

Department of Classical Studies
Course Outline
CS 9450B: THE ROMAN FAMILY



INSTRUCTOR: Dr. K. Olson (kolson2@uwo.ca)

OFFICE: Lawson Hall 3227 (661-2111 x 84525)

OFFICE HOURS: Thursdays, 4:00-5:00 PM

TIME AND PLACE OF CLASS: Tuesdays, 1:30-4:30, LAH 3220

REQUIRED TEXTS:

S. Dixon. 1992. *The Roman Family*. Johns Hopkins. = **Dixon 1992**

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

This course will analyze the different ways in which, from 200 BCE -200 CE, Romans lived together as families. We will examine the strategies they developed to secure the continuation of the family and its property; how families and their constituent members fitted into public life, and how these issues affected individuals of different social backgrounds. It will study what concepts like childhood, adolescence, or familial affection meant to Romans; what sentiments were invested in the various family-related roles and how these sentiments differed from our own. We will also look at such topics as slavery, adultery, and the dissolution of marriage, and their effects on family.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- To become familiar with the main evidence for the Roman family in the central period.

- To become aware of the problems with and limitations of that evidence.
- To investigate modern reactions to, interpretations of, and preconceptions about that evidence.

TRANSFERABLE SKILLS:

- To develop critical, analytical and problem-solving skills through the writing of an essay and through the close analysis of ancient texts and artefacts in seminars.
- To gain a knowledge of the different types of evidence available for this area of Roman history, primarily the main literary texts and the archaeological evidence.
- To gain an appreciation of the historiographical and analytical skills needed to handle these sources.
- To gain an ability to use these different sources together to assess the main issues in the interpretation of the Roman family.
- To develop and enhance skills in oral presentation through participation in seminars.
- To develop the skills necessary for conducting in-depth research.
- To develop an ability to discuss these issues in written work with coherent and logical arguments, clearly and correctly expressed.

GRADES:

Essay	40%
Presentation	20%
TWO article reviews (20% each)	40%

100%

This will be a discussion-based seminar which will require participation from **all** students. I do not give a 'participation grade' as such, but factor a willingness to speak up in class into the final grade.

ESSAY AND PRESENTATIONS:

- **Essays** should be 5000 words, and are due by **FRIDAY APRIL 24th**.
- I encourage you to write the essay on a topic of interest to you (in consultation with me). Although we cover many topics pertinent to women in ancient society in the class readings and discussion, some we simply do not have time to examine. One of those may be appropriate for your paper: for instance, the Roman family and the house; the family in art; the early Christian family; domestic religion and the family, etc.
- **Presentations** should be about 15-20 minutes in length (in other words, conference-paper length, or **8-10** double-spaced typed pages). You will choose a

date for your presentation in the first week or two of classes; if you need to cancel or change your date **you must find a classmate willing to take your place.**

- Your essay should incorporate and address questions, suggestions, and comments raised during your presentation; thus, the essay and presentation are on the same topic.
- **Article reviews:** students are required to choose **TWO** of our readings in advance and prepare questions and comments for discussion in class. (Dixon is excluded from these). You will choose your articles in the first week or two of classes; if you need to cancel or change your choices **you must find a classmate willing to take your place.**

COURSE OUTLINE:

Jan 7th: Introduction/demography: size and shape of the Roman family:

Questions for discussion:

A. “The ratio of hard work to intellectual reward is lamentably meager” (K. Hopkins). Is this a fair assessment of the attempts made to study ancient demographic trends using ancient ‘statistical’ evidence?

B. What were the important demographic patterns in Roman antiquity? How would they have affected Roman family experience?

Reading:

- Parkin, T. 1992. *Demography and Roman Society*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press.: 91-133
- Parkin, T. 2011. The Roman life course and the family. In B. Rawson (ed). *A Companion to Families in the Greek and Roman Worlds*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell: 276-290.
- Hopkins, K. 1987. Graveyards for historians. In F. Hinard (ed). *La Mort, les morts et l'au-dela dans le monde romain. Actes du Colloque de Caen, 20-22 novembre 1985*, Caen: 113-126.
- Frier, B. 1999. Roman demography. In D. Potter and D. Mattingly (eds). *Life, Death, and Entertainment in the Roman Empire*. Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press: 85-109.
- Scheidel, W. 1996. *Measuring Sex, Age and Death in the Roman Empire (JRA Suppl. 21)*. Providence R.I.: 139-163
- Meyer, E. 1990. Explaining the epigraphic habit in the Roman empire: the evidence of epitaphs. *JRS* 80: 74-96

C. How did the Romans define ‘family?’ Should we reconstitute the Roman family as nuclear or extended?

Reading:

- Dixon 1992: 1-35, 133-59

- Saller, R.P. 1994. *Patriarchy, Property and Death in the Roman Family*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press: 71-101
- George, M. 2005. Family imagery and family values in Roman Italy. In M. George (ed). *The Roman Family in the Empire: Rome, Italy, and Beyond*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press: 37-66.
- Nielsen, H. S. 1999. Quasi-kin, quasi-adoption and the Roman family. In M. Corbier (ed). *Adoption et fosterage*. Paris: de Boccard: 249-262.
- Dixon, S. 1999. The circulation of children in Roman society. In M. Corbier (ed). *Adoption et fosterage*. Paris: de Boccard: 217-230.
- Kampen, N. 2012. Afterword: possibilities. In M. Harlow and L. Larssen Lovén (eds). *Families in the Roman and Late Antique World*. London: Continuum Books: 254-64.

Jan 14th: Transmission of property and patterns of inheritance:

Questions for discussion:

- A. “The will is in essence a vehicle for moderated deviance from the rules of intestacy.” Does this adequately convey the importance and purpose of Roman will-making?

Reading:

- Dixon 1992: 36-60
- Crook, J.A. 1967a. *Law and Life of Rome 90 BC – AD 212*. (Cornell Univ. Press): 98-138
- Corbier, M. 1991. Divorce and Adoption as Roman Family Strategies. In B. Rawson (ed). *Marriage, Divorce, and Children in Ancient Rome*. Oxford: Clarendon Press: 47-78.
- Saller, R.P. 1994. *Patriarchy, Property and Death in the Roman Family*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press: 155-180
- Gardner, J. 2011. Roman “horror” of intestacy? In B. Rawson (ed). *A Companion to Families in the Greek and Roman Worlds*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell: 361-376.
- Gardner, J. 1999. Status, sentiment and strategy in Roman adoption. In M. Corbier (ed). *Adoption et fosterage*. Paris: de Boccard: 63-79.

- B. Under which circumstances could women inherit in Roman antiquity?

Reading:

- Crook, J.A. 1986. Women in Roman succession. In B. Rawson (ed). *The Family in Ancient Rome: New Perspectives*. Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press: 58-82.
- Gardner, J. 1986. *Women in Roman Law and Society*. Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press: 163-204
- Saller, R.P. 1994. *Patriarchy, Property and Death in the Roman Family*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press: 204-224

- Pölönen, J. 1999. Lex Voconia and conflicting ideologies of succession: privileging agnatic obligation over cognatic family feeling. *Arctos* 33: 111-131.
- Hopwood, B. 2009. Livia and the *lex Voconia*. In E. Herring and K. Lomas (eds), *Gender Identities in Italy in the First Millennium BC*, BAR Int. S1983: 143-148.
- Dixon, S. 1985a. Breaking the law to do the right thing: the gradual erosion of the Voconian Law in ancient Rome. *Adelaide Law Review* 9: 519-34.

C. Law problems (handout)

Jan 21st: *Patria potestas* and its implications:

Questions for discussion:

A. What were the legal rights of the *pater*? Were these mitigated in any way by social or demographic considerations, and if so, how?

B. “Half of Roman men no longer had a father by the time they were twenty and were *patres familiae* in their own right; others remained minors until they were at least twice that age. The juxtaposition of these two realities must have aggravated resentment and revolts” (P. Veyne). Do you agree?

Reading:

- Crook, J.A. 1967b. *Patria potestas*. *CQ* 17: 113-22.
- Saller, R.P. 1986. *Patria potestas* and the stereotype of the Roman family. *Continuity and Change* 1: 7-22
- Saller, R.P. 1994. *Patriarchy, Property and Death in the Roman Family*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press: 181-203
- Harris, W. 1986. The Roman father's power over life and death. In R. Bagnall and W. Harris (eds). *Studies in Roman Law in Memory of A.A. Schiller*. Leiden: Brill: 81-95.
- Shaw, B. 2001. Raising and killing children: two Roman myths. *Mnemosyne* 54: 31-77.

C. What were the implications of *tutela* for women’s legal, social, and economic position?

Reading:

- Dixon, S. 1986. Family finances: Terentia and Tullia. In B. Rawson (ed). *The Family in Ancient Rome: New Perspectives*. Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press: 93-120.
- Gardner, J. 1986. *Women in Roman Law and Society*. Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press: 5-30
- Thomas, Y. 1992. The division of the sexes in Roman law. In P. Schmitt Pantel (ed). *A History of Women in the West vol. I: From Ancient Goddesses to Christian Saints*, Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press: 83-97.

D. Law problems (handout)

Jan 28th: Marriage and marriage patterns:

Questions for discussion:

A. What were the main types of marriage, for the Romans? Did marriage patterns vary according to class?

Reading:

- Dixon 1992: 61- 97
- Hopkins, K. 1965. The age of Roman girls at marriage. *Population Studies* 18: 309-27.
- Syme, R. 1987. Marriage ages for Roman senators. *Historia* 36: 318-32.
- Shaw, B. 1987. The age of Roman girls at marriage: some reconsiderations. *JRS* 77: 30-46.
- Saller, R.P. 1987. Men's age at marriage and its consequences in the Roman family. *CP* 82: 21-34.
- Scheidel, W. 2007. Roman funerary commemoration and the age at first marriage. *CP* 102: 389-402.
- Martin, D.B. 1996. The construction of the ancient family: methodological considerations. *JRS* 86: 40-60.
- Crook, J. A. 1990. 'His and hers:' what degree of financial responsibility did husband and wife have for the matrimonial home and their life in common in a Roman marriage? in J. Andreau and H. Bruhns (eds). *Parente et strategies familiales dans l'antiquite Romaine*. Rome: Ecole Française de Rome: 153-72.
- Treggiari, S. 1991. *Roman marriage : lusti Coniuges From the Time of Cicero to the Time of Ulpian*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press: 3-36
- Saller, R.P. and B. Shaw. 1984. Tombstones and Roman family relations in the principate: civilians, soldiers and slaves. *JRS* 74: 124-56.

B. Law problems (handout)

Feb 4th: The sentimental idea of the Roman family and the idea of companionate marriage:

Questions for discussion:

A. "The effort to write Roman family history in terms of trends of affection is methodologically misconceived." Discuss.

Reading:

- Dixon, S. 1991. The sentimental idea of the Roman family. In B. Rawson (ed). *Marriage, Divorce, and Children in Ancient Rome*. Oxford: Clarendon Press: 99-113
- Dixon, S. 1997. Continuity and change in Roman social history: retrieving 'family feeling(s)' from Roman law and literature. In M. Golden and P. Toohey (eds). *Inventing Ancient Culture: Historicism, Periodization and the Ancient World*. London and New York: Routledge: 79-90.

- Rawson, B. 1966. Family life among the lower classes at Rome in the first two centuries of the empire. *CP* 61: 71-83.
- Treggiari, S. 1991. *Roman marriage: Iusti Coniuges From the Time of Cicero to the Time of Ulpian*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press: 183-261
- Bradley, K. R. 1998. The Roman family at dinner. In I. Nielsen and H. S. Nielsen (eds). *Meals in a Social Context: Aspects of the Communal Meal in the Hellenistic and Roman World*. Aarhus: Aarhus Univ. Press 36-55.

Feb 11th: Divorce and remarriage:

Questions for discussion:

- A. How frequent were divorce and remarriage in Roman society? Did it depend to some extent on class? What were the factors encouraging divorce and remarriage?

Reading:

- Bradley, K. R. 1991. Remarriage and the structure of the upper-class Roman family. In B. Rawson (ed). *Marriage, Divorce, and Children in Ancient Rome*. Oxford: Clarendon Press: 79-98.
- Treggiari, S. 1991. *Roman marriage: Iusti Coniuges From the Time of Cicero to the Time of Ulpian*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press: 435-482
- Corbier, M. 1991. Divorce and Adoption as Roman Family Strategies. In B. Rawson (ed). *Marriage, Divorce, and Children in Ancient Rome*. Oxford: Clarendon Press: 47-78.

B. Law problems (handout)

Feb 25th: Augustan legislation, propaganda, and the visual representation of the family:

Questions for discussion:

- A. What types of rewards and penalties did the Augustan marriage legislation set out? How did Augustus' legislation on marriage and sexual behavior fit into his wider social and political programme?

Reading:

- Cohen, D. 1991. The Augustan Law on Adultery: The Social and Cultural Context' in D. Kertzer and R. Saller (eds). *The Family in Italy from Antiquity to the Present*. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press: 109-126.
- Treggiari, S. 1991. *Roman marriage: Iusti Coniuges From the Time of Cicero to the Time of Ulpian*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press: 60-80
- McGinn, T.A.J. 1991. Concubinage and the Lex Julia on adultery. *TAPhA* 121: 335-75.
- Edwards, C. 1993. *The Politics of Immorality in Ancient Rome*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press : 34-62

- Ramsby, T.R, and Severy-Hoven, Beth. 2007. Gender, sex, and the domestication of the empire in art of the Augustan age. *Arctura* 40 (1): 43-71.
- Kleiner, D.E.E. 1978. The great friezes of the Ara Pacis Augustae: Greek sources, Roman derivations and Augustan social policy. *MEFRA* 90: 753-85.

Mar 3rd:

The Roman father and the Roman mother:

Questions for discussion:

- A. How can we define *pietas*? What were the Roman ideals surrounding this quality?
- B. What were the ideals of parenting, for Roman authors?

Reading:

- Eyben, E. 1991. Fathers and sons. In B. Rawson (ed). *Marriage, Divorce, and Children in Ancient Rome*. Oxford: Clarendon Press: 114-143.
- Saller, R.P. 1997. Roman kinship: structure and sentiment. In B. Rawson and P. Weaver (eds). *The Roman Family in Italy: Status, Sentiment, Space*. Oxford: Oxford University Press: 7-34.
- Saller, R.P. 1999. *Pater familias, mater familias*, and the gendered semantics of the Roman household. *CP* 94: 182-197.
- Saller, R. P. 1988. Pietas, obligation and authority in the Roman family. In *Alte Geschichte und Wissenschaftsgeschichte: Festschrift für Karl Christ zum 65. Geburtstag*: 393-410.
- Dixon, S. 1988. *The Roman Mother*. Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press: 71-103, 141-67
- Evans-Grubbs, J. 2011. Promoting *pietas* through Roman law. In B. Rawson (ed). *A Companion to Families in the Greek and Roman Worlds*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell: 377-392.

Mar 10th: Childbirth, *expositio*, infanticide:

Questions for discussion:

- A. Was *expositio* the same thing as infanticide? What were the factors influencing the decision to expose a newborn?

Reading:

- Dixon 1992: 98-132
- Engels, D. 1980. The problem of female infanticide in the Graeco-Roman world. *CP* 75: 112-20.
- Evans-Grubbs, J. 2010. Hidden in plain sight: *expositi* in the community. In V. Dasen and T. Späth (eds). *Children, Memory, and Family Identity in Roman Culture*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press: 293-310.
- Dasen, V. 2011. Childbirth and infancy in Greek and Roman antiquity. In B. Rawson (ed). *A Companion to Families in the Greek and Roman Worlds*. Malden,

MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

B. What methods of birth-control were available in antiquity? How effective were they?

Reading:

- Riddle, J. 1992. *Contraception and Abortion from the Ancient World to the Renaissance*. Cambridge, MA.: Harvard Univ. Press: 1-15, 57-65, 74-86
- Frier, B. 1994. Natural fertility and family limitation in Roman marriage. *CP* 89: 318-333.

Mar 17th: Attitudes to children and childhood:

*Student presentations (last hour of class)

Questions for discussion:

Reading:

A. "The Romans had no concept of childhood." Discuss.

- Manson, M. 1983. The emergence of the small child in Rome (third century BC-first century AD). *History of Education* 12: 149-54.
- Garnsey, P. 1991. Child rearing in ancient Italy. In D. Kertzer and R. Saller (eds). *The Family in Italy from Antiquity to the Present*. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press: 48-65
- Laes, C. 2004. *Children in the Roman Empire: Outsiders Within*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press: 13-49
- Laes, C. 2017. Touching children in Roman antiquity: the sentimental discourse and the family. In C. Laes and V. Vuolanto (eds). *Children and Everyday Life in the Roman and Late Antique World*. London and New York: Routledge: 60-78.
- Rawson, B. 1997. The iconography of Roman childhood. In B. Rawson and P. Weaver (eds). *The Roman Family in Italy: Status, Sentiment, Space*. Oxford: Oxford University Press: 205-232, with 233-236 (Huskinson).

B. Did the ancients care when their children died?

Reading:

- Golden, M. 1988. Did the ancients care when their children died? *G&R* 35: 152-63.
- Huskinson, J. 2007. Constructing childhood on Roman funerary memorials. In A. Cohen and J. Rutter (eds). *Constructions of Childhood in Ancient Greece and Italy*. Princeton, NJ: The American School of Classical Studies at Athens. *Hesperia* supplement no. 41: 323-338.
- Carroll, M. 2012. 'No part in earthly things:' the death, burial and commemoration of newborn children and infants in Roman Italy. In M. Harlow and L. Larssen Lovén (eds). *Families in the Roman and Late Antique World*. London: Continuum Books: 41-63.

Mar 24th: Slavery and the Roman family

(Student presentations: last hour of class)

- Edmondson, J. 2011. Slavery and the Roman family. In *The Cambridge World History of Slavery Vol. 1: The Ancient Mediterranean World*. Online.
- Perry, M. 2014. *Gender, Manumission, and the Roman Freedwoman*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univ. Press: 43-68
- Penner, L. 2012. Gender, household structure and slavery: re-interpreting the aristocratic columbaria of early imperial Rome. In R. Laurence and A. Strömberg, *Families in the Greco-Roman World*. London: Continuum: 143-58.
- Joshel, S. and L. H. Petersen. 2014. *The Material Lives of Roman Slaves*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univ. Press: 24-86.
- Mouritsen, H. 201. The families of Roman slaves and freedmen. In B. Rawson (ed). *A Companion to Families in the Greek and Roman Worlds*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell: 129-44.

Mar 31st: Old age and death in the Roman family:

*Student presentations (last hour of class)

Questions for discussion:

- A. Is it possible to reconstruct the Romans' emotional attitudes towards death?
- B. What was old age like in the ancient world? Which factors influenced what kind of an old age one had?

Reading:

- Hopkins, K. 1983. *Death and Renewal*. (*Sociological Studies in Roman History* 2). Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press: 201-256
- Hope, V. 1997. A roof over the dead: communal tombs and family structure. In R. Laurence and A. Wallace-Hadrill (eds). *Domestic Space in the Roman World: Pompeii and Beyond*. Portsmouth R.I.: *ORA Suppl.* 22: 69-88.
- Parkin, T. 1997. Out of sight, out of mind: elderly members of the Roman family. In B. Rawson and P. Weaver (eds). *The Roman Family in Italy: Status, Sentiment, Space*. Oxford: Oxford University Press: 123-148.
- Parkin, T. 2003. *Old Age in the Roman World: A Cultural and Social History*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press: 203-35
- Harlow, M. and R. Laurence. 2002. *Growing Up and Growing Old in Ancient Rome: A Life Course Approach*. London and New York: Routledge.