



Department of Classical Studies

Preliminary Course Outline for CS 3450E: Roman History

Instructor: Dr. Debra L. Nousek
E-mail: dnousek@uwo.ca
Office: Lawson Hall 3208
Office Hours: TBA
Course Website: on OWL
Teaching Assistant: TBA
TA Office Hours: TBA

CS 3450E is offered by the Department of Classical Studies but counts as a principal course towards the Honors Specialization in History.

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES:

This course is a survey of Roman history from the founding of the city in the eighth century BCE to the decline of Roman power in the late empire. The course is intended as a mixture of Roman history (chronological narrative) and analysis of primary source material. We will devote considerable time and emphasis to analyzing ancient texts and assessing their value as source material for history.

The major goals of this course are to familiarize students with important events in Roman history and to provide a broad understanding of the development and character of Roman civilization. In addition, through reading passages of ancient sources (in English translation), students will learn the basic principles of "source criticism", so that they will be able to make informed judgments about modern interpretive theories based on the ancient evidence. Equally, they will come to understand that the study of ancient history is not simply a series of "facts" set in cement, but a constantly-changing process, involving the accumulation of fresh data (wherever possible) and the rethinking of older ideas and interpretations.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Successful students will have advanced their written communication skills in the clear and organized presentation of scholarly argument in the form of a research paper; in so doing, they will have developed the ability to gather, review, and evaluate primary sources and pertinent scholarly literature and to incorporate both into their own lines of argument. In addition, inter-personal skills will have improved through collaborative effort in the preparation of seminar materials and by participation in class discussions.

TEXTBOOKS: (available at the Western University Bookstore, or online retailers)

1. David Potter, *Ancient Rome: A New History*, 3rd edition. (2018) Pub. Thames & Hudson (ISBN: 978-0-500-29412-3). Publisher price: \$97.50
2. Ronald Mellor, ed. *The Historians of Ancient Rome. Third Edition* (2013), pub. Routledge (ISBN: 9780415527163) **Available online at Western Libraries.** *Students are not required to purchase this book as the sections we will use can be downloaded from the Library.* For anyone who wishes to have their own paper copy, the publisher price is \$75.72.

EVALUATION/GRADE BREAKDOWN:

1. Ancient Source Analyses: 20% (5% x 4 written submissions [in class])
2. Midterm Test 1: 20% (Nov. 21)
3. Midterm Test 2: 20% (Feb. 27)
4. Research Paper: 20% (December or April)
5. Final Exam: 20% (Scheduled by the Registrar)

FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT EVALUATIONS AND ASSIGNMENTS:

- A. The **two midterm tests** will be given during class time and will consist of sections that test your knowledge of (a) significant facts, dates, places and people in Roman history; and (b) your ability to analyze, critique and interpret the larger issues, themes and patterns of development in Roman historical texts. Thus there will be both objective-type questions and short answer/essay-type questions in each test. The **final examination** will be similar to the midterms in style, but will be more comprehensive in scope; it will take place in April as scheduled by the Office of the Registrar. There is no exam in the December examination period.
- B. **Formal Documentation Designation:** Please note that the two midterm tests are central to the learning objectives for this course. **Accordingly, students seeking academic consideration for these assessments will be required to provide formal supporting documentation.** Students who are granted academic consideration for this assessment will be able to sit a make-up test at a time determined in consultation with the instructor.
- C. This course counts as an essay course for undergraduate degrees at Western. In order to meet that requirement, you will be expected to submit written assignments that, together, total approximately 5000 words. These assignments are divided into two types of written work:
 - a. ANCIENT SOURCE ANALYSES: Four critical analyses of ancient sources, based on the readings in Mellor, and where necessary, supplemented by other sections of an author's work. These assignments require no outside research and the writing will take place in class.
 - b. ONE RESEARCH PAPER (ca. 2500 words), in either the Fall or Winter term.

ANCIENT SOURCE ANALYSES: (4 x 5%; in class on Sept. 29, Nov. 6, Jan. 12, Mar. 4)

Over the course of the year – twice in the Fall term, and twice in the Winter term -- students will write an analytical critique of an ancient source (the **Ancient Source Analysis [=ASA]**) as a means of developing their skills in reading and assessing the value of ancient texts as sources for historical information. The goal of these assignments is to develop students' analytical abilities in understanding the historiographical aspects of an ancient source – that is, not just the historical content, but how authorial choices can shape our knowledge in various ways.

- These will be written assessments which will take place during the class meeting period on those days. Students will be given the assignment in advance and will be permitted to bring in one page of notes to aid them in their response.

RESEARCH PAPER: (20%)

Each student will also prepare a research paper on a topic germane to the study of Roman history. Students will write one paper, on either Republican or Imperial history, in the appropriate term. This will serve to spread the workload somewhat over the year. The goal of these papers is to develop students' abilities to synthesize information collected in both ancient sources and modern analytical scholarship on Roman historical topics. There will be 'scaffolding' components to the research paper (e.g., developing a research question, bibliographical research) that must be completed in order to get full credit for the assignment. A list of suggested topics, due dates, and writing guidelines will be provided.

STATEMENT ON THE USE OF GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

In this course, students will not be penalized for using AI tools (including, but not limited to: automatic translation tools, grammar checkers, ChatGPT, other LLMs) but may only use them for information gathering and preliminary research purposes. These tools are intended to enhance the learning experience by providing access to diverse information sources. However, it is essential that students critically evaluate the obtained information, exercise independent thinking, and engage in original research to synthesize and develop their own ideas, arguments, and perspectives. The use of AI tools can serve as a starting point for exploration; however, students are expected to uphold academic integrity by appropriately attributing all sources and avoiding plagiarism. Assignments should reflect the students' own thoughts and independent written work. By adhering to these guidelines, students contribute to a responsible and ethical learning environment that promotes critical thinking, independent inquiry and allows them to produce original written contributions.

- **Note:** We will discuss the advantages and limitations of what LLMs and other forms of generative AI can do with respect to research in ancient history. There is no penalty for using these tools in the preliminary stages of the research project; students who use any AI-driven tools will be required to disclose which tools they used, for what purposes, and to indicate what benefit they derived from using the tool instead of more traditional (or "old-school") research resources.

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/academicpolicies/appeals/academicconsiderationSep24.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/academicconsiderations/>
- 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 final examination (scheduled by the Registrar) is excluded from this, and therefore always requires formal supporting documentation.
- A make-up exam will be arranged in consultation with the student for any missed midterm test.

COURSEWORK DEADLINES AND FLEXIBILITY

Students are expected to submit assignments by the deadline listed. As we proceed through the year, however, it may happen that life interferes with your ability to complete your work in this course by the deadline: this is normal; do not panic! Should extenuating circumstances arise, students should contact the instructor as soon as it becomes clear that the deadline will not be met. I am much more interested in reading your well-thought-out ideas a day or two later than reading something that is rushed and difficult to decipher. That said, communication is essential: extensions can be granted up to 72 hours ***with instructor approval (by email or in-person communication)*** without needing to formally request academic consideration. If there has been no communication and 72 hours have passed, a late penalty of 5% per 24 hour period will be applied.

SOME ADVICE FOR HOW TO SUCCEED IN THIS COURSE:

1. You will gain the most from this course if you participate actively. Take notes, ask questions, review material frequently and engage critically with what you read. Visit me during office hours to chat about course content or Classics in general!
 2. Life does not always proceed as planned, and often interferes with academics. If you are having difficulty for any reason (academic or personal), don't hesitate to let me know. I may be able to direct you to resources that can help.
 3. Exam questions will be based on lectures and assigned readings. History has shown that those who complete the readings prior to the lectures will have an easier time following the sometimes complicated and confusing barrage of names, terms, and dates that populate Roman History.
 4. Communications technology is a modern necessity, but can also be distracting to your learning or to others around you. Please minimize any distractions as a courtesy to your classmates and the instructor.
 5. Those who miss classes or parts of classes remain responsible for material they have missed. You are encouraged to form study groups in order to assist each other in preparing for tests and for discussion of assigned readings.
 6. There is no possibility for "extra credit" in this course; the grades assigned for the course will reflect the performance of the student on each graded assignment.
 7. Missed coursework will be made up at an alternate date or by a specified deadline. There is no re-weighting of assessments.
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Important Policies for all Western Courses

Mental Health Support

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to [Mental Health@Western](#) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

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.

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>

Special Examinations

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](#).

Policy on Accommodation for Religious Holidays

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.

Learning Development and Success

Counsellors at the [Learning Development and Success Centre](#) 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. Additional [student-run support services](#) are offered by the USC.

Plagiarism and Plagiarism-Checking Software

Students must complete assignments in their own words. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar). All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

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, at the following Web site: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

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 has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts, [here](#). **To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.**

TOPICS, READINGS, AND SCHEDULE

Lecture topics and reading assignments will be posted prior to the start of the academic year