

The City of Rome

Virginia Jewiss, WHC 323

Hums 444

Fall 2020

“The entire history of the world is linked up with this city, and I reckon my second life, a very rebirth, from the day when I entered Rome.”

Goethe, December 3, 1786

Course Description:

Rome was Troy’s destiny and Aeneas’s new home. Under the Caesars, Rome was the Caput Mundi, and became the seat of the most extraordinary imperial power the world has ever known. In Rome, Peter became the Rock of the Church, and the city remains the indisputable center of western Christendom. The Renaissance took its inspiration from ancient Rome, while the Reformation rejected papal authority and the opulence of Rome. Romanticism was born among Rome’s ruins. The French and American Revolutions embraced Rome’s political ideals, while Nazism and Fascism usurped its imperial legacy.

Since its founding, Rome has been at the center of a rich exchange with other civilizations in the Mediterranean and beyond. Rome remains a mecca for pilgrims and a shrine for artists, the point of intersection for the great forces of European civilization, a battleground in the unending war of Church and state, and a crossroads for all cultures.

Rome is thus a living template for the fecund dialogue of the humanities: the multiple layers of history and the intersection of arts and politics are ever-present in its urban landscape and cultural imagination. Nothing is simply ancient history here.

This course will study the city of Rome from its legendary origins to its role in post-war Europe. Significant moments of Roman and world history will be considered through literature, intellectual history, political science, theology, and the arts. We will learn to analyze texts and images related to all these disciplines as we travel to Rome in our imaginations.

Participation is a significant part of your grade. Please note that active and attentive *listening* is an essential element of participation.

Due to the variety and breadth of the material covered, there will be a series of short written / creative assignments and quizzes throughout the semester as well as a final essay exam.

Reading assignments are to be completed **prior** to class meetings. When study questions are provided, make sure you are prepared to answer them fully. We will often do close readings of passages, so always bring a hard copy of the relevant reading material to class.

All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the day indicated on the syllabus.

Academic integrity:

While you are encouraged to exchange ideas with your classmates, plagiarism is a serious offense and will not be treated lightly. You must acknowledge all your sources (it is better to err on the side of generosity), and document all material you consult. Please refer to the Yale College Writing Center website:

<https://poorvucenter.yale.edu/writing/using-sources/understanding-and-avoiding-plagiarism>

[\(Links to an external site.\)](#)

Week 1

All Roads Lead to Rome: introduction to course themes and materials

Reading: Livy: *The Rise of Rome*, Preface

- Book 1:1-16

Week 2

Rome Wasn't Built in a Day

Reading: Livy: *The Rise of Rome* Book 1:17-60, with particular attention to contributions of each king, and the story of Lucretia; Book 2:1-40, 3:32-60, with particular attention to the Horatii and Curiatii and the Verginia episode; Book 5:42-55

Week 3

The Roman Constitution

Reading: Kenneth C. Davis: "How the Civil War Created Thanksgiving"

Polybius: *The Rise of the Roman Empire*, Book 1:1-14; Book 6

ASSIGNMENT (bring to class): create a visual image of your understanding of Polybius' cycle of political evolution

Week 4

From Ashes to Empire

Reading: Virgil, *Aeneid* 1-3, 6

QUIZ: Roman numerals

Week 5

Rome's Destiny

Readings: Virgil, *Aeneid* 6, 8, 12

Augustus, *Res Gestae*

ASSIGNMENT (bring to class): close reading of Aeneas's shield: create a visual image of the shield, based on a careful analysis of the passage

Week 6

Empire without End?

Readings: Tacitus: *The Annals of Imperial Rome*: Chapter 1 and selections

Hibbert, *Rome: Biography of a City*, pp. 64-80

-Virgil: *The Fourth Eclogue*

-Eusebius: *The Conversion of Constantine*

-*The Donation of Constantine*

WATCH: FILM: *Julius Caesar*, 1953 (starring Marlon Brando!)

Come prepared to discuss film: what did you learn? What surprised you?

Week 7

Rome's Two Suns

Reading: Dante: *Monarchy*

ASSIGNMENT: Omens

Week 8

Rome in Hell

Reading: Dante: *Inferno* 1-6, 19, 34

Hibbert: Rome: *Biography of a City*, pp. 81-96, 97-112

Week 9

Rome Revised / Rome Redeemed

Reading: Dante: *Purgatorio* 6, 16, 21-23, 30-33

Paradiso 1, 6, 33

Week 10

Rome "reborn" – the Renaissance

Readings: Petrarch: *Letters on Familiar Matters*, 6:2

- *Coronation oration*

Raphael and Castiglione: Letter to Pope Leo X

Week 11

Empire Divided: the Babylonian Captivity and the Great Schism

Martin Luther: Two letters to Leo X

Hibbert: Rome: *Biography of a City*, pp.113-124

Week 12

The Empire Strikes Back: Reformation and Counterreformation; Revolution and Risorgimento

Reading: Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent (excerpt)

Gregorovius: *The Roman Journals*, selections

Hibbert: Rome: *Biography of a City*, pp.227-273

VISIT (in person or on line): Center for British Art, identify Rome-inspired works

ASSIGNMENT: analyze one Rome-inspired artwork from CBA; and one Rome-inspired building in New Haven or wherever you are (3 pages plus images)

THANKSGIVING

Week 13

Old Rome, New Rome, Third Rome

Reading: Mussolini: *The Doctrine of Fascism*

Hibbert: Rome: *Biography of a City*, pp.286-303

WATCH: FILM: Paolo Sorrentino: *La Grande Bellezza*

FINAL EXAM

Required books:

Livy: *The Rise of Rome, Books 1-5* (Oxford World's Classics, trans. T.J. Luce)

Polybius: *The Rise of the Roman Empire* (Penguin Classics, trans. Ian Scott-Kilvert)

Dante: *Divine Comedy* (3 vols., Bantam Classics, trans. Allen Mandelbaum)

Dante: *Monarchy* (Cambridge University Press, trans. Prue Shaw)

Virgil, *Aeneid* (Bantam Classics, trans. Allen Mandelbaum)

Hibbert: *Rome, Biography of a City* (Penguin)

The following readings can be found on line:

Kenneth C. Davis:

http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/11/25/how-the-civil-war-created-thanksgiving/?action=click&pgtype=Homepage&version=Mothers-Visible&module=inside-nyt-region®ion=inside-nyt-region&WT.nav=inside-nyt-region&_r=0

Res Gestae:

<http://classics.mit.edu/Augustus/deeds.html>

[\(Links to an external site.\)](#)

Virgil, Fourth Eclogue:

<http://classics.mit.edu/Virgil/eclogue.4.iv.html>

[\(Links to an external site.\)](#)

Donation of Constantine:

<http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/source/donatconst.asp>

[\(Links to an external site.\)](#)

Eusebius: The Conversion of Constantine:

<https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/conv-const.asp>

Petrarch, Coronation Oration:

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/460017>

[\(Links to an external site.\)](#)

Martin Luther:

Letter to Leo X accompanying the “Resolutions” to the XCV Theses:

<http://www.iclnet.org/pub/resources/text/wittenberg/luther/nine5-pope.txt>

[\(Links to an external site.\)](#)

Letter to Leo X, “Concerning Christian Liberty”:

<http://www.bartleby.com/36/6/1.html>

Council of Trent: On the Invocation, Veneration, and Relics of Saints, and on Sacred Images:

<http://history.hanover.edu/texts/trent/ct25.html>

[\(Links to an external site.\)](#)

Mussolini: The Doctrine of Fascism:

<http://www.worldfuturefund.org/wffmaster/Reading/Germany/mussolini.htm>