

**DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICAL STUDIES
COURSE OUTLINE
CS 3355G: ANCIENT ROMAN SEXUALITY
WINTER 2026**



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

OFFICE: LAH 3227 (661-2111 x 84525)

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

COURSE OBJECTIVES This course is designed to give honours-level students insight into ancient Roman sexuality and categories of gender using primary sources. The wide body of artistic evidence available from the ancient world on this topic (in the form of sculpture, wall-paintings, and everyday objects) is supplemented by a close reading of literary sources in translation.

Antirequisite: Classical Studies 3300F/G

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- C. Vout. *Sex on Show: Seeing the Erotic in Greece and Rome* (Berkeley, 2013, \$51)
- J. Clarke. *Looking at Lovemaking: Constructions of Sexuality in Roman Art, 100 B.C. - A.D. 250* (Berkeley 1998, \$57.95).
- *Primary Sources* (on our OWL site). Please note the study questions for each day.
- **All other readings:** please go to the 'course readings' section of our OWL site.

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

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

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

- have acquired a knowledge of ancient Roman sexuality and sexual activities, be able to describe in detail the sexual 'blueprint' of Roman antiquity, and be able to outline how ancient sexual categories differ from our own

- identify both iconography and subject matter, and be able to visually analyze ancient Roman art which depicts ancient sexual activities
- 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 male and female body in the ancient Roman world
- read, comprehend, and sum up ancient literary sources in translation concerning sexuality
- have acquired an understanding of the importance of historical perspective, and how social norms and customs, and the construction of sexuality, are products of time, events and context
- have acquired a developed understanding of the limits of primary evidence as embodying actual historical fact

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 sexuality, 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	40%
Midterm	20% (**Please note that this assessment is central to the learning objectives for this course. Accordingly, students seeking academic consideration for this assessment <u>will be required to provide formal supporting documentation</u> . Students who are granted academic consideration for this assessment will be provided with an opportunity to write a makeup exam).
Final exam (scheduled by the Registrar)	40%

=100%

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAMS:

The midterm and the final exam are designed to test the students' visual memory, knowledge of textbook reading, and lectures. Details on the in-class writing assignments TBD.

NOTES TO STUDENTS:

1. Since tests 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 tests, the essay, 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/>