance is somewhere within the late or post-Roman Empire. Anything

is acceptable so long as it is a **form of material culture that was human-made**. Examples include: Statues, imperial monuments, inscriptions, mosaics, ivory diptychs, manuscripts of early books, silverware (e.g. the Esquiline Treasure) as well as more quotidian objects such as lamps, stamped bricks or pipes, clothing items, and children's toys.

One place to look for ideas is: Deliyannis, Dey, and Squatriti, *Fifty Early Medieval Things: Materials of Culture of Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2019). Another place to search for ideas are the links on this syllabus to sites dealing with barbarian material culture.

### **Project Requirements:**

The content of each project must include the following:

- A. A Complete description of your object in your own words. Your report may include images of the object, but it should not rely upon them for the description. What is this object, and when was it made? Who produced it (if such information is known), and for whom was it created?
- B. A thorough discussion of the object's historical context: what sort of community, broadly speaking, created this? What political, social, and economic conditions help explain the object's appearance and function? What (and here you may speculate some) meanings did the object hold to those who possessed or encountered it?
- C. An evaluation of the object as an historical source, i.e. a piece of evidence about the past. Discuss the object's historical significance, what can we learn from it? And what are its limitations as a historical source, what **can't** it tell us?
- D. Bibliography. You must use **at least four** secondary sources for this project.

### **Platform Options for Final Project: Essay, Podcast, or Webpage**

For this assignment, you may choose to present your research and analysis in any one of the following three forms:

#### ***Traditional Essay Option***

Students who chose this option will compose an essay of 8-10 pages (including bibliography and embedded images of the object). The essay should be double-spaced with 12 pt. font.

All essays must also include footnotes as the means to cite all relevant (quoted, summarized) primary and secondary sources.

Grammar, spelling, and paragraph organization “count” toward the final grade. Please consult the rubric on Carmen for all grading categories under consideration by the instructor.

### ***Webpage Option***

You have the option of designing a webpage dedicated to the object, its historical context, meaning, and significance for historians of the Late Roman Empire.

Every webpage **must use three** of four possible media: video, audio, button, and text (approximately 2500 words).

OSU has a subscription for free, user-friendly software, with which to create the webpage called Adobe Spark. The website is: <https://spark.adobe.com/>. Directions for logging in are available through OSU’s Digital Flagship: <https://digitalflagship.osu.edu/adobe-spark>.

In addition to uploading the website address onto Carmen, please also include an annotated bibliography that presents all sources used to create the webpage.

### ***7-8 Minute Podcast Option***

The format of your podcast is up to you. Suitable formats include an interview, a mystery, or a short report. The entire audio narrative should be no more than ten minutes long and at least seven minutes long. You should be certain to start with a written text of some sort (it makes recording a great deal easier).

The assessment will be based on the **written transcript** of the podcast, the quality of podcast recording and editing, and the annotated bibliography. Please be sure to hand in your transcript to Carmen.

In terms of learning how to record a podcast (or more correctly, an audio file), please watch the following video to help you prepare. The link is [here](#). It includes information about free editing software called Audacity (<https://www.audacityteam.org/>), which you can download and use to edit your audiofile.

You may be able to record your narrative in a special audio recording studio on campus run by ODEE. To find out more about this option, go to: <https://odee.osu.edu/audio-studio>

### **Project Steps**

**Step One:** Select an object from the late Roman Empire to study.

**Step Two:** Conduct a preliminary round of research on your chosen object, during which you identify and read at least one relevant secondary source. Write up a short description of your object and include an annotated bibliography of the source you have already located and read. Upload this paragraph to Carmen and look for the instructor's response.

**Step Three:** Working with the instructor's comments and suggestions, continue research until you have located enough secondary sources to answer all the questions above. You must identify and use **at least four** secondary sources in total.

**Step Four:** Craft a written, oral, and/or visual narrative that examines your object and answers all the questions outlined above. Again, for this step you have three choices of platforms:

- An eight-ten page traditional essay
- A webpage
- A seven to eight-minute podcast

**Step Five:** Hand in your narrative either to the designated Carmen drop box (essays and websites) or to the designated class "Box" folder (podcasts and websites).

### **Enrollment Requirements, Statements, and Special Requests**

All students must be officially enrolled in this course by the end of the **FIRST** full week of the semester. No requests to add this course will be approved by the department chair after this time. Each student is solely responsible for his/her enrollment.

#### Statement on Disability

The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. In light of the current pandemic, students seeking to request COVID-related accommodations may do so through the university's request process, managed by Student Life Disability Services. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. SLDS contact information: [slds@osu.edu](mailto:slds@osu.edu); 614-292-3307; [slds.osu.edu](http://slds.osu.edu); 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.

### Statement on Mental Health

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student's ability to participate in daily activities. The Ohio State University offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. If you or someone you know are suffering from any of the aforementioned conditions, you can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Office of Student Life's Counseling and Consultation Service (CCS) by visiting [ccs.osu.edu](http://ccs.osu.edu) or calling [614-292-5766](tel:614-292-5766). CCS is located on the 4th Floor of the Younkin Success Center and 10th Floor of Lincoln Tower. You can reach an on call counselor when CCS is closed at [614-292-5766](tel:614-292-5766) and 24 hour emergency help is also available 24/7 by dialing 988 to reach the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.

### Statement on Violence and Sexual Harassment

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories (e.g., race). If you or someone you know has been sexually harassed or assaulted, you may find the appropriate resources at <http://titleix.osu.edu> or by contacting the Ohio State Title IX Coordinator at [titleix@osu.edu](mailto:titleix@osu.edu)

### Statement on Diversity

The Ohio State University affirms the importance and value of diversity in the student body. Our programs and curricula reflect our multicultural society and global economy and seek to provide opportunities for students to learn more about persons who are different from them. We are committed to maintaining a community that recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person; fosters sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among each member of our community; and encourages each individual to strive to reach his or her own potential. Discrimination against any individual based upon protected status, which is defined as age, color, disability, gender identity or expression, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status, is prohibited.

### **Academic Misconduct Policy**

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed;

illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct <http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/csc/>

### **Electronic Device Policy**

This classroom is **device-free**. All cell phones, tablets, and laptops should be switched off and put away unless otherwise directed by me. Texting, typing, and surfing the internet during class creates an atmosphere of distraction and undermines the basic purpose of education: to listen, learn, think, and discuss the topic at hand. Numerous studies have demonstrated that multi-tasking is detrimental to classroom learning. See, for example, Faria Sana, Tina Weston, and Nicholas Cepeda, "Laptop Multitasking Hinders Classroom Learning for Both Users and Nearby Peers," *Computers and Education*, 62 (2013): 24-31.

\*\*Students with disabilities that prevent them from handwriting notes are exempt from this policy.

## **Class Schedule**

### **1.1 Introduction to the Class and Syllabus**

### **1.2 Introduction to the Study of "Late Antiquity": Decline or Transformation?**

#### **Part 1: The empire in crisis and reformed**

#### **2.1 The Roman empire in ca. 200CE**

#### **2.2 The Crisis of the Third Century**

#### **3.1 Diocletian and the Tetrarchy**

#### **3.2 Christianity before Constantine: the 'Great Persecution' **Quiz 1****

#### **4.1 Constantine: Revolutionary or reactionary, part 1**

#### **4.2 Constantine: Revolutionary or reactionary, part 2**

#### **5.1 Old and New Elites**

#### **5.2 Constantine's successors: Constantius II and Julian **Quiz 2****

#### **6.1 Pagans and Paideia**

## **6.2 Bishops, Monks, and the Church in Schism**

### **7.1 Ruling the Late Roman Empire: Army and Administration**

### **7.2 Late Roman Art**

#### **Midterm Commentary**

### **8.1 Literary culture and the “Jeweled style”**

### **8.2 Theodosius I and the Formation of a Christian Empire**

#### **Reflection 1**

## **Part 2: An empire divided**

### **9.1 Constantinople, New Rome**

### **9.2 Alaric and the Gothic Problem**

### **10.1 Attila and the Hunnic Empire**

### **10.2 The Rise of the Barbarian Kingdoms in the West**

### **11.1 Rural Life and the Late Roman Economy**

### **11.2 Late Antique Cities: Continuity and Change **Quiz 3****

### **12.1 Justinian’s Rome: War, Infrastructure, and Plague**

### **12.2 Justinian and Theodora: Christian Monarchs or Tyrants?**

### **13.1 Abbesses and Queens: Two Models of Female Power**

### **13.2 Persians and the Final Frontiers of Empire**

### **14.1 Wrap-up discussion: Did Rome fall?**

### **14.2 Revision **Reflection 2****

## **15 **Project deadline****

## **Detailed schedule**

### **WEEK 1**

#### **1.1 Introduction to the Class and Syllabus**

Please familiarize yourself with the syllabus; and copy all deadlines into your calendar.

This first lecture will introduce you to the later Roman Empire, its contested periodization, and the types of history (political, cultural, literary, religious, intellectual) that we will encounter in future weeks.

## **1.2 Introduction to the Study of “Late Antiquity”: Decline or Transformation?**

Before beginning our study of the Later Roman Empire in detail, we will first investigate how other scholars have approached the period. What, indeed, should it be called: “The Later Roman Empire” or “Late Antiquity” (and what does each title imply)? In advance of the lecture, you should read the three chapters listed below and consider the questions that follow. Edward Gibbon has often been hailed as the first modern historian to chart our period in his monumental *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. The influence of this massive work continues to be felt today: Peter Brown and Bryan Ward-Perkins have responded to Gibbon in radically different ways. Together, however, they provide us with two interpretative paradigms, against which we will evaluate the cultural, political, religious and literary history of Late Rome in the following weeks.

### Modern Scholarship

- Gibbon, Edward 1776. *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Chapter 38
- Brown, Peter 1971 *The World of Late Antiquity: AD 150-750*. London: Thames & Hudson. Pp.11-48
- Ward-Perkins, B. 2005. *The Fall of Rome and the End of Civilization*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp.1-11.

Questions to consider when you read:

- How does each of these three authors define the period of The Later Roman Empire / Late Antiquity chronologically?
- How does each author characterize the period?
- How might a focus on different sorts of source material affect the theses of Brown vs. Ward-Perkins?
- What details/points of analysis stand out to you in Brown & Ward-Perkins’ chapters?

## **WEEK 2**

### **2.1 The Roman empire in ca. 200CE**

This class will introduce you to the state of the Roman Empire at the beginning of our period. From the retrospect of the later 3<sup>rd</sup> century, the early decades appear relatively peaceful and prosperous. We will explore three major changes that took place between 200 and 225CE: changes in emperors; extension of Roman citizenship; and the role of religion in empire.



**Readings** (you must read these items *before* class, and bring copies with you):

### Ancient Sources

- The *Constitutio Antoniniana* (*P. Giss.* 40, col.1.1-12)
- Cassius Dio *Roman History* 78.9.1-7
- *P. Oxy.* 12.1467 (Aurelia Thaisous' petition)

### Modern Scholarship

- Potter, D. 2018. "An Age of Rust and Iron (AD 180-238)" in *Ancient Rome: a New History*. London. Pp.258-270

## **2.2. The Crisis of the Third Century**

Scholarship has long labelled the Third Century as a time of crisis. It was certainly a period of great political and military instability, which saw a long series of emperors and usurpers ascend and swiftly depart the imperial throne. This lecture will consider the systemic problems that the empire faced during this period. Firstly, the failure of earlier regimes to create a legal framework for the appointment of an emperor, rather than relying on an imprecise combination of approval from different bodies in society (notably the army and the senate); and the increase of external threats, particularly the newly aggressive Sassanid dynasty in Persia. The combination of civil and external war wreaked havoc on the economy and caused many areas to suspend their reliance upon the Roman emperor for their safety and security.

Questions to consider when you read:

- What does the *Libellus* try to prove? What does this tell us about the nature of Roman religion?
- What sort of economic situation might have prompted the *strategos*' decree?
- What does Cyprian's letter tell us about the position of Christians in 3<sup>rd</sup>-century society?

### Ancient Sources

- *Libellus* of the Decian Persecution (*Michigan Papyri* 158)
- *P. Oxy.* 1.411 (Edict from the *Strategos* of Oxyrhynchus)
- Cyprian, *To Demetrianus*

### Modern Scholarship

- Potter, D. 2006. "The transformation of the Empire: 235-337" in *A companion to the Roman Empire*. Blackwell. Pp.153-66 only.

## **WEEK 3**

### **3.1 Diocletian and the Tetrarchy**

In this lecture we will examine how Diocletian (284-303CE) attempted to solve the crises of the Third Century. Our approach will be thematic, and will look at the formalization of collegiate rule, developments in imperial administration, economic reforms, and the projection of power (religion is also important, but we'll return to this next week). In our analysis, we will have to decide how effective Diocletian's reforms were, and to what degree they made fundamental changes to the Roman state.

Whereas the lecture will introduce you to several examples and case studies, I'd like you to prepare some thoughts on a specific issue (and a topic that is crucial importance currently for our post-pandemic economy): the control of inflation. Please read the short section of Jill Harries' book, as well as the source *The Edict on Maximum Prices* and be prepared to answer the following questions in class:

- What did Diocletian set out to achieve with this legislation?
- What evidence is there for its effectiveness?
- What does this edict tell us about changes in imperial control under the Tetrarchy?

There are a few other sources that you should look at in advance, and which we will also discuss in class:

#### Ancient Sources

- *Theodosian Code* 15.1 (*Maas Source Book* 1.3.4)
- *Edict on Maximum Prices* (*Maas Source Book* 1.4.1)
- Lactantius *On the Deaths of the Persecutors* 7.1-8 (*Maas Source Book* 1.3.1)
- *Notitia Dignitatum* West 1 & East 1
- *Latin Panegyric* 10(2)1-3.

#### Modern Scholarship

- Harries, Jill 2012. *Imperial Rome AD 284-363: The New Empire*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. pp.64-70 ("Coinage and Prices")

Optional/Revision reading: Chapters 2&3 in Harries, *Imperial Rome*.

### **3.2 Christianity before Constantine: the 'Great Persecution'**

In the first part of this lecture, you will be introduced to the status and growth of Christianity during the first three centuries CE, together with some of the problems in charting its expansion (we will recap some issues in the past few weeks, including the Decian persecution of the mid-3rd Century). During the second half, which will be more discursive, we will examine the so-called Great Persecution of Christians by the Tetrarchs. Using the accounts by Lactantius and

Eusebius, we will consider what the Tetrarchs' motivations were, how successful the persecution was, and how Christians responded.

### Ancient Sources

- Lactantius, *On the Deaths of the Persecutors* 10.1-5; 14.1-16.1; 33.1-34.1
- Eusebius, *History of the Church* 8.1.7-6.4; 8.15.1-16.3

### Modern scholarship

- Harries, Jill 2012. *Imperial Rome AD 284-363: The new empire*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. pp.88-101 ("Laws against Christian Observance; Aftermath")

## WEEK 4

### **4.1 Constantine: Revolutionary or reactionary, part 1**

In this lecture, we meet one of the most famous individuals of Late Antiquity, the emperor Constantine (306-337CE), who was the first emperor to embrace Christianity. In the lecture portion of the class, you will be introduced to Constantine's rise as part of the final configuration of the Tetrarchy, and his opposition to Maximian's son Maxentius (306-312CE). In the discussion portion, we will debate the moment when Constantine publicly declared his support for Christianity: the Battle of the Milvian Bridge in 312CE, where he defeated his political rival Maxentius and took the city of Rome. We will interrogate the various accounts of the vision he supposedly had before the battle, and set them within their religious and political contexts. Some questions to consider:

- What exactly did Constantine (claim to) see?
- How did contemporaries report the vision?
  - To what extent do the Christian sources, Lactantius and Eusebius, agree with each other?
- How valuable is panegyric as source material?
- Did Constantine convert to Christianity in 312?

### Ancient Sources

- Eusebius of Caesarea, *Life of Constantine* 3-5 & 1.28-29 (In Gwynn *Christianity in the Later Roman Empire* pp.27 & 30-1)
- *Panegyrici Latini* VI(7).21 (In Gwynn *Christianity in the Later Roman Empire*, p.28)
- Eusebius of Caesarea, *Ecclesiastical History* 9.5 (In Gwynn *Christianity in the Later Roman Empire*, p.29)

- Lactantius, *De Mortibus Persecutorum (On the Deaths of the Persecutors)* 44.1-6 (In Gwynn *Christianity in the Later Roman Empire*, p.30)
- *Panegyrici Latini* XII(9)16-17

### Modern scholarship

- Harries, Jill 2012. *Imperial Rome AD 284-363: The new empire*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. "The disputed Succession, 305-311" (pp.41-45); "Constantine and Maxentius" (pp. 106-111)

### **4.2 Constantine: Revolutionary or reactionary, part 2.**

This lecture will continue the study of Constantine begun last week, picking up from his victory over Maxentius in 312CE and surveying the changes he brought to the state and particularly to Christianity through to his death in 337. The lecture portion will introduce you to his conflict with his co-emperor Licinius, the promotion of his sons as Caesars, and briefly his foundation of the city of Constantinople (we'll come back to this last topic later in the semester). Our discussions will focus on the changes brought to the church, first in the so-called Edict of Milan (313 CE) and then in Constantine's oversight of and interaction with the church.

General questions to bear in mind when you read: what changes did Constantine bring about to the status of Christianity in the empire; what do the Council of Nicaea and Socrates' description tell us about Constantine's role in the Church?

### Ancient Sources

- *The Edict of Milan* (Lactantius, *On the Deaths of the Persecutors* 48.1–11) (*Maas Source Book* 4.3.1)
- *Council of Nicaea, Canon 4*. (*Maas Source Book* 4.4.1)
- Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History* 1.34. (*Maas Source Book* 4.4.6)

### Modern Scholarship

- Harries, Jill 2012. *Imperial Rome AD 284-363: The New Empire*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. pp.156-168 ("Constructing the Christian Emperor; The 'Christian' Legislator")

## **WEEK 5**

### **5.1: Old and New Elites (and Non-Elites)**

This lecture introduces you to the organization of Roman society into socially and legally defined statuses. Roman society was sharply stratified in comparison to modern American society, but its organization underwent some important changes in Late Antiquity. After examining aristocratic identity in earlier periods of Roman history, we shall explore shifting definitions of “elite” status in Late Antiquity, when men from more humble backgrounds became

emperors and senators. The lecture will also introduce the subjects of slavery, gender roles, and the impact of Christianity on social status. Some questions to consider as you read today's assigned sources:

- What were some of the changes that Diocletian introduced to the determination of aristocratic status? Can you guess how elites previously established their position in society relative to one another? How was wealth important, or not?
- What were the qualities of a virtuous aristocratic woman?
- How was slavery defined in the late Roman Empire? Were all slaves the same?
- What do you make of this peculiar late Roman category of persons known as “the Colonnate” - an English term based on the Latin *colonus* (“tenant”)?

#### Ancient Sources

- A New Aristocracy of Service (*Maas Source Book* 1.3.9)
- The Colossal Wealth of Aristocrats (*Maas Source Book* 1.4.3)
- Aristocratic Female Virtues (*Maas Source Book* 7.2.3)
- Abolition of penalties for failure to marry (*Maas Source Book* 8.4.3)
- Slaves in the Law (*Maas Source Book* 1.4.17-19)
- Slaves in the Roman Household (*Maas Source Book* 8.5.1)
- *Theodosian Code* 5.17.1-3 (Carmen): the Colonnate

#### Modern Scholarship

- S. Mitchell, 2015. *A History of the Later Roman Empire*, Pp. 329-370
- Sessa, 2018. “Introduction,” in *Daily Life in Late Antiquity*, Pp. 12-14.

### **5.2 Constantine's successors: Constantius II and Julian.**

Constantius II, Constantine's last surviving son, is often overlooked because of the dominating role of Constantine and Julian in fourth-century history. Julian was Constantius' cousin, but unlike the other Constantinians, broke from Christianity and tried to revive a form of paganism. We will start with Constantius (337-361CE), however, and evaluate his attempts to consolidate the reforms of his father, before turning to Julian (361-363CE) and asking how sincere his promotion of (neo)paganism was.

Questions to consider while you read.

- How does Ammianus depict Constantius' arrival in Rome? What seems exceptional about it?
- To what extent do you think Julian's rebellion from Constantius was premeditated?
- How did Christians respond to Julian's apostasy (revival of paganism)?

## Ancient Sources

- Julian, *Panegyric to Constantius 1* (selections)
- Julian, *Letter to Oribasius* 384a-d
- Julian, *Letter to Arsacius*
- Gregory of Nazianzus *Oration 4 against Julian* 61, 71, 74, 75, 81
- Ammianus, *History* 16.10 (*Maas Source Book* 1.2.1)

## Modern Scholarship

- Harries, Jill 2012. *Imperial Rome AD 284-363: The new empire*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. pp.294-317 ("Chapter 13: Julian Augustus")

## **WEEK 6**

For the next two and half weeks we're going to break our chronological narrative (which had been largely political in nature) to survey other aspects of Late Roman society. Each topic will provide a further case study to think about the models of decline vs transformation that we encountered in week 1.

### **6.1 Pagans and *Paideia***

In recent weeks, we have followed the story of Christian expansion, from persecuted religion to state religion. In this session, we look at those who were left behind, those who did not embrace the new religion. One fundamental problem is what to call them (we've already been calling them 'pagan', but it's not a term they would recognize). This lecture will examine how and when paganism was marginalized, and how, nonetheless, several pagans retained prominent positions in the empire until at least the end of the fourth century.

- Which aspects of pagan worship/practice did Christian emperors target?
- What does Julian's description of proper education reveal about the relationship between education and religion?
- Why did Christians have concerns about traditional school curricula?

## Ancient Sources

- Julian *Letter* 36. (*Maas Source Book* 2.8.4)
- Justinian, *Code* I.11.1–2, 4–7; *Theodosian Code* 16.10.4, 9, 17, 20, 24. (*Maas Source Book* 5.3.1)
- Augustine, *Letter* 50. (*Maas Source Book* 5.4.6)

## Modern Scholarship

- Stenger, J. 2018 "The 'pagans' of late antiquity" in N. Baker-Brian und J. Lössl (eds.) *A Companion to Religion in Late Antiquity*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell. 391–409.

### **6.2. Bishops, Monks, and the Church in Schism**

Thus far we have explored how Constantine's vision in 312 CE marked a new era in the relationship between the Roman state and Christianity. In this lecture, we turn to the church itself in the wake of that Constantinian revolution. We will examine its hierarchy, the appearance of a new form of Christian - the ascetic - and consider why this new life became necessary for some to prove their Christian credentials. Finally, we will return briefly to the problems that Christians faced in terms of doctrinal conflict.

- Question to discuss in class: to what extent did the views of the emperors affect the Christological debate in the 4th and 5th Century?

## Ancient Sources

- *Theodosian Code* 1.27.1. (*Maas Source Book* 4.4.10) The Legal Functions of Bishops
- *Theodosian Code* 16.5.5. (*Maas Source Book* 4.5.7) The Government Forbids Heresy
- Athanasius, *Life of Antony* 5–7. (*Maas Source Book* 4.8.1) The Devil Tempts Antony

## Modern Scholarship

- Gwynn, D. 2015. *Christianity: a Sourcebook*. London: Routledge. Chapter 6: "The Doctrine of the Trinity."

## **WEEK 7**

### **7.1 Ruling the Late Roman Empire: the Army and Administration**

In a change of format, this session will be run as a seminar rather than a lecture. This means that rather than the instructor offering an overview of the topic in a lecture, you should read Sessa's chapter "The State in Everyday Life" in advance of class. You will also be assigned a source in advance from the list below. Please think about how your assigned source complements/develops/illustrates any of the details in Sessa's chapter. Be prepared to introduce your source (who wrote it, when, what type of source is it; how does this matter when evaluating what it says), and explain how it relates to the chapter.

- Sessa, Kristina 2018. *Daily Life in Late Antiquity*. Cambridge. Chapter 4 "The State in Everyday Life" pp.125-157.

## Ancient Sources

- John Lydus, *On Magistracies* 3.59 (*Maas Source Book* 1.3.10) Corruption
- *Abbinæus Archive*. (*Maas Source Book* 3.4.4) Tax collection.
- Vegetius *Epitome* 1.2-4. (*Maas Source Book* 3.5.1) Recruits.
- Zosimus *History* 4.12. (*Maas Source Book* 3.6.3) Recruitment.
- *Theodosian Code* 7.8.5. (*Maas Source Book* 3.7.2) Billeting
- *Acts of Marcellus* 250-9. (*Maas Source Book* 3.9.1) Christians in army.
- Augustine *Against Faustus* 22.74-5. (*Maas Source Book* 3.9.3) Justifying war.
- *Theodosian Code* 1.5.9. (*Maas Source Book* 9.1.4). Corrupt judges
- *Peutinger Map*

## **7.2 Late Roman Art**

We have already encountered the imperial image on coins and statues. In this lecture, we explore the characteristics of late Roman art more broadly, and again scrutinize why scholars have labeled it as another example of decline/transformation. We will begin by discussing Elsner's short chapter, which recaps some details of the imperial image that we have encountered in recent weeks. Questions to consider when you read (and be prepared to share your thoughts in class):

- Why were Roman emperors concerned about their physical representation?
- What sort of messages could imperial artwork convey; what sort of trends are apparent in our period?

The rest of the session will be an interactive lecture, in which you'll be introduced to some other trends in Late Roman art, before focussing on a case-study: the Arch of Constantine in Rome, which illustrates the practice of spoliation, and the dynamics of architecture in the imperial urban environment.

## Modern Scholarship

- Elsner, J. 1998 *Imperial Rome and Christian Triumph: The Art of the Roman Empire AD100-450*. Oxford: Oxford University Press pp.53-63.

## **WEEK 8**

### **8.1 Literary culture and the “Jeweled style”**

This lecture forms a counterpart to the lecture on Late Roman Art. Whereas art and architecture were publicly visible, literature was generally available only to those who had received an elite education (*paideia*). We will investigate three aspects of late antique literary culture: letter-writing, which also sustained complex networks of friendship and patronage across the empire; the Christianization of traditional epic poetry; and the comparison between literary and visual aesthetics. As in the Art lecture, we will have to decide whether there is a unique late-antique



literary aesthetic that marks this period off as something different and new, or represents continuity with what has come before.

Questions to consider while you read:

- For what sorts of reasons and to what sort of people did Libanius compose his letters?
- Claudian composed his poetry at a Christian court. How should we analyze his subject matter in light of our discussions of Christians' responses to traditional *paideia* in week 6.1?

#### Ancient Sources

- Proba *Centio* 1-90.
- Libanius, *Letters* 419, 435, 1296
- Claudian, *The Rape of Proserpina* 1.214-288

#### Modern scholarship

- Bradbury, S. 2014. "Libanius' Networks" in Lieve Van Hoof (ed.) *Libanius: a Critical Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp.220-240.

### **8.2 Theodosius I and the Formation of a Christian Empire**

Today we return to topics of political and religious history. We encountered Theodosius I (379-395 CE) briefly in the context of the Christological controversy (Arians vs. Nicenes), but today we turn to study him directly. We'll trace his rise to power, the political threats he encountered, before reviewing in more depth the Council of Constantinople that he convened in 381CE.

Theodosius' reign was the last time that the two halves of the empire (which we've seen repeatedly separated and knitted together again) were truly unified under one ruler. An irony of his reign, then, is that whereas it brought an end to Arianism's claims to be the dominant form of Christianity, it also marked an end to unified imperial rule. Theodosius - and this lecture - marks an end to the first part of the course. From here on we will be dealing with an empire divided.

We will also take stock today of what we've covered in the past nine weeks, and revisit the Gibbonian vs. Brownian views of the Later Roman Empire. Please review your notes from the start of the semester on these two authors (Gibbon and Brown), and consider the following questions:

- How does Zosimus' take on Theodosius' reign compare to the other two historians?
- How do you account for the differences and whose history do you find most persuasive, and why?

#### Ancient Sources

- Rufinus, *Church History* 11.33-34
- Zosimus, *New History* 4.58

- Sozomen, *Church History* 7.15

#### Modern Scholarship

- Mitchell, D. 2015. *The Later Roman Empire* London: Routledge. pp.84-95.

## **Part II: THE EMPIRE DIVIDED**

### **WEEK 9**

#### **9.1 Constantinople, New Rome**

We encountered Constantinople as the new city founded by Constantine after his defeat of Licinius in 324CE. Today, however, we examine the growth of the city and its long-term effects on the geopolitics of the Later Roman Empire. We will begin by studying the circumstances of the city's foundation by Constantine, and the extent to which it was always intended to be a 'New Rome', before tracing its longer-term role as the capital of an eastern Byzantine empire.

- How does each author describe Constantinople? How do you account for the differences?

#### Ancient Sources

- *Easter Chronicle* 1. (*Maas Source Book* 2.7.1)
- *Demegoria Constantii* (Themistius' adlection letter) 23b-d
- Themistius *Oration* 3.41c-42b
- Eusebius, *Life of Constantine* 3.47-49

#### Modern Scholarship

- Lucy Grig & Gavin Kelly 2012 "Chapter 1 Introduction: From Rome to Constantinople" in Grig & Kelly (eds.) *Two Romes*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

#### **9.2 Alaric and the Gothic Problem**

The Sack of Rome by Alaric and the Goths in 410 CE has often been seen as the end of the Roman empire. Not since 387BCE had a foreign enemy taken the city. This lecture sets out a narrative of the events that led to the sack, and in the process both introduces you to important shifts in the nature of emperorship at the turn of the 5th century, and questions the status of Alaric and the Goths. One major historiographical issue that we will confront is: how do we study the history of a people such as the Goths, when most of our accounts of them are written by Romans? To prepare for this question, please read the chapter by Kulikowski. We'll hold a seminar-like discussion on it during class.

#### Ancient Sources

- Jordanes *The Gothic History* 4.25-29. (*Maas Source Book* 13.2.1)
- Jerome *Letter* 127.12. (*Maas Source Book* 2.6.1)
- Orosius, *History Against the Pagans* 7.39-41. (*Maas Source Book* 2.6.4)

#### Modern Scholarship

- Kulikowski, M. 2007 *Rome's Gothic Wars*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp.50-70.

### **WEEK 10**

#### **10.1 Attila and the Hunnic Empire**

In the lecture, we will study an eastern counterpart of the Goths, whom we encountered last week. The Huns had their roots in the eastern Steppe on the borders of ancient China. Their arrival in the Black Sea and Danube area caused problems for both the Persians and the Romans. Their most famous leader, Attila, acted not unlike Alaric by invading Roman territory and negotiating with Roman rulers. We will examine also how Romans tried to understand the Huns, and subject them to *interpretatio Romana*. A major question for us to consider is: to what extent should the Huns and Goths be held responsible for the collapse of imperial control of the West?

#### Ancient Sources

- Ammianus Marcellinus *History* 31.2.1-12. (*Maas Source Book* 14.2.1)
- Priscus *Fragment* 11.2. (*Maas Source Book* 14.2.2)
- 14.2.2 Priscus *Fragments* 22.3. (*Maas Source Book* 14.2.2)

#### Modern Scholarship

- Kim, Hyun Jin 2016 *The Huns*. London. Chapter 5 "Attila the Hun." pp.92-107.

#### **10.2 The Rise of the Barbarian Kingdoms in the West**

From the mid-fifth century onward, imperial control over the western provinces effectively ended. In its place arose a series of so-called 'barbarian' kingdoms, including the Ostrogothic Kingdom in Italy and the Vandal Kingdom in North Africa. This might sound like the end of the Roman empire (at least in the west), but this lecture will explore the ways in which these new kingdoms emulated and maintained certain Roman political and social structures. A major question to consider is: (how) should we define the end of empire?

#### Ancient Sources

- *Anonymous Valesianus* 12.65-7, 69-73. (*Maas Source Book* 13.1.11)
- Cassiodorus *Official Correspondence* 3.9. (*Maas Source Book* 13.1.14)
- Victor of Vita, *History of the Vandal Persecution* 1.24-26. (*Maas Source Book* 13.1.15)

- *Burgundian Law Codes* 1, 2,3, 8,13. (*Maas Source Book* 13.1.18)

#### Modern Scholarship

- Mitchell, S., *A History of the Later Roman Empire*, pp.191-224.

### Week 11

This week we will again break from political history and turn towards the life experiences and living conditions of men, women, and children from across the Empire and up/down the social ladder. We will also learn about the late Roman economy, and how it contracted in certain ways over the course of Late Antiquity.

#### 11.1: Rural Life and the Late Roman Economy

This class focuses on the countryside, the home of most late Romans (80-90%), and the engine of the late Roman economy. We shall explore rural life from the top down, from the perspective of the Roman state, which relied on agricultural production for its taxes and to feed its army; and from the bottom up, from the perspective of the men and women who owned, lived, and/or labored on rural farms and villages. We shall also explore the trade networks that moved products across the Empire, and how these networks changed rather substantially over Late Antiquity. Consider the following questions as you read:

- How would you describe the living conditions of Aurelius Sakaon and his family? What are some of the greatest challenges in their lives as Egyptian peasants?
- What sort of responsibilities did estate owners have and in what ways did they exploit their workers?
- Do you think Egypt is a representative context of late Roman rural life? Why or why not?

#### Ancient Sources

- *The Archive of Aurelius Sakaon. Papers of an Egyptian Farmer in the Late Century of Theadelphia* (selections of individual papyri on Carmen).
- The great estates and the rise of patrons (*Maas Source Book*, 1.4.9)
- Exploitation of peasant farmers in Egypt and Syria (*Maas Source Book* 1.4.10)
- Dependence on a landlord on an Egyptian estate (*Maas Source Book*, 1.4.11)

#### Modern Scholarship

- Sessa, 2018. "Rural Life," in *Daily Life in Late Antiquity*, Pp. 21-46.
- Jairus Banaji, 2008. "Economic Trajectories," in *The Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity*, Pp. 597-624.

## 11.2 Late Antique Cities: Continuity and Change

In this lecture, we examine urban life in cities across the empire from Gaul to Syria. What was daily life like for the large swathes of the ancient population that lived in cities; how did the amenities and design of cities affect social life; and what changes can be traced, if any, in the later Roman city?

There is only optional reading for today's lecture. Use the time to start work on your late ancient object project.

### Optional Reading

- Sessa, K. 2018, "Urban Life," *Daily Life in Late Antiquity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press Chapter 2, "Urban Life" (pp.47-83)

## WEEK 12

### 12.1 Justinian's Rome: War, Infrastructure, and Plague

The reign of Justinian (527-565 CE) marks the chronological end of our course. A polarizing figure, Justinian has been seen as both a heroic reformer who strove to reassemble the fragmenting Roman empire, and a tyrannical figure who stamped his authority on eastern Rome. In today's session, we will investigate his rise to power, his attempts to reconquer parts of the West that had become 'barbarian kingdoms', and finally the plague that ravished the Mediterranean world during the early part of his reign. The first two-thirds of the class will largely be a lecture, but the section on the plague will be a seminar-like discussion. Please read the chapter by Harper, the extract of Procopius, and think about the questions below.

### Ancient Sources

- Procopius *History of the Wars* 1.24 (*Maas Source Book* 2.3.3). Nika Riot
- Procopius *History of the Wars* 2.22-23.1 (*Maas Source Book* 10.4.2) Plague

### Modern Scholarship

- Harper, K. 2017. 'The Wine-Press of Wrath', Chapter 6 in *The Fate of Rome: Climate, Disease, and the End of an Empire*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. pp. 199-235 only

Questions to prep while reading Harper (we'll discuss these in class):

- What role do the following play in Harper's argument?
- Procopius as a source vs. DNA evidence as a source
- Enzootic disease
- Climate data for 536CE
- The geographic spread of the plague

- Mortality rates

### Optional Reading

Lee, A. 2013. *From Rome to Byzantium AD 363 to 565*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. Chapter 12 "Justinian and the Roman Past"

## **12.2 Justinian and Theodora: Christian Monarchs or Tyrants?**

In the lecture itself, we will conclude our study of Justinian and his wife Theodora. The targets of fierce invective from Procopius, did they deserve such damning criticism? We'll begin by reading Procopius' condemnation of the couple, before turning to one of Justinian's major cultural triumphs, the creation of the *Codex Iustinianus*, the Code of Justinian, a compilation of laws. Via his legal pronouncements, we'll trace his innovations in cultural, political, religious and social life.

Questions for class:

- Did Justinian and Theodora deserve such damning criticism?
- Would it have been dangerous for Procopius' views to have been made public in sixth-century Constantinople?
- How can we distinguish between rhetoric and reality in this text?

### Ancient Sources

- Procopius, *Secret History* 2.14-38; 15 (pp.58-61 & 68-71)

### Modern Scholarship

- Lee, A. 2013. *From Rome to Byzantium AD 363 to 565*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. Chapter 13 "Justinian and the Christian Present".

## **WEEK 13**

### **13.1: Abbesses and Queens: New Models of Female Power**

In the late Roman West and emerging barbarian kingdoms, two new models of elite female power began to take shape: the abbess and the queen. In this class we shall explore these new roles for aristocratic women through the figure of Radegund, a sixth-century Thuringian woman who was both a queen and an abbess, as well as the founder of an important royal abbey in Frankish Gaul. This class will also be structured more like a seminar discussion, so please prepare the following questions to discuss in class:

- What made Radegund powerful?

- What made Radegund holy? (For both questions, you might compare the comments of Gregory of Tours with those of Venantius Fortunatus).
- Was her femininity an asset or a liability?
- Why did she write the letter to the bishops that Gregory cites in 9.42?

#### Ancient Sources

- Gregory of Tours, *Ten Books of History*, 3.7 and 9.39-42 (find the texts [here](#))
- Radegund, verse letter known as the *De excidio Thuringiae*, or “On the Destruction of Thuringia” (find the text [here](#))
- Venantius Fortunatus, *The Life of Holy Radegund* (find the text [here](#))

#### Modern Sources

- E. T. Dailey, 2015. “Brides and Social Status,” in *Queens, Consorts, Concubines: Gregory of Tours and Women of the Merovingian Elite* (find the text [here](#))

#### Optional Reading

- Dailey, 2015. “Merovingian Marital Practice,” in *Queens, Consorts, Concubines: Gregory of Tours and Women of the Merovingian Elite* (find the text [here](#))

### **13.2: Persia and the Final Frontiers of the Late Roman Empire**

For this lecture, we shall shift to the opposite side of the late Empire to study the other major power that threatened the Roman state in the East: the Sasanian Empire of Persia. After a brief introduction to the political organization and culture of Sasanian Persia, we’ll look at some of the variables that impacted the increasingly hostile relationship between the two empires, culminating with the Persian siege of Constantinople in 626 and the recovery of Roman territory thereafter by the Roman emperor Heraclius (610-641 CE).

#### Ancient Sources

- The Persian sack Amida in 502 (*Maas Source Book* 12.1.8)
- The reforms of Khusro Anushirwan (*Maas Source Book* 12.1.9)
- Justinian breaks the Persian monopoly on the silk trade (*Maas Source Book* 12.1.12)
- The siege of Constantinople in 626 CE (*Maas Source Book* 12.1.14)
- Heraclius Triumphant (*Maas Source Book* 12.1.15)

#### Modern Scholarship

- Dignas and Winter, 2007. *Rome and Persia in Late Antiquity*, Pp. 34-62 (On Carmen)

#### Additional Reading

- Dignas and Winter, 2007. *Rome and Persia in Late Antiquity*, Pp. 173-209 (On Carmen)

## WEEK 14

### 14.1 Wrap-up discussion: Did Rome Fall?

In this final session, we will look back over the past fourteen weeks, in which we traced Rome and her empire from the extension of citizenship under Caracalla in 212CE to the reign and reconquests of Justinian in the mid 6th century. Along the way we have traced political and administrative change; regionalism and imperialism; literary and artistic culture; social and educational history; the development of Christianity and its relations with traditional religion (paganism). Now we are in an excellent position to re-evaluate the two interpretative paradigms of our period that we met in week 1: was this a period of decline and fall (Gibbon; Ward-Perkins), or change and transformation (Brown)? Please arrive in class with some thoughts for the following questions:

- Which topics / issues / examples fit better into the case for/against decline?
- How should we define decline/transformation within the context of the later Roman empire?
- To what extent does regional difference affect our answers to these questions?

To help spur our discussions, please also read this review of Ward-Perkin's book. [Links to an external site.](#) Do you agree with the author's critique?

### 14.2 No Class - Work on your late Roman object report!



# **GE Theme course submission worksheet: Traditions, Cultures, & Transformations**

## **Overview**

Courses in the GE Themes aim to provide students with opportunities to explore big picture ideas and problems within the specific practice and expertise of a discipline or department. Although many Theme courses serve within disciplinary majors or minors, by requesting inclusion in the General Education, programs are committing to the incorporation of the goals of the focal theme and the success and participation of students from outside of their program.

Each category of the GE has specific learning goals and Expected Learning Outcomes (ELOs) that connect to the big picture goals of the program. ELOs describe the knowledge or skills students should have by the end of the course. Courses in the GE Themes must meet the ELOs common for **all** GE Themes and those specific to the Theme, in addition to any ELOs the instructor has developed specific to that course. All courses in the GE must indicate that they are part of the GE and include the Goals and ELOs of their GE category on their syllabus.

The prompts in this form elicit information about how this course meets the expectations of the GE Themes. The form will be reviewed by a group of content experts (the Theme Advisory) and by a group of curriculum experts (the Theme Panel), with the latter having responsibility for the ELOs and Goals common to all themes (those things that make a course appropriate for the GE Themes) and the former having responsibility for the ELOs and Goals specific to the topic of **this** Theme.

## **Briefly describe how this course connects to or exemplifies the concept of this Theme (Traditions, Cultures, & Transformations)**

In a sentence or two, explain how this class “fits” within the focal Theme. This will help reviewers understand the intended frame of reference for the course-specific activities described below.

The course requires students to evaluate the ways in which the later Roman Empire can be defined as a period of transformation between the Classical and Medieval worlds (as opposed to older historiographical models of decline and fall). They will address how the tension between tradition and transformation differs in various aspects of late Roman culture: political, religious,

and social. Additionally, students will trace the emergence of Christianity as a dominant political institution and of heresy and orthodoxy as discursive and legal categories/tools of exclusion; they will examine Roman cultural continuities between the early and late Roman empire with regard to social relations (elites, slavery); geo-political fragmentation of the Roman Empire and emergence of post-Roman barbarian regimes in North Africa and northwestern Europe, and rise of Persia as dominant superpower in the East.

## Connect this course to the Goals and ELOs shared by *all* Themes

Below are the Goals and ELOs common to all Themes. In the accompanying table, for each ELO, describe the activities (discussions, readings, lectures, assignments) that provide opportunities for students to achieve those outcomes. The answer should be concise and use language accessible to colleagues outside of the submitting department or discipline. The specifics of the activities matter—listing “readings” without a reference to the topic of those readings will not allow the reviewers to understand how the ELO will be met. However, the panel evaluating the fit of the course to the Theme will review this form in conjunction with the syllabus, so if readings, lecture/discussion topics, or other specifics are provided on the syllabus, it is not necessary to reiterate them within this form. The ELOs are expected to vary in their “coverage” in terms of number of activities or emphasis within the course. Examples from successful courses are shared on the next page.

**Goal 1:** Successful students will analyze an important topic or idea at a more advanced and in-depth level than the foundations. In this context, “advanced” refers to courses that are e.g., synthetic, rely on research or cutting-edge findings, or deeply engage with the subject matter, among other possibilities.

**Goal 2:** Successful students will integrate approaches to the theme by making connections to out-of-classroom experiences with academic knowledge or across disciplines and/or to work they have done in previous classes and that they anticipate doing in future.

<p><b>ELO 1.1</b> Engage in critical and logical thinking.</p>	<p>This course helps students to further develop their critical and logical thinking skills through in-class analysis and discussions of primary sources, and through assessments.</p> <p><i>In class:</i> through the analysis of primary sources and the help of guided discussion questions provided by the instructor, the students are encouraged to ask questions, consider alternative points of view and challenge their assumptions.</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> All assessments require students to analyze critically ancient sources within their contexts; for example the mid-term commentary requires the close reading of objects or texts within attention to the perspective of their author/creator and how they illustrate aspects of late Roman culture.</p>
--	--

<p><b>ELO 1.2</b> Engage in an advanced, in-depth, scholarly exploration of the topic or ideas within this theme.</p>	<p>Every week the students engage with secondary scholarship on aspects of the later Roman Empire, which often express different points of view and approaches to the study of the period. One of the main goals of the class is to learn how to critique these views, especially with regard to ideas about Rome’s “fall” and “decline.”</p> <p><i>In class:</i> Students are thus encouraged to participate in the weekly discussion of this assigned scholarship, sharing their opinions on the readings and answering questions posed by the instructor and fellow-classmates. Class discussion on week 1.2 and 14.1 will be devoted exclusively to assessing the grand narratives that scholars have used to characterize the late Roman Empire as either “declining” or “transforming.”</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> For their final project, regardless of the medium they choose (paper, podcast or website), students are required to find, read/analyze, synthesize, and cite the work of modern scholars on their chosen topic. All students must incorporate the arguments and observations (whether to accept or critique) of at least four different works of modern scholarship (articles or books).</p>
---	---

**ELO 2.1** Identify, describe, and synthesize approaches or experiences.

One of the primary pedagogical goals of this course is to teach students how to identify, describe, and synthesize both scholarly approaches to the subject matter and the experiences of historical actors as evidenced in primary sources..

*In class:* Every week, students will listen to at least one lecture from the profession, wherein s/he/they models the identification, description, and synthesis of approaches to material and/or the experiences of late ancient persons. During the weekly class discussions, students will answer questions (some presented in the syllabus, others offered by the instructor in class) that call for them to identify, describe and/or synthesize how late ancient authors experienced their world, whether through politics, religious practice, social status, or environment.

*Assessments:* In the mid-term commentary, students will practice their skills of identification, description, and synthesis in relation to a single primary source. They will write a short essay that identifies the author and the genre of the source and its historical context; that describes the author's arguments; and that synthesizes their understanding of the author's arguments in relation to broader themes of the course, such as the rise of Christian churches or the emergence of non-Roman, barbarian leaders. For their final project, students will further hone their skills of identification, description, and synthesis by examining multiple sources (primary and secondary) in relation to a single material artifact.

<p><b>ELO 2.2</b> Demonstrate a developing sense of self as a learner through reflection, self-assessment, and creative work, building on prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts.</p>	<p>Numerous topics discussed in this class offer opportunities for students to reflect on what they are learning about the Later Roman Empire and to connect it with their experiences in other contexts, both education and every day.</p> <p><i>In class:</i> In discussions, students will be encouraged to draw connections between the course material and other contexts, including their own experiences. For example, week 12.1 includes discussion of plague, a topic which invites further scholarly reflection from students who have a background in the life sciences and more broadly by those affected by COVID. The material in week 14.1 will invite comparative conversations about the trajectories of the Roman Empire versus other world empires, including that of the US. Week</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> Students will compose two 200-400 word “reflections” essays at the end of each module, in which they will be invited to reflect on how that module’s material changed or challenged their perceptions of the present. Students may also opt to integrate personal reflections on the material artifact they choose to study for their final project, i.e., how this object challenges what they thought they knew about the end of the Roman Empire.</p>
---	---

## Goals and ELOs unique to Traditions, Cultures, & Transformations

Below are the Goals and ELOs specific to this Theme. As above, in the accompanying Table, for each ELO, describe the activities (discussions, readings, lectures, assignments) that provide opportunities for students to achieve those outcomes. The answer should be concise and use language accessible to colleagues outside of the submitting department or discipline. The ELOs are expected to vary in their “coverage” in terms of number of activities or emphasis within the course. Examples from successful courses are shared on the next page.

**GOAL 3:** Successful students will engage in a systematic assessment of how cultures and sub-cultures develop and interact, historically or in contemporary society.

**GOAL 4:** Successful students will engage in a systematic assessment of differences among societies, institutions, and individuals' experience within traditions and cultures.

<p><b>ELO 3.1</b> Describe the influence of an aspect of culture (religious belief, gender roles, institutional organization, technology, epistemology, philosophy, scientific discovery, etc.) on at least one historical or contemporary issue.</p>	<p><i>In class:</i> In week 4.1-2, students read and discuss primary and secondary literature about the impact of Christianity on the reign of Constantine, the first Christian Roman emperor, and how religion (pagan and Christian) shaped his reign. In weeks 12.1 and 13.1 they will assess the role of gender for elite women of the late Roman Empire, looking closely at new roles for empresses, queens, and abbesses. Students will read primary sources and scholarship engaging with Christianity and gender, and will be asked to assess their impact in class discussions structured around prompts on the syllabus.</p> <p><i>Assessment:</i> In the mid-term commentary and the final project, students can select an appropriate primary source that allows them to explore the influence of Christianity, gender, and/or ethnicity on the cultural, political, economic, or social development of the late Roman Empire. Students can also use either of the two “Reflections” essays to comment on how Christianity impacted the trajectory of the late Roman Empire.</p>
---	---

<p><b>ELO 3.2</b> Analyze the impact of a “big” idea or technological advancement in creating a major and long-lasting change in a specific culture.</p>	<p><i>In class:</i> Students will discuss primary and secondary literature about how Christian ideas and practices (e.g., martyrdom, asceticism, penance) changed both the political environment of the late Roman empire (weeks 3.2, 4.1-2,5.2, 6.1-2, 8.2, 12.2, 13.1 , and the life of late Romans (6.2, 7.1, 11.2).</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> Students can choose to reflect in writing on the impact of martyrdom, asceticism, or penance on late Roman society in one of their two “Reflections” essays. They can also select a material object that relates to any one of these “big ideas.”</p>
<p><b>ELO 3.3</b> Examine the interactions among dominant and sub-cultures.</p>	<p><i>In-class:</i> through the analysis of primary sources and modern scholarship, the instructor presents how certain sub-groups (especially Christians, provincials, and Germanic peoples) gained greater power and visibility in late Roman society, reaching levels of dominance by the end of the period. For example, in week 3.2 students examine the persecution of Christians by the Roman State; whereas in 4.1 the examine how, within a generation, Christianity was embraced by the Roman emperor; and in 6.2 they study how the organization of church hierarchies was modeled on secular power structures; in weeks 9.2-10.2 they trace the arrival of distinct groups of Germanic peoples within the empire, and their rapid ascendance to positions of power in society, including the creation of successor kingdoms in the post-Roman west.</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> in the mid-term commentary and the final project, students can choose to analyze a source that allows them to explore the relationship between mainstream culture and sub-cultures, the power dynamic between them, and how these dynamics change over the period. For example, by analyzing a Christian martyr narrative in commentary midterm, students can explain how Christians used persecution to strengthen their cause.</p>

<p><b>ELO 3.4</b> Explore changes and continuities over time within a culture or society.</p>	<p><i>In-class:</i> Via lectures and discussions, the instructor helps students analyze the transformation or relative continuity of certain ideas, cultural practices, and political structures. For example, in 6.1 students explore traditional Greco-Roman education (<i>paideia</i>) and Christians’ attempts to reconcile its pagan foundations with their religion. In 7.2 and 8.1 students consider the changing aesthetics in art, architecture and literature (from high classicism to the ‘jeweled style’ of late antiquity); and in 9.1 they examine the changed in imperial geopolitics brought about by the creation of a new eastern capital, Constantinople.</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> students can use both their final project and their self-reflection essays to explore how ideas, cultural practices, and social structures have evolved or transformed, and draw comparisons with similar processes in the modern world. For example, if a student chose a late Roman mosaic for their final project, they could examine how a traditional artistic medium was now deployed with a new (more visually fragmented) aesthetic.</p>
---	--

<p><b>ELO 4.1</b> Recognize and explain differences, similarities, and disparities among institutions, organizations, cultures, societies, and/or individuals.</p>	<p><i>In-class:</i> Through instructor-led analysis of ancient sources and modern scholarship, students repeatedly encounter examples societal and cultural differences and examine their causes: for example, in weeks 3.1 and 7.1, the administrative changes and regional variation in imperial and regional government under Diocletian; in 9.2 and 10.1, Roman ethnographic practices and the ‘othering’ of non-Roman groups such as Goths and Huns; and in 13.1, post-Roman female rulership (compared to repeated examples of male rulership encountered earlier in the course). With each case study, students will be invited to assess how they define and evaluate varying types of difference across numerous aspects of Late Roman society.</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> Students can demonstrate, both in their final project and in the self-reflection essays, that they</p>
--	--



	<p>can recognize and analyze cultural and societal difference in the later Roman Empire. For example, students could select an object such as a coin of the Gothic king Theoderic for their final project, and analyze the way in which it attempts to emulate imperial designs, but incorporates distinct Gothic details.</p>
<p><b>ELO 4.2</b> Explain ways in which categories such as race, ethnicity, and gender and perceptions of difference, impact individual outcomes and broader societal issues</p>	<p><i>In-class.</i> By the end of the course, successful students recognize and explain the role that gender and ethnic difference played in changes within late Roman society. They will also articulate how perceptions and constructions of difference motivated cultural and institutional change. For example, a particular focus of 4.1, 5.2, 6.2, 8.2 and 12.2 is the use of the insider-outsider rhetoric of heresy/orthodoxy by different Christian denominations during Christianity’s search for doctrinal unity. Students will become more attuned to the relative use of insider-outsider terminology.</p> <p><i>Assessments:</i> quizzes will ensure students understand the defining characteristics of certain subgroups (e.g. Arians vs. Nicene Christians; Goths vs. Huns). In their self-reflections, students can contemplate how the rhetoric of difference, in e.g. Christological debates, can help understand contemporary political or societal discourse related to factionism or party politics.</p>