CS 9552: Burial and Identity in the Roman Provinces
Graduate Seminar
Fall 2023

*This syllabus is preliminary. The weekly topics and readings will be included before the beginning of the semester*

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course takes a close look at the different and varied traditions across the Roman provinces of burial and commemoration of individuals and groups. The provinces make a rich case study to look at this subject because of the different processes of change, continuity and creation that took place in the wake of conquest and subjugation by the Roman empire. The varied traditions that existed before conquest provide a rich backdrop for exploring responses to imperial rule. Burial practice is often a place in which groups and individuals solidified their status in society and across regions, and in many places became an important locus of individual and collective identity. We will look at all provincial regions (not necessarily every single province) in the empire to understand the physical monuments and, where possible, the motivations behind burial traditions, both before and after incorporation into the broader Roman world. We will also use this context to explore theoretical approaches to processes of cultural change, and look beyond basic binaries of continuity vs. change in provincial contexts.

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION
Instructor: Dr. Elizabeth Greene
Office Hours: By Appointment. I’m on campus on Monday-Tuesday-Thursday and I’m flexible. Email for an appointment.
My Info: My office is in Lawson 3212. Stop in if you need me. If I can’t talk then, we can schedule a time to meet later.
Email: egreene2@uwo.ca (if you don’t get a response from me quickly, please don’t hesitate to send a reminder)

ASSIGNMENTS and COURSE BREAKDOWN
Grades are dependent upon participation in the class and the independent research that you will do for the course, as follows:

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DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS:

**In-class Participation: 25%**
This course is a discussion-based course that holds the expectations of graduate level debate and engagement. I expect that you will come to class having read the material assigned and with questions and discussion points to pose to our group. Graduate seminars are what you make of them, and they are not for me to talk and you to listen. Graduate school moves you beyond that mode of learning. There will be very few occasions that I will give an outright lecture, except to provide background on themes and topics and the sites that we will discuss in the second half of the course. I am here to facilitate and also participate myself, but I do not carry the full three hours of the seminar. Productive participation in a graduate course includes bringing both thoughtful ideas and observations, as well as questions that provoke further discussion and debate. Simple observations, critiques of whether or not you “liked” an article (or criticism of writing style, organization of an article, etc.) or attacks on authors is not considered productive debate and does not further fruitful conversation. A few minutes of that is fine at the start of a discussion, and sometimes it is relevant for a more in-depth analysis of work, but remember that this is not sophisticated participation and shouldn’t be the only type of contribution you make to the class. *If you have any further questions or want to discuss class participation further, please don’t hesitate to come chat with me.*

**Article Presentation #1: 15%**
This assignment will be a fairly traditional presentation on an article that is on the syllabus and you will present to the whole class so they understand its contents. This type of assignment is done for two reasons: 1) It will give you the opportunity to get to know an important body of work in depth and the experience to summarize this work for another group of people (your classmates). This is an important exercise to master as you move into your graduate careers and will be expected to perform analysis and communication such as this on a regular basis; 2) It will cut down the reading for everyone else to a more manageable amount. So, on the week you present you will feel like you have some extra work but on the other weeks you will have one fewer article to read and you can sit back and listen to one of your classmates tell you what it’s all about.

**Article Presentation #2: 15%**
This is going to be done a little differently. Rather than me assign an important article for our class discussions, you will choose an article that you find fascinating, interesting, useful, seminal for your research as it is developing through the semester. You will present that article (or book chapter) to the class and discuss how it fits into the class themes and your research. It cannot be something we have all read together. These will be presented in the last weeks of the semester together with some explanation and presentation of your research project; therefore, you cannot start your research for this class in December. I am doing this as a favour—you (and your grade) will benefit enormously from starting your research early and thinking about this subject in depth. Please discuss with me in October sometime what you are thinking about and what
reading you might like to cover for the class. Please provide a digital handout that the class can refer to in the future (we’ll figure out how we’ll share docs in this class at the first meeting).

Research Presentation: 10%
This will be somewhat informal but I would like everyone to take seriously sharing your research with the class and learning how to convey to others the importance of your research and the conclusions you are reaching. Practically speaking, this will force you to think pretty seriously about this research paper well before the end of the term. We will spend the last class meeting sharing our research (more if the class is large) and getting peer feedback on your work to that point.

Research Paper: 35%
This will be a research project that will probably take the form of a traditional written research essay. We can talk about other formats but only if they involve serious scholarly approaches and outcomes (this is not undergrad anymore, so no blogs, podcasts, etc.). I understand, however, that research can go in different directions using emerging technologies, so if there is something interesting you’d like to do, come talk to me.

Given the subject matter, I assume most people will do a research essay. I understand that this subject will be new to many of you, so you should use part of this research project to explore new topics and approaches. I have never taught this class before and I don’t know any colleagues teaching a similar class, so really we’re exploring things together here and I have no set notion of how this will go. Let’s figure out what is most interesting to you and how that can be explored in the most useful and fruitful way.

GETTING DISCUSSION GOING
It can sometimes be tough to get going on discussion, especially if you’re new to the program or not comfortable with your surroundings in a graduate seminar yet. Let’s make this easier with a few approaches that may seem a bit childish at first, but I promise will help to get your thoughts going. Every week we’ll start with you answering and bringing a few questions to the class. This is a very easy-going space and we are not in competition with each other, so let’s keep this productive and helpful always. So, every class bring this information with you:

1. What is one entirely new thing that you learned this week?
2. What surprised or intrigued you the most from the readings this week?
3. What did you think you knew, but the readings told you something different or changed your mind about?
4. What did you learn this week that shocked you the most?
5. What would you like to know more about?

Feel free to add your own elements to this list. What other questions do you find useful to guide your reading? Remember to take notes as you read. Don’t rely on remembering everything you thought or wanted to say. Often with several articles per week on the agenda, ideas that seemed
so clear two days ago can get jumbled as you read more articles on the same subject. Whatever else works for you to think critically about our subject matter is great. Bring ideas and share with the class!

**COURSE MATERIALS**
There is no textbook for this course nor anything you are expected to buy. Much of what we will read is already online and we will crowdsourcethe rest as we go through the semester. Let’s just keep the lines of communication open on this front and we’ll all have what we need for the course. I will drop everything I already have into a folder so it’s available. We’ll discuss this further on the first day of class.