

DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICAL STUDIES
 COURSE OUTLINE
 Classical Studies 3350F: WOMEN IN ANCIENT ROME
 Autumn 2025



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

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

OFFICE HOURS: Tuesdays, 4:00-5:00 in LAH 3227 or by appointment

REQUIRED TEXTS:

1. M.R. Leftkowitz and M. B. Fant, eds. *Women's Life in Greece and Rome: A Sourcebook in Translation*. **4th ed. (Baltimore 2016, \$44.95). =L&F.

****You will need to order from amazon.ca or similar.**

2. E. D'Ambra. *Roman Women*. (Cambridge 2007, \$36.95). = D'Ambra

3. Handouts (posted to our OWL site).

4. Other readings: please go to: <https://ares.lib.uwo.ca/ares/> OR click the button on the OWL site. You will need your UWO login/password

USEFUL WEBSITE:

****In addition, a useful website to look at is Diotima: Women and Gender in the Ancient World (<https://diotima-doctafemina.org>)**

COURSE OBJECTIVES: This course seeks to introduce students to the study of women and women's lives in Roman antiquity starting from a body of literary and artistic evidence. Marriage and childbearing, women and the law, women's occupations, and women in history and poetry will be explored from a variety of perspectives; as well, powerpoint lectures will focus on such topics as women's artifacts, artistic portrayals of women, and female spaces in antiquity.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

On successful completion of this course students are expected to be able to:

- have acquired a knowledge of ancient Roman gender and gender stereotypes and activities, be able to describe in detail the female 'blueprint' of antiquity, and be able to outline how ancient gender ideals differ from our own
- identify both iconography and subject matter, and be able to visually analyze ancient art which depicts Roman women
- address the possible symbolism and meaning of content/subject matter in ancient art within its specific and larger social/historical context
- to understand the discourse surrounding the female body in the ancient world
- read, comprehend, and sum up ancient literary sources in translation concerning Roman women

LEARNING OUTCOMES/TRANSFERABLE SKILLS:

Students completing this course are expected to have acquired:

- an understanding of the importance of historical perspective, and how social norms and customs, and the construction of gender, are products of time, events and context
- a developed understanding of the limits of primary evidence as embodying actual historical fact

GRADES:

Two in-class writing assignments: 20% each

Midterm: 20% (**Please note that this assessment is central to the learning objectives for this course. Accordingly, students seeking academic consideration for this assessment will be required to provide formal supporting documentation. Students who are granted academic consideration for this assessment will be provided with an opportunity to write a makeup exam).

Final exam: 40%

100%

EXAMS:

The exams are designed to test the students' visual memory of images, and knowledge of readings and lectures. Details will follow regarding the in-class writing assignments.

NOTES TO STUDENTS:

1. Since tests and writing assignments are given in class time, there can be no conflicts. **More than one test on the same day does not constitute a conflict.** Plan your schedule ahead of time.
2. Those who miss classes or parts of classes remain responsible for the material they have missed. I will not review the contents of lectures or repeat announcements for those who arrive late or miss classes. I post **very** basic powerpoints on OWL, but class attendance is still **essential** to understand the details of the lecture.
3. The final grade is calculated on the basis of your performance on the midterm, the writing assignments, and final examination **only**. **You cannot do an extra assignment to make up for a poor performance on a test or the final examination.** Nor can I re-weight grades unless I hear from your academic counsellor.
4. If a lecture and its readings appears on the syllabus, **that lecture and readings will appear on the midterm and final exam**, regardless of whether the lecture is given in-person, uploaded as a document to our OWL site, or recorded and uploaded to the OWL site.
5. Students are responsible for checking the course OWL site (<https://westernu.brightspace.com/>) regularly for news and updates. This is the primary method by which information will be disseminated to all students in the class. If students need assistance with the course OWL site, they can seek support on the [OWL Brightspace Help](#) page. Alternatively, they can contact the Western Technology Services Helpdesk. They can be contacted by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800.

Note from the Dean of Arts and Humanities

You are responsible for ensuring that you have successfully completed all course prerequisites and that you have not taken an antirequisite course. Lack of prerequisites may not be used as basis of appeal. If you are not eligible for a course, you may be removed from it at any time, and you will receive no adjustment to your fees. These decisions cannot be appealed.

Use of AI:

In this course, the use of AI (automatic translation tools, grammar checkers, ChatGPT, etc.) **is prohibited**. If AI use is suspected, the instructor will ask for research notes, rough drafts, essay outlines, and other materials used in preparing assignments. Students are expected to retain these materials until after final grades have been entered. In the unlikely event of concerns being raised about the authenticity of any assignment, students may be asked to produce these materials; an inability to do so may weigh heavily against them.

General information about missed coursework

Students must familiarize themselves with the *University Policy on Academic Consideration – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs* posted on the Academic Calendar:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf

This policy does not apply to requests for academic consideration submitted for **attempted or completed work**, whether online or in person. The policy also does not apply to students experiencing longer-term impacts on their academic responsibilities. These students should consult: [Accessible Education](#).

For procedures on how to submit Academic Consideration requests, please see the information posted on the Office of the Registrar's webpage:

https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/academic_considerations/

All requests for Academic Consideration must be made within 48 hours after the assessment date or submission deadline.

All academic consideration requests must include supporting documentation; however, recognizing that formal documentation may not be available in some extenuating circumstances, the policy allows students to make **one Academic Consideration request without supporting documentation in this course**. However, the following assessments are excluded from this, and therefore **always require** formal supporting documentation:

- Examinations scheduled during official examination periods
- **The midterm for this course**

Absences from Final Examinations

If you miss the Final Exam, please contact the Academic Counselling office of your Faculty of Registration as soon as you are able to do so. They will assess your eligibility to write a Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam). A Special Examination is any examination other than the regular examination, and it may be offered only with the permission of the Dean of the Faculty in which the student is registered, in consultation with the instructor and Department Chair. Permission to write a Special Examination may be given on the basis of compassionate or medical grounds with appropriate supporting documents. To provide an opportunity for students to recover from the circumstances resulting in a Special Examination, the University has implemented Special Examinations dates. These dates as well as other important information about examinations and academic standing can be found [here](#).

Religious Accommodation

Students should review the [policy for Accommodation for Religious Holidays](#). Where a student will be unable to write examinations and term tests due to a conflicting religious holiday, they should inform their instructors as soon as possible but **not later than two weeks** prior to writing the examination/term test. In the case of conflict with a midterm test, students should inform their instructor as soon as possible but not later than one week prior to the midterm.

Religious Accommodation requests for final exams should be submitted via the Student Absence Portal.

Academic Accommodation and Accessible Education

Academic Accommodation is “a means of adjusting the academic activities associated with a course or program of student in order to permit students with disabilities to participate in those activities at the University and to fulfill the essential requirements of a course or program.”

<https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academicpolicies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodationdisabilities.pdf>.

Students with disabilities are encouraged to register with Accessible Education at the earliest opportunity.

“Accessible Education plays a central role in Western's efforts to ensure that its academic programs are accessible for all students” https://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html

Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously, and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, here:

<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academicpolicies/appeals/scholasticdisciplineundergrad.pdf>.

Academic Advising

Your Home Faculty's Academic Advising Office will support or refer whenever you have an issue that is affecting your studies, including information on adding/dropping courses, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic related matters. Do not hesitate to reach out to them if you are struggling and unsure where to go for help. Contact info for all Faculties is here:

<https://registrar.uwo.ca/facultyacademiccounselling.html>

Mental Health Support

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western (<https://uwo.ca/health/>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Gender-based and sexual violence

Western University [is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence](#) (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website:

<https://www.uwo.ca/health/studentsupport/survivorsupport/get-help.html>. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Learning Development and Success

Counsellors at the Learning Development and Success Centre <https://learning.uwo.ca> are ready to help you improve your learning skills. They offer presentations on strategies for improving time management, multiple-choice exam preparation/writing, textbook reading, and more. Individual support is offered throughout the Fall/Winter terms in the drop-in Learning Help Centre, and year-round through individual counselling.

USC

Additional student-run support services are offered by the USC, <https://westernusc.ca/services/>

COURSE OUTLINE:

***Notes:**

1. Please do the assigned reading **BEFORE** the lecture.
2. The L&F references are to ****PASSAGE** numbers, not page numbers. Note this is the ****FOURTH EDITION** (with a black cover)
3. Please look on OWL for **study questions** for the day's readings. These will help structure your study (***)and are also fair game for any exam).

I. INTRODUCTION, SOURCES, EARLY HISTORY

Frid Sept 5: Introduction to course

Mon Sept 8:

- Source problems; gender and history I

Reading: D'Ambra 2-9, 12-43; Foxhall, L. 2013. Gender and the study of classical antiquity. In *Studying Gender in Antiquity*. Cambridge: 1-23.

Weds Sept 10:

- Source problems; gender and history II: the history of women in antiquity; women in ancient art

Reading: Rawson, B. "From daily life to demography," in R. Hawley and B. Levick, eds., *Women in Antiquity: New Assessments* (New York 1995): 1-20; Kampen, N.B. Social status and gender in Roman art: the case of the saleswoman, in N. Broude and M.D. Garrard, eds., *Feminism and Art History: Questioning the Litany* (New York, 1982): 63-78

II. THE FEMALE LIFE CYCLE (**read D'Ambra 46-91 for this unit**)

Frid Sept 12:

- *Patria potestas, tutela*, and betrothal I

Reading: L&F # 132-137, 150-151

Mon Sept 15:

- *Patria potestas, tutela*, and betrothal II

Weds Sept 17:

- Dowry

Reading: L&F # 157; **handout** (on OWL)

Frid Sept 19:

- The Roman wedding in literature and art

Mon Sept 22:

- Marriage and concubinage in Roman law

Reading: L&F # 140-142, 146, 148-152, 155, 200-201; **handout** (on OWL)

Weds Sept 24:

- The Roman house

Reading: **handout** (on OWL); Wallace-Hadrill, A. "Engendering the Roman House," in D. E. Kleiner and S. B. Matheson (eds) *I Claudia: Women in Ancient Rome* (Univ. of Texas Press, 1996): 104-115.

Frid Sept 26:

- Sexuality and emotional life I

Reading: L&F # 287-292; **handout** (on OWL); Dixon, S. "Representations of female sexualities," in *Reading Roman Women* (Duckworth 2001), pp. 32-44

Mon Sept 29:

- Sexuality and emotional life II

Weds Oct 1:

- The Roman woman: correct behavior

Reading: L&F #48-50, 52, 55-57, 59, 61-63, 190-191, 193-195, 246-249, 286-292 G. Davies, *Gender and Body Language in Roman Art* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 2018): 57-81.

Frid Oct 3:

- The Roman woman: incorrect behavior

Reading: L&F # 83, 85, 143-145, 154, 156, 162, 317, 197

Mon Oct 6:

- Pregnancy and childbirth

Reading: L&F # 295, 297-301, 311, 424-428, 429-436, 440, 442-443, 448, 449, 455, 459, 460, 461, 470, 472, 474-475, 477-481; Carroll, M. 2018. *Infancy and Earliest Childhood in the Roman World* (Oxford Univ. Press): 51- 81; J. Laskaris, "Nursing Mothers in Greek and Roman Medicine," *AJA* 112 (2008), 459-64.

Weds Oct 8:

- Children and childrearing I

Reading: L&F #302-310, 315-316; Kleiner, D. E. E. "Family ties: mothers and sons in elite and non-elite Roman art." In D.E.E. Kleiner and S. B. Matheson (eds) *I Claudia II: Women in Roman Art and Society* (Univ. of Texas Press 2000); Dixon, S. "The sentimental ideal of the Roman family," in B. Rawson, ed. *Marriage, Divorce and Children in Ancient Rome* (Oxford 1991): 99-113; F. Dolansky, 2012. "Playing with gender: girls, dolls, and adult ideals in the Roman world," *Classical Antiquity* 31.2: 256-292.

Frid Oct 10:

- Children and childrearing II

Reading: C. Laes, "Touching children in Roman antiquity: the sentimental discourse and the family," in *Children and Everyday Life in the Roman and Late Antique Worlds* (ed. C. Laes and V. Vuolanto, Routledge, 2016), 60-78

Mon Oct 13: THANKSGIVING. NO CLASS.

Weds Oct 15:

- Divorce

Frid Oct 17: *IN-CLASS MIDTERM**

Mon Oct 20:

- Widowhood

Weds Oct 22: IN-CLASS WRITING ASSIGNMENT #1

Frid Oct 24:

- Old age

Reading: D'Ambra, E. "The calculus of Venus: nude portraits of Roman matrons," in N.B. Kampen, ed., *Sexuality in Ancient Art* (Cambridge, 1996): 219-232. R. Barrow, The incongruous body: portrait of 'Marcia Furnilla' as Venus. In *Gender, Identity and the Body in Greek and Roman Sculpture* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 2018), 110-122.

Mon Oct 27:

- Death, inheritance and bequest I

Reading: L&F # 333- 340, 342-343

Weds Oct 29:

- Death, inheritance and bequest II

III. CLOTHING AND ADORNMENT

Frid Oct 31:

- Clothing, cosmetics and adornment I

Reading: M. Harlow. 2012. Dressing to please themselves: clothing choices for Roman women. In M. Harlow (ed) *Dress and Identity* (Oxford: Archeopress), 37-46; K. Olson, Special morning beauty routine of young Cassia, in -10 BC Rome (**handout** on OWL)

Mon Nov 3 – Frid Nov 7: FALL READING BREAK. NO CLASSES.

Mon Nov 10:

- Clothing, cosmetics and adornment II

Weds Nov 12: IN-CLASS WRITING ASSIGNMENT #2

Frid Nov 14:

- Clothing, cosmetics and adornment III

IV. WOMEN IN PUBLIC (read D'Ambra 94-180 for this unit**)

Mon Nov 17:

- Leisure: upper-class women; the educated woman

Reading: Richlin, A. 2021. The woman in the street: becoming visible in mid-Republican Rome. In R. Ancona and G. Tsouvala (eds) *New Directions in the Study of Women in the Greco-Roman World* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press), 213-230; L&F # 196-197, 199, 202- 204, 211-215, 221-227, 229-232, 252-253, 260-261, 263, 265-266, 318, 323-324, 350

Weds Nov 19:

- Imperial women I

Reading: Boatwright, M. 2021. *Imperial Women of Rome: Power; Gender; Context* (Oxford Univ. Press): 83-118.

Frid Nov 21:

- Imperial women II

Mon Nov 24:

- Women in Pompeii; women in the Roman economy

Reading: L&F #203, 205-210, 222, 223-227, 350-352, H. Becker. "Roman women in the urban economy: occupations, social connections, and gendered exclusions," in *Women in Antiquity: Real Women Across the Ancient World*, eds. S. L. Budin and J. M. Turfa (Routledge 2016), 915-931; and C. Holleran, "Women and retail in Roman Italy," in *Women and the Roman City in the Latin West*, eds. E. Hemelrijk and G. Woolf (Brill 2013): 313-330.

Weds Nov 26:

- Lower-class occupations

Reading: L&F # 346-349, 351-352, 370-377, 382-396, 400-402, 407-411, 418-419, 422, 464-469; Treggiari, S. "Jobs for women," in *American Journal of Ancient History* 1 (1976): 76-104

Frid Nov 28:

- Sex workers

Reading: L&F #362- 369; Edwards, C. "Unspeakable professions: public performance and prostitution in ancient Rome," in Hallet, J. and M. Skinner, eds. *Roman Sexualities* (Princeton 1997), 66-95; Levin-Richardson, S. 2013. *Fututa sum hic*: female subjectivity and agency in Pompeian sexual graffiti. *Classical Journal* 108: 319-45

Mon Dec 1:

- Enslaved women

Reading: F. Dolansky, "Strained relations, gender differences, and domestic ideals: the significance of two Roman family festivals," in *Women in Antiquity: Real Women Across the Ancient World* (ed. S. L. Budin and J. M. Turfa, Routledge 2016), 905-14. Perry, M. 2014. *Gender, Manumission, and the Roman Freedwoman*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univ. Press: 43-68.

V. WOMEN IN ROMAN RELIGION

Weds Dec 3:

- Women in Roman religion: paganism

Reading: L&F #511-518, 526, 527, 536-538, 546, 552-553; A. Richlin, "Carrying water in a sieve: class and the body in Roman women's religion," in *Arguments with Silence* (Ann Arbor, 2014), 197-240

Frid Dec 5:

- Women in Roman religion: Christianity

Reading: L&F # 60, 555-568

Mon Dec 8: (as needed)