
Term Information

Effective Term Spring 2026

General Information

Course Bulletin Listing/Subject Area Classics
Fiscal Unit/Academic Org Classics - D0509
College/Academic Group Arts and Sciences
Level/Career Undergraduate
Course Number/Catalog 3701
Course Title Domestic Space and Public Life in the Roman World
Transcript Abbreviation DomesticSpaceRome
Course Description In this course, we study ancient Roman domestic spaces (houses, apartments, villas, and palaces) and the relationship between these spaces and the built and natural environments of the ancient Roman world. Our goals are to understand the distinct significance of domestic space in the Roman world and to reflect on what housing means for us in our own environments and communities.
Semester Credit Hours/Units Fixed: 3

Offering Information

Length Of Course 14 Week, 12 Week, 7 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

Prerequisites and Exclusions

Prerequisites/Corequisites
Exclusions
Electronically Enforced Yes

Cross-Listings

Cross-Listings

Subject/CIP Code

Subject/CIP Code 16.1299
Subsidy Level General Studies Course
Intended Rank Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior

Requirement/Elective Designation

Lived Environments

The course is an elective (for this or other units) or is a service course for other units

Course Details

Course goals or learning objectives/outcomes

- Students will engage in critical thinking and scholarly exploration of domestic space in the Roman world by reading ancient texts from a variety of genres, time periods, and disciplines and completing multiple writing assignments.
- Students will identify, describe, and synthesize approaches to ancient built and natural environments in scholarship and views of domestic space and public life in Roman literature.
- Students will develop a sense of themselves as learners by completing scaffolded reading and writing assignments, participating in class discussion and in peer review exercises, and completing a substantial final essay on Roman domestic life.
- Students will focus on the complexity and uncertainty of human-environments interactions in the Roman world in both built and natural environments.
- Students will analyze the significance of environmental uncertainty for historical and archaeological scholarship on ancient Rome.
- Students will describe and analyze the development of the atrium house in Pompeii, the Palatine hill in Rome, and the insula in ancient Roman cities and explore the impact of Roman imperial expansion on domestic spaces in the ancient Mediterranean.
- Students will analyze how domestic spaces facilitated the attitudes and behaviors central to elite success in public life and how Romans shaped their houses to communicate their commitments to key cultural beliefs.
- Students will critically assess ancient evidence for domestic environments with an eye to whose voices are and are not represented in our evidence and discuss a range of scholarly approaches to working with or accounting for these absences.
- Students will analyze and critique ancient conventions, theories, and ideologies regarding the relationship between Roman domestic space and public life and the natural environment.

Content Topic List

- Politics in the ancient house
- Domestic labor and domestic display
- Insulae in Rome, Ostia, and Pompeii
- Emperors' houses
- Poets vs. agricultural writers
- Villa life
- Ancient environmental disasters
- Trimalchio's banquet
- Women in the Roman house
- Slaves in the Roman house
- Roman houses beyond Italy

Sought Concurrence

No

Attachments

- CLAS 3701 GE Form - Lived Environments.docx: GE Themes Form
(Other Supporting Documentation. Owner: Walton,Rachel Kathryn)
- Classics Undergraduate Curriculum Map.xlsx: Curriculum Map
(Other Supporting Documentation. Owner: Walton,Rachel Kathryn)
- CLAS 3701 Syllabus.docx: Updated Syllabus
(Syllabus. Owner: Walton,Rachel Kathryn)
- CLAS 3701 History of Art Concurrence.pdf: Concurrence
(Concurrence. Owner: Walton,Rachel Kathryn)
- CLAS 3701 Changes.pdf: Explanation of changes
(Other Supporting Documentation. Owner: Walton,Rachel Kathryn)
- Fertik Classics 3701 syllabus 9.10.25.docx: Updated Syllabus 9.10.25
(Syllabus. Owner: Bauer,Leah)

Comments

- See feedback email sent to unit 09-10-2025 RLS *(by Steele,Rachel Lea on 09/10/2025 12:53 PM)*
- Please see Subcommittee feedback email sent 05/14/2025. *(by Hilty,Michael on 05/14/2025 09:28 AM)*

Workflow Information

Status	User(s)	Date/Time	Step
Submitted	Walton,Rachel Kathryn	04/23/2025 10:59 AM	Submitted for Approval
Approved	Fullerton,Mark David	04/23/2025 12:46 PM	Unit Approval
Approved	Vankeerbergen,Bernadette Chantal	04/24/2025 10:00 AM	College Approval
Revision Requested	Hilty,Michael	05/14/2025 09:28 AM	ASCCAO Approval
Submitted	Walton,Rachel Kathryn	05/20/2025 09:34 AM	Submitted for Approval
Approved	Fullerton,Mark David	05/20/2025 05:52 PM	Unit Approval
Approved	Vankeerbergen,Bernadette Chantal	05/22/2025 03:22 AM	College Approval
Revision Requested	Steele,Rachel Lea	09/10/2025 12:53 PM	ASCCAO Approval
Submitted	Bauer,Leah	09/10/2025 02:35 PM	Submitted for Approval
Approved	Fullerton,Mark David	09/11/2025 10:33 AM	Unit Approval
Approved	Vankeerbergen,Bernadette Chantal	09/11/2025 10:36 AM	College Approval
Pending Approval	Jenkins,Mary Ellen Bigler Neff,Jennifer Vankeerbergen,Bernadette Chantal Steele,Rachel Lea	09/11/2025 10:36 AM	ASCCAO Approval

Classics 3701: Domestic Space and Public Life in the Roman World

Spring 2026 Tuesday/Thursday xxxx

GE Theme: Lived Environments

Instructor: Prof. Harriet Fertik

Email: fertik.1@osu.edu

Office Hours: University Hall 426, xxxx and by appointment

Format of instruction: In-Person Lecture 3 credit hours

Description

How do domestic spaces shape our environment? How does the environment shape the spaces in which we live? In this course, we study ancient Roman domestic spaces (houses, apartments, villas, and palaces) and the relationship between these spaces and the built and natural environments of the ancient Roman world. We focus on the central importance of domestic space for Roman public life. Sources include ancient texts from a range of literary genres, archaeological evidence for Roman houses from across the social spectrum, and modern scholarship from multiple disciplines (including classics, archaeology, and art history), with special attention to digital databases for the study of ancient cities in Italy. We spend most of our time in Rome (the imperial capital) and in the Bay of Naples (where ample archaeological evidence was preserved by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 CE), but we also explore Roman houses in environments beyond Italy. Our goals are to understand the distinct significance of domestic space in the Roman world and to reflect on what housing means for us in our own environments and communities.

No knowledge of Greek or Latin is required for this course: we will read all ancient sources in English translation. After an introductory unit to orient you to the geography, chronology, and types of evidence essential to the course (Unit 1), we will study how domestic space communicated status and power in the Roman city (Unit 2), how Romans used domestic spaces for agriculture and for recreation in nature (Unit 3), and how different social and ethnic groups in the Roman world experienced their lived environments—experiences which can help us to define and to redefine “the Roman house” (Unit 4). Substantial image libraries (shared in class and available via Carmen) will supplement the assigned readings throughout the semester.

Goals & Expected Learning Outcomes

Classics 3701 is approved as a part of the GEN Theme: Lived Environments category.

Goals	Expected Learning Outcomes	In this course
GOAL 1: Successful students will analyze an important topic or idea at a more	Successful students are able to... 1.1. Engage in critical and logical thinking about the topic or idea of the theme.	In this course, students... read ancient texts from a variety of genres (e.g., historiography, philosophy, and epic) and time periods (focusing on the 1st century BCE-2nd century CE)

advanced and in-depth level than the foundations.		• read scholarship from multiple disciplines (classics, archaeology, history, art history) • complete frequent low-stakes writing assignments • develop, research, and write a substantial final essay
	1.2. Engage in an advanced, in-depth, scholarly exploration of the topic or idea of the theme.	• engage closely with scholarship on current issues in the study of domestic space in the Roman world • engage with a range of methodological approaches to ancient texts and material culture
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.	2.1. Identify, describe, and synthesize approaches or experiences as they apply to the theme.	• identify, describe, and synthesize ○ approaches to ancient built and natural environments in scholarship ○ views of domestic space and public life in Roman literature
	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.	• complete scaffolded reading and writing assignments ○ primary texts ○ scholarship ○ in-class writing exercises and digital database assignments ○ essay exams • participate in class discussion on developing an essay proposal and best practices for building a bibliography • meet with instructor individually to discuss final essay proposal and preliminary bibliography • participate in peer review exercise • complete substantial final essay incorporating primary and secondary sources on Roman domestic space

Goals	Expected Learning Outcomes	Related course content
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GOAL 3: Successful students will explore a range of perspectives on the interactions and impacts between humans and one or more types of environment (e.g. agricultural, built, cultural, economic, intellectual, natural) in which humans live.	Successful students are able to... 3.1 Engage with the complexity and uncertainty of human-environment interactions.	In this course, students... • focus on the complexity and uncertainty of human-environment interactions in the Roman world, in both built and natural environments, with attention to: ○ ancient urbanism ○ ancient environmental disasters • analyze the significance of environmental uncertainty for historical and archaeological scholarship on ancient Rome
	3.2 Describe examples of human interaction with and impact on environmental change and transformation over time and across space.	• describe and analyze the development of ○ the atrium house in Pompeii ○ the Palatine hill in Rome ○ the insula (multipurpose apartment block) in ancient Roman cities • explore the impact of Roman imperial expansion on domestic spaces in diverse environments in the ancient Mediterranean
GOAL 4: Successful students will analyze a variety of perceptions, representations and/or discourses about environments and humans within them.	4.1 Analyze how humans' interactions with their environments shape or have shaped attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviors.	• Analyze how domestic spaces facilitated the attitudes and behaviors central to elite success in public life, with attention to the writings of Roman historians, philosophers, and politicians • Analyze how Romans shaped their houses in order to communicate their commitments to key cultural beliefs, with attention to architecture and visual culture
	4.2 Describe how humans perceive and represent the environments with which they interact	• critically assess ancient evidence for domestic environments with an eye to whose voices and experiences are and are not represented in our evidence (literary and archaeological) • discuss a range of scholarly approaches to working with or accounting for these absences or silences

	4.3 Analyze and critique conventions, theories, and ideologies that influence discourses around environments.	• analyze and critique ancient conventions, theories, and ideologies regarding the relationship between Roman domestic space and ○ public life ○ the natural environment, with special attention to ▪ ancient poetry and agricultural manuals ▪ scholarly studies of the Roman villa as both a luxury resort and a productive agricultural center
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Course Materials

You are required to obtain copies of:

- Lisa C. Nevett, *Domestic Space in Classical Antiquity*. Key Themes in Ancient History. Cambridge University Press, 2010. ISBN 978-0521789455.
- Petronius. *Satyricon*. Translated by Sarah Ruden. Hackett, 2000. ISBN 978-0872205109.

These books are available at The Ohio State University Bookstore and via online vendors. All other assigned texts and supplementary materials for the course will be available through the OSU Library and Carmen.

Expectations, Assignments, and Assessments

Attendance: Attending class is essential to success in this course. I will take attendance occasionally (and without advance notice). If you must be absent, email me as soon as possible. You must contact me within one week of an absence to discuss make-up opportunities.

Participation: Class time is an opportunity to learn from each other, and I look forward to learning from and with you. Please take a moment to consider whether you are usually more of a listener or more of a talker in class discussion. If you are more of a listener, make sure you are challenging yourself to share your ideas. If you are more of a talker, make sure you are allowing space to hear what others have to say.

Daily Reading: This course requires a substantial amount of reading: you are expected to read the texts assigned for each day before class and to have the texts available to consult during class time. It takes practice to develop strengths and skills as a reader, and this course is an

opportunity to do that. Allow yourself time to read carefully and take notes as you go. What do you find most striking, strange, compelling, or funny? What did you find confusing or unclear? What connections do you notice with previous reading assignments for the course or other courses you have taken? What more would you like to know? **Please note that assigned readings contain content that may be disturbing, and I am always willing to meet with you to discuss any concerns you may have.** All readings are selected to expose you to “a range of perspectives on the interactions and impacts between humans and one or more types of environment...in which humans live” and to “analyze a variety of perceptions, representations and/or discourses about environments and humans within them” in the ancient world (GEN Theme: Goal 4).

Writing Exercises: You will complete low-stakes writing assignments throughout the semester (expect 1 per week): these will be marked complete (full credit) or incomplete (no credit). Some, but not all, of these assignments are posted on the course schedule. If you miss an assignment, you must contact me within one week to discuss make-up opportunities. These informal assignments will be opportunities to make connections between material in this course and a) your knowledge about lived environments from other coursework and b) your experiences beyond the classroom (GEN Theme: Goal 2).

The Digital Scavenger Hunts are included in this assignment category. You will receive a set of short answer and short essay questions for each assignment, and you will use important digital resources for the study of ancient Pompeii (especially Pompeii in Pictures, the Pompeii Mapping Project, and the Swedish Pompeii Project) to complete them. Scavenger Hunt #1 will orient you to the map of Pompeii and to the types of structures found there. You will seek out inscriptions (texts carved into stone, plaster, etc.) in a Pompeian insula in Scavenger Hunt #2, to try to reconstruct human interaction with and impact on this space. Scavenger Hunt #3 will focus on evidence for natural disasters, and human responses to them, at Pompeii.

Midterm Exams (2): Short answer and essay exams to be completed in class, covering the assigned readings and material presented in lecture. Each exam will include three parts. Part 1: short answer questions about chronology, geography, and key authors and texts. Part 2: identification and analysis of selected passages and images from assigned primary sources. Part 3: analyses of selected passages from assigned scholarly sources. These exams are an opportunity to demonstrate your command of and engagement with the course material. You will use literary and material evidence for ancient domestic spaces to demonstrate that you can “describe examples of human interaction with and impact on environmental change and transformation over time and across space” in the ancient Roman world as well as “analyze and critique conventions, theories, and ideologies that influence discourses around Environments” (GEN Theme: ELO 3.2 & 4.3). **Detailed instructions for each exam will be posted on Canvas 2 weeks before the exam date.**

Final Paper: You will write a paper (2500 words) analyzing a Roman house from a specific historical perspective: householder, child, free woman inhabitant, enslaved inhabitant, visitor, etc. The final paper can take the form of an academic essay or a creative narrative. You must draw on ancient literary and archaeological sources as well as secondary scholarship. This final

essay is an opportunity to “engage in an advanced, in-depth, scholarly exploration of” lived environments (GEN Theme LE: ELO 1.2). Your bibliography must include at least 3 scholarly sources, including at least 1 scholarly source not assigned on the course syllabus. To help you prepare for this assignment, we will spend time during the class session before spring break reviewing the guidelines, discussing best practices for building your bibliography, and brainstorming possible topics. You will prepare a 1-page outline and preliminary bibliography to discuss in an individual meeting with me during the last week of classes, and we will also do an in-class peer review exercise (focused on a draft of 1 page of your essay) on the last day of class. **Detailed instructions will be posted to Canvas prior to spring break.**

Grading

Attendance: 5%

Writing Exercises: 20%

Midterm Exams: 50% (25% each)

Final Essay: 25%

Grading Scale

93-100 = A	73-76 = C
90-92 = A-	70-72 = C-
87-89 = B+	67-69 = D+
83-86 = B	60-66 = D
80-82 = B-	59 or below = E
77-79 = C+	

Course Policies

Attendance: Attending class is essential for success in this course, but illnesses and emergencies happen. You should not attend class if you are sick. If you must be absent, please email me to let me know in advance, and plan to attend office hours to get caught up. If you know you must be absent for multiple class sessions, please contact me immediately to discuss accommodations.

Communication: All information about the course will be communicated through Canvas. You are responsible for reading all communications sent about this course. If you have a question, **email me directly at fertik.1@osu.edu.** I do my best to respond to all emails within 24 hours during the week, or 48 hours over the weekend.

Electronic Devices: You are welcome to use your computer or tablet for class-related purposes only. Cell phones must be set to silent and put away unless you are using them to access Carmen for an in-class assignment. Using electronic devices for purposes not related to class is

distracting, not only to you but to your fellow students: be considerate of your classmates' learning as well as your own.

Extensions and Make-Ups: Extensions or make-ups must be requested via email at least 24 hours in advance of the deadline (except in case of emergency) and are subject to approval.

Office Hours: If you need to discuss any course material or assignments, you should plan to attend my office hours. I encourage you to come to office hours to introduce yourself, chat about your academic interests, and discuss further opportunities for studying the ancient world at OSU.

University Policies

Academic Misconduct: 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://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/>. Please contact Prof. Fertik if you have questions about what constitutes academic misconduct in this course.

Disability Services: The university strives to maintain a healthy and accessible environment to support student learning in and out of the classroom. 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.

If you are ill and need to miss class, including if you are staying home and away from others while experiencing symptoms of a viral infection or fever, please let me know immediately. In cases where illness interacts with an underlying medical condition, please consult with Student Life Disability Services to request reasonable

accommodations. You can connect with them at slds@osu.edu; 614-292-3307; or slds.osu.edu.

Creating an Environment Free from Harassment, Discrimination, and Sexual Misconduct:

The Ohio State University is committed to building and maintaining a welcoming community. All Buckeyes have the right to be free from harassment, discrimination, and sexual misconduct. Ohio State does not discriminate on the basis of age, ancestry, color, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity or expression, genetic information, HIV/AIDS status, military status, national origin, pregnancy (childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, or recovery therefrom), race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or protected veteran status, or any other bases under the law, in its activities, academic programs, admission, and employment. Members of the university community also have the right to be free from all forms of sexual misconduct: sexual harassment, sexual assault, relationship violence, stalking, and sexual exploitation.

To report harassment, discrimination, sexual misconduct, or retaliation and/or seek confidential and non-confidential resources and supportive measures, contact the Civil Rights Compliance Office (CRCO): Online reporting form: <http://civilrights.osu.edu/>

Intellectual Diversity: Ohio State is committed to fostering a culture of open inquiry and intellectual diversity within the classroom. This course will cover a range of information and may include discussions or debates about controversial issues, beliefs, or policies. Any such discussions and debates are intended to support understanding of the approved curriculum and relevant course objectives rather than promote any specific point of view. Students will be assessed on principles applicable to the field of study and the content covered in the course. Preparing students for citizenship includes helping them develop critical thinking skills that will allow them to reach their own conclusions regarding complex or controversial matters.

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 or calling 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 and 24 hour emergency help is also available 24/7 by dialing 988 to reach the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.

Religious Accommodations: Ohio State has had a longstanding practice of making reasonable academic accommodations for students' religious beliefs and practices in accordance with

applicable law. In 2023, Ohio State updated its practice to align with new state legislation. Under this new provision, students must be in early communication with their instructors regarding any known accommodation requests for religious beliefs and practices, providing notice of specific dates for which they request alternative accommodations within 14 days after the first instructional day of the course. Instructors in turn shall not question the sincerity of a student's religious or spiritual belief system in reviewing such requests and shall keep requests for accommodations confidential.

With sufficient notice, instructors will provide students with reasonable alternative accommodations with regard to examinations and other academic requirements with respect to students' sincerely held religious beliefs and practices by allowing up to three absences each semester for the student to attend or participate in religious activities. Examples of religious accommodations can include, but are not limited to, rescheduling an exam, altering the time of a student's presentation, allowing make-up assignments to substitute for missed class work, or flexibility in due dates or research responsibilities. If concerns arise about a requested accommodation, instructors are to consult their tenure initiating unit head for assistance. A student's request for time off shall be provided if the student's sincerely held religious belief or practice severely affects the student's ability to take an exam or meet an academic requirement and the student has notified their instructor, in writing during the first 14 days after the course begins, of the date of each absence. Although students are required to provide notice within the first 14 days after a course begins, instructors are strongly encouraged to work with the student to provide a reasonable accommodation if a request is made outside the notice period. A student may not be penalized for an absence approved under this policy.

If students have questions or disputes related to academic accommodations, they should contact their course instructor, and then their department or college office. For questions or to report discrimination or harassment based on religion, individuals should contact the [Civil Rights Compliance Office](#). (Policy: [Religious Holidays, Holy Days and Observances](#))

Course Schedule (subject to change, with notice!)

Unit 1: Historical Background, Types of Evidence, and Guiding Questions

Introduction to the Course

January 13

- Overview of syllabus, including course goals
 - As a group, we will discuss and set expectations for thoughtful, productive, and respectful class discussion.
- Overview: Timelines and Maps for Ancient Greek and Roman History

Key Sites and Sources

January 15

- M. Beard (2010), *The Fires of Vesuvius: Pompeii Lost and Found*, Chapter 1: "Living in an Old City"

January 20

- Nevett (2010), *Domestic Space in Classical Antiquity*, Chapter 1: “Domestic Space and Social Organization”
- John Clarke (2013), “*Domus*/Single Family House,” in *A Companion to Roman Architecture*

January 22

- Vitruvius (1st century CE), *On Architecture* Book 1 and 6 (selections)
- Cicero (1st century BCE), *On Duties* Book 1 (selections)
- Velleius Paterculus (1st century CE), *Histories* Book 2 (selections)

Unit 2: Domestic Space and the Roman City: Status and Power

The Basics of Construction

January 27

- L. Lancaster and R. Ulrich (2013), “Materials and Techniques,” in *A Companion to Roman Architecture*
- **In class:** Digital Scavenger Hunt 1

Politics in the Ancient House

January 29

- Quintus Cicero (1st century BCE), “How to Win an Election”
- Plutarch (1st century CE), *Life of Lucullus* (selections)

February 3

- A. Wallace-Hadrill (1994), *Houses and Society in Pompeii and Herculaneum* (selections)

Domestic Labor and Domestic Display

February 5

- P. Alison (2004), *Pompeian Households: An Analysis of the Material Culture* (selections)
- Nevett, Chapter 5: “Seeing the *domus* behind the *dominus* in Roman Pompeii”

Insulae in Rome, Ostia, and Pompeii: Literary and Material Sources

February 10

- Plutarch (1st century CE), *Life of Crassus*
- Juvenal (1st century CE), *Satire* 3
- Seneca (1st century CE), *Letter* 56
- **In class:** Digital Scavenger Hunt 2

February 12

- R. Ulrich (2013), "Courtyard Architecture in the *Insulae* of Ostia Antica," *A Companion to Roman Architecture*
- E. Mayer (2012), *The Ancient Middle Classes: Urban Life and Aesthetics in the Roman Empire*, 100 BCE-250 CE (selections)

Emperors' Houses

February 17

- Suetonius (1st/2nd century CE), *Lives of the Twelve Caesars* (selections)
- H. Fertik (2019), *The Ruler's House: Contesting Power and Privacy in Julio-Claudian Rome*, Chapter 3: "Where to See the Emperor: Augustus and Nero in Rome"

February 19: Midterm Exam 1

Unit 3: Nature, Agriculture, and the Built Environment

Poets vs. Agricultural Writers

February 24

- Selections from Cato (2nd century BCE), Varro (1st century BCE), Columella (1st century CE)

February 26

- Selections from Hesiod, *Works and Days* (8th/7th century BCE); Vergil, *Georgics* and *Aeneid* (1st century BCE); Horace, *Satires* (1st century BCE)

Villa Life

March 3

- Pliny the Younger (1st/2nd century CE), *Letters* 1.20, 2.8, 2.17, 3.19
- Seneca (1st century CE), *Letter* 55
- Plutarch (2nd century CE), "Life of Cato the Elder"

March 5

- M. Zarmakoupi (2014), *Designing for Luxury on the Bay of Naples: Villas and Landscapes (c. 100 BCE–79 CE)* (selections)
- A. Marzano (2007), *Roman Villas in Central Italy: A Social and Economic History* (selections)

Ancient Environmental Disasters: Mount Vesuvius

March 10

- Pliny the Younger (1st/2nd century CE), *Letters* 3.5, 6.16, 6.20
- Martial (1st century CE), *Epigrams* 4.44
- **In class:** Digital Scavenger Hunt 3

Ancient Environmental Disasters: The Great Fire of Rome

March 12

- Tacitus (1st/2nd century CE), *Annales* and Suetonius (1st/2nd century CE), *Nero* (selections)
- **In class:** orientation to Final Paper assignment

Spring Break

Unit 4: Lived Environments, Lived Experiences: Romans and “Others” in the House

Trimalchio’s Banquet

March 24

- Petronius (1st century CE?), *Satyricon* (selections)

March 26

- Petronius (1st century CE?), *Satyricon* (selections)

Focus: Women in the Roman House

March 31

- J. Gardner (2002), *Being a Roman Citizen*, Chapter 4: “Gender: The Independent Woman”
- Livy (1st century BCE), *From the Founding of the City* Book 1 (selections)
- Selected inscriptions

Focus: Slaves in the Roman House

April 2

- S. Joshel and L. Hackworth Petersen (2014), *The Material Lives of Roman Slaves* (selections)

Roman Houses Beyond Italy

April 7

- Nevett, Chapter 4: “Housing and cultural identity: Delos, between Greece and Rome”
- Selections from Vitruvius (1st century BCE), Dionysius of Halicarnassus (1st century BCE), Cornelius Nepos (1st century BCE)

April 9

- Tacitus (1st/2nd century CE), *Germania* (selections)
- L. Revell (2013), “Romanization” in *A Companion to Roman Architecture*

April 14

- Nevett, Chapter 6: “Housing as symbol: Elite self-presentation in North Africa under Roman rule”

April 16: Midterm Exam 2

April 20-21: Individual final paper meetings with instructor (No meeting as a full class)

April 23: In class peer review exercise

May 1: Final Paper due by 11:59pm

GE Theme course submission worksheet: Lived Environments

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 (Lived Environments)

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.

(enter text here)

How do domestic spaces shape our environment? How does the environment shape the spaces in which we live? In this course, we study ancient Roman domestic spaces (houses, apartments, villas, and palaces) and the relationship between these spaces and the built and natural environments of the ancient Roman world. We focus on the central importance of domestic space for Roman public life. Sources include ancient texts from a range of literary genres, archaeological evidence for Roman houses from across the social spectrum, and modern scholarship from multiple disciplines (including classics, archaeology, and art history), with special attention to digital databases for the study of ancient cities in Italy. We spend most of our time in Rome (the imperial capital) and in the Bay of Naples (where ample archaeological evidence was preserved by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 CE), but we also explore Roman houses in environments beyond Italy. Our goals are to understand the distinct significance of domestic space in the Roman world and to reflect on what housing means for us in our own environments and communities.

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.

	Course activities and assignments to meet these ELOs
ELO 1.1 Engage in critical and logical thinking.	The reading and writing assignments are all designed to give students opportunities for critical and logical thinking, both when they read and write independently and during class meetings. Students will read ancient texts from a variety of genres and time periods as well as scholarship from multiple disciplines (literature, history, art history and archaeology). To prepare for the larger assignments (the midterm essay exams and final essay), students will complete frequent low-stakes writing assignments in class as well as digital “scavenger hunt” assignments to practice using archaeological databases for exploring ancient Roman cities. These exercises are intended to prepare students to approach the variety of sources we use in this class with an eye toward critical assessment and analysis.
ELO 1.2 Engage in an advanced, in-depth, scholarly exploration of the topic or ideas within this theme.	While foundations courses in Classics focus primarily on primary sources, the goal of this advanced course is to engage closely with scholarship on these sources, with attention to current debates in the field. For example, in Unit 2, students will analyze scholarly debates about political activities in the Roman houses. Literary and material evidence offer substantially different pictures of the domestic space as a site of elite status display, and examining (though class discussion and in writing) different disciplinary methodologies allows students to gain a nuanced view of ancient lived environments and the ways that scholars approach them.
ELO 2.1 Identify, describe, and synthesize approaches or experiences.	Students will identify, describe, and synthesize 1) approaches to the study of ancient lived environments and 2) evidence for diverse experiences of domestic space in ancient Rome. For example, while Units 2 and 3 focus on domestic space in ancient Rome and Italy, Unit 4 moves to houses in the wider Roman world (Greece, North Africa, and Gaul). We will consider how concepts of and approaches to domestic environments from Rome and Italy do or do not apply to evidence from other parts of the Roman Empire, and we will explore the implications of these questions for efforts to study and define “Roman” experiences of the lived environment.
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.	Assignments are designed to help students to build up to a substantial final essay or creative narrative which presents a tour of a Roman house from a specific historical perspective (e.g., the elite householder, a woman inhabitant, an enslaved inhabitant). Reading assignments and image libraries help students to determine what kinds of material they might be interested in exploring further. Low-stakes, in-class writing assignments will give students the opportunity to assess and reflect on their comprehension of key themes and questions in the course (note: to encourage attendance and participation, most in class writing assignments are not listed on the course schedule). We will have a scheduled class discussion on building bibliographies for the final essay. Students will meet with me individually to discuss proposals for their essays and will participate in a peer review exercise at the end of the semester. These scaffolded assignments give students opportunities to reflect on their progress as learners, thinkers, readers, and writers throughout the course and in the context of their wider academic experiences.

Goals and ELOs unique to Lived Environments

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 explore a range of perspectives on the interactions and impacts between humans and one or more types of environment (e.g. agricultural, built, cultural, economic, intellectual, natural) in which humans live.

GOAL 4: Successful students will analyze a variety of perceptions, representations and/or discourses about environments and humans within them.

	Course activities and assignments to meet these ELOs
ELO 3.1 Engage with the complexity and uncertainty of human-environment interactions.	Students focus on the complexity and uncertainty of human-environment interactions in the Roman world, in both built and natural environments. For example, in Unit 3, we discuss ancient environmental disasters, including the Great Fire in Rome in 64 CE and the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 CE. We examine how these disasters informed ancient views of their lived environments (with attention to literary sources) and the significance of environmental uncertainty for historical and archaeological scholarship on ancient Rome.
ELO 3.2 Describe examples of human interaction with and impact on environmental change and transformation over time and across space.	Students will describe change over time in Roman domestic environments, with special attention to the development of the atrium house in Pompeii, the Palatine hill in Rome, and the rise of the insula (multipurpose apartment block) in cities in Roman Italy (Units 2 and 3), and they will explore the impact of Roman imperial expansion on domestic spaces in diverse environments in the Mediterranean world (Unit 4). For example, in Unit 2, students will complete a digital scavenger hunt in an insula in ancient Pompeii: the database includes 3-D models as well as a map of inscriptions (texts carved onto stone, plaster, etc.), which allow us to try to reconstruct human interaction with and impact on this space.
ELO 4.1 Analyze how humans’ interactions with their environments shape or have shaped attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviors.	Domestic environments were key to shaping Roman attitudes, beliefs, values, and behaviors. For elites in the ancient Roman world, the house was not a private retreat but a site for performance and display, for expressing your status in and promoting your relationship to the broader community. In Unit 1 and 2, students examine literary accounts of elite Roman houses (Cicero, Vitruvius, Velleius Paterculus, Plutarch) and Roman domestic art (especially frescoes) in order to analyze how domestic spaces facilitated the attitudes and behaviors central to elite success in public life and how Romans shaped their houses in order to communicate their commitments to key cultural beliefs and values.
ELO 4.2 Describe how humans perceive and represent the environments with which they interact.	Throughout this course, we will critically assess ancient evidence for domestic environments with an eye to whose voices and experiences are and are not represented in our evidence. We will also discuss a range of scholarly approaches to working with or accounting for these absences or silences. In Unit 4, we focus on both literary and archaeological evidence for the perceptions and experiences of slaves and women in the Roman house: for example, Joshel and Petersen’s <i>The Material Lives of Roman Slaves</i> studies how wall painting in ancient houses was intended to “script” the movements of slaves in the ancient house and how slaves might evade this script. This unit will be

	especially valuable for the final essay, which requires students to draw on evidence from primary sources and scholarly methodologies to create a tour of a specific Roman house from the perspective of one of its inhabitants.
ELO 4.3 Analyze and critique conventions, theories, and ideologies that influence discourses around environments.	Students will analyze and critique ancient conventions, theories, and ideologies regarding the relationship between domestic space and Roman public life and between domestic space and the natural environment. For example, in Unit 3, students will compare and contrast views of the appropriate relationship between the domestic and the natural environment via ancient poetry and agricultural manuals; they will also discuss scholarly studies of the Roman villa as both a luxury resort and a productive (and profit-driven) agricultural center. The midterm exams will require students to assess the ideologies expressed regarding urban (Exam 1) and rural (Exam 2) environments in ancient literary sources in comparison with archaeological evidence.

From: [Fullerton, Mark](#)
To: [Fertik, Harriet](#); [Jama, Khalid](#); [Walton, Rachel](#); [Hawkins, Julia Hawkins](#)
Subject: Fw: Concurrence
Date: Monday, May 19, 2025 4:55:40 PM

See below

Mark

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From: Whittington, Karl <whittington.78@osu.edu>
Sent: Monday, May 19, 2025 6:32 PM
To: Fullerton, Mark <fullerton.1@osu.edu>
Cc: Paulsen, Kris <paulsen.20@osu.edu>
Subject: Re: Concurrence

Hi Mark,
Thanks for checking with us. It looks like a great course and I'm happy to provide concurrence, I'm just copying Kris as undergraduate studies chair in case she has any concerns, but I don't imagine she will.
Cheers,
Karl

From: Fullerton, Mark <fullerton.1@osu.edu>
Date: Saturday, May 17, 2025 at 3:32 PM
To: Whittington, Karl <whittington.78@osu.edu>
Subject: Concurrence

Hi, Karl,

I have been asked to request concurrence from History of Art for the following course:
Classics 3xxx: Domestic Space and Public Life in the Roman World
The syllabus is attached.

Classics has very strong resources for a course on this topic. One of the faculty proposing has published a very well received book on the Roman house and at least three of our Latin faculty work in the area of Roman private life. This course should be of great interest to at least some History of Art students.

Please forward to whatever faculty member or committee considers such requests.

Feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Thanks for your support.

Mark

Mark D. Fullerton
Professor and Chair, Department of Classics
Professor of History of Art

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<https://classics.osu.edu/>