

# HIST-2818: SPECIAL TOPICS: THE ROMAN WORLD

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## Cuyahoga Community College

**Viewing: HIST-2818 : Special Topics: The Roman World**

**Academic Term:**

Fall 2026

**Subject Code**

HIST - History

**Course Number:**

2818

**Title:**

Special Topics: The Roman World

**Catalog Description:**

An exploration of the Roman Republic and Empire and the larger world within which it existed; examines political, economic, cultural, and ecological intersections both in the metropole and in peripheral cultures in Africa, the Middle East, and Europe, with a focus on the era from 800 BCE to 600 CE.

**Credit Hour(s):**

3

**Lecture Hour(s):**

3

## Requisites

**Prerequisite and Corequisite**

None.

## Outcomes

**Course Outcome(s):**

Analyze the political, cultural, and economic aspects of the Roman World

**Essential Learning Outcome Mapping:**

Critical/Creative Thinking: Analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information in order to consider problems/ideas and transform them in innovative or imaginative ways.

Information Literacy: Demonstrate contextual awareness of the research process through the reflective discovery of the production and value of information, the use of information in the creation of new knowledge, and ethical participation in the use of information in communities of learning.

Written Communication: Demonstrate effective written communication for an intended audience that follows genre/disciplinary conventions that reflect clarity, organization, and editing skills.

**Objective(s):**

1. Analyze Roman society and statehood and their evolution from Rome's founding through the fragmentation of the empire.
2. Evaluate the relationship between Rome and neighboring cultures.
3. Analyze the issues surrounding the collapse of the Roman Republic and the later fragmentation of the empire.
5. Evaluate and analyze primary and secondary sources.

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**Course Outcome(s):**

Using primary and secondary sources—including text, maps, media, and quantifiable data—analyze, explain, and contextualize the migrations of people and spread of diseases in each era of Roman history.

**Essential Learning Outcome Mapping:**

Critical/Creative Thinking: Analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information in order to consider problems/ideas and transform them in innovative or imaginative ways.

Information Literacy: Demonstrate contextual awareness of the research process through the reflective discovery of the production and value of information, the use of information in the creation of new knowledge, and ethical participation in the use of information in communities of learning.

Written Communication: Demonstrate effective written communication for an intended audience that follows genre/disciplinary conventions that reflect clarity, organization, and editing skills.

**Objective(s):**

Critical/Creative Thinking: Analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information in order to consider problems/ideas and transform them in innovative or imaginative ways.

Information Literacy: Demonstrate contextual awareness of the research process through the reflective discovery of the production and value of information, the use of information in the creation of new knowledge, and ethical participation in the use of information in communities of learning.

Written Communication: Demonstrate effective written communication for an intended audience that follows genre/disciplinary conventions that reflect clarity, organization, and editing skills.

1. Explain the factors that influenced the migrations of people to, from, and within the Mediterranean region.
2. Identify and analyze the connections between migration and ethnogenesis.
3. Analyze the emergence and pathways of diseases in the Roman world, including the Plague of Justinian.

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**Course Outcome(s):**

Recognize, analyze, and explain issues of culture within the Roman world in relation to religion, class, gender, and other categories of identity and expression.

**Essential Learning Outcome Mapping:**

Critical/Creative Thinking: Analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information in order to consider problems/ideas and transform them in innovative or imaginative ways.

Written Communication: Demonstrate effective written communication for an intended audience that follows genre/disciplinary conventions that reflect clarity, organization, and editing skills.

**Objective(s):**

1. Explain the formation, implementation, and evolution of Roman state religion, Greek philosophies, mystery religions, neighboring forms of polytheism, Judaism, and Christianity.
2. Investigate the structure and evolution of gender dynamics in the Roman world and their intersections with other areas of identity.
3. Investigate the structure and evolution of class dynamics in the Roman world and their intersections with other areas of identity.

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**Course Outcome(s):**

Analyze and discuss the Roman Empire as a subject of present-day American political and social discourse.

**Essential Learning Outcome Mapping:**

Cultural Sensitivity: Demonstrate sensitivity to the beliefs, views, values, and practices of cultures within and beyond the United States.

**Objective(s):**

1. Analyze ways in which American social and political discourse addresses the fall of representative government in Rome.
2. Analyze ways in which American social and political discourse addresses the fall of the Roman Empire.
3. Analyze ways in which American social and political discourse addresses the rise and evolution of Christianity within the Roman World.

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**Course Outcome(s):**

Present primary or secondary research to classmates.

**Essential Learning Outcome Mapping:**

Oral Communication: Demonstrate effective verbal and nonverbal communication for an intended audience that is clear, organized, and delivered effectively following the standard conventions of that language.

**Objective(s):**

Present primary or secondary research to classmates.

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**Methods of Evaluation:**

1. In-Class Essay Exams
2. Online Modules
3. Discussions
4. Research Paper & Presentation

**Course Content Outline:**

1. Survey of the Mediterranean World before Rome
  - a. Mediterranean geography
  - b. Ethnicities, lifeways, and major civilizations
    - i. Egypt
    - ii. Mesopotamia
    - iii. Hellas (Greece)
    - iv. Phoenicia
  - c. The Bronze Age Collapse
2. The Rise of the Roman City-State
  - a. Etruscan, Latin, and Greek influences
  - b. Foundation myths and early kings
  - c. The Republic: constitution and citizenship
3. Expansion and Empire: Italy to the Mediterranean
  - a. Conquest and integration of Italy
  - b. The Punic Wars and Carthage
  - c. Provincial administration and cultural blending
4. Crisis and Adaptation in the Late Republic
  - a. Inequality, reform, and popular politics
  - b. Caesar, Pompey, and the end of the Republic
  - c. The rhetoric of liberty and the meaning of empire
5. The Augustan Settlement and Imperial Ideology
  - a. Augustus and the transformation of power
  - b. The arts, religion, and architecture of legitimacy
  - c. The Pax Romana and its contradictions
6. Life in the Roman World
  - a. Urbanism, infrastructure, and daily life
  - b. Family, gender, and slavery
  - c. Economy, labor, and ecology
7. Religion, Philosophy, and Cultural Syncretism
  - a. Roman state religion and local traditions
  - b. Stoicism, Epicureanism, and mystery cults
  - c. Judaism and the rise of Christianity
8. Empire of Many Peoples: Rome and Its Frontiers
  - a. Client kingdoms, allies, and "barbarians"
  - b. Trade networks, migration, and ethnogenesis
  - c. Imperial identity and hybridity
9. Crisis and Continuity in the Third Century
  - a. Military revolts and regionalism
  - b. Economic restructuring and inflation
  - c. Shifts in art, religion, and political legitimacy
10. Rebuilding Empire: Diocletian and Constantine
  - a. The Tetrarchy and administrative reforms
  - b. Christianity and imperial power
  - c. New capitals, new symbols of authority

11. The Christianization of the Roman World
  - a. Theology, councils, and empire
  - b. Paganism, suppression, and adaptation
  - c. Monasticism and new forms of community
12. Ecology, Plagues, and the Limits of Growth
  - a. Climate fluctuations and agricultural change
  - b. Disease and demographic transformation
  - c. Environmental continuities and collapse narratives
13. The Western Provinces and the Emergence of Successor Kingdoms
  - a. Visigoths, Vandals, and Franks as heirs to Rome
  - b. Law codes, literacy, and Roman institutions in new contexts
  - c. Hybrid cultures and regional resilience
14. The Eastern Roman Empire and the “New Rome”
  - a. Constantinople as imperial and spiritual center
  - b. Bureaucracy, military, and diplomacy
  - c. Cultural synthesis in the late antique Mediterranean
15. Transformation of the Mediterranean World (400–600 CE)
  - a. Justinian’s reforms and reconquests
  - b. The Plague of Justinian and shifting demography
  - c. The transformation of empire into new forms of polity and culture
16. Legacies of Rome
  - a. Continuities in law, language, and religion
  - b. The idea of Rome in medieval and modern thought
  - c. The Roman World as a case study in transformation

### Religious Accommodation

Before reviewing the course schedule, students should carefully review the following religious accommodation policy and other required instructional policies:

#### Religious Accommodation:

Students seeking an accommodation for absences permitted under Ohio’s Testing Your Faith Act must provide the instructor with written notice of the specific dates for which the student requires an accommodation and must do so not later than fourteen (14) days after the first day of instruction. Please submit requests for accommodations at this link: <https://portal2.tri-c.edu/ReligiousAccommodation/ReligiousAccommodationForm>. Students with questions about their religious accommodations under Ohio’s Testing Your Faith Act may contact the College’s Office of General Counsel and Legal Services by phone at 216.987.4856 or via email at [legal@tri-c.edu](mailto:legal@tri-c.edu).

#### Other Required Instructional Policies:

<https://www.tri-c.edu/student-resources/curriculum/documents/syllabus-part-b.pdf>

### Weekly Schedule

	Topics
Week 1	Introduction to the Course / The Mediterranean Before Rome
Week 2	The Rise of the Roman City-State: Kings, Republic, and Citizenship
Week 3	Expansion and Empire: Italy to the Mediterranean
Week 4	Crisis and Adaptation in the Late Republic
Week 5	The Augustan Settlement and the Birth of Empire
Week 6	Life in the Roman World: Society, Class, and Daily Life
Week 7	Religion and Cultural Syncretism in the Empire
Week 8	Review Session / Midterm
Week 9	Empire of Many Peoples: Rome and Its Frontiers
Week 10	Crisis and Continuity in the Third Century
Week 11	Rebuilding Empire: Diocletian and Constantine

Week 12	The Christianization of the Roman World
Week 13	Ecology, Plagues, and the Limits of Growth
Week 14	Transformation in the West and the Rise of Successor Kingdoms
Week 15	The Eastern Roman Empire and the "New Rome"
Week 16	Legacies of Rome / Final Exam

The Course Schedule is subject to change due to pedagogical needs, instructor discretion, parts of term, and unexpected events.

### Required/Recommended Readings

#### Textbooks

Beard, Mary. *SPQR: A History of Ancient Rome*. New York: Liveright Publishing, 2015

#### Other Works

Petronius. *The Satyricon*. Translated by Sarah Ruden. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2000.

Pliny the Younger. *The Letters of Pliny the Younger*. Translated by P. G. Walsh. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Rea, Jennifer A., and Liz Clarke. *Perpetua's Journey: Faith, Gender, and Power in the Roman Empire*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017.

Toner, Jerry. *How to Manage Your Slaves by Marcus Sidonius Falx*. New York: Overlook Press, 2014.

Matyszak, Philip. *24 Hours in Ancient Rome: A Day in the Life of the People Who Lived There*

### Additional Resources for the Instructor

#### Books

Boatwright, Mary T. *Peoples of the Roman World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Brown, Peter. *The World of Late Antiquity: AD 150–750*. London: Thames & Hudson, 1971.

Dench, Emma. *Romulus' Asylum: Roman Identities from the Age of Alexander to the Age of Hadrian*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Fredriksen, Paula. *Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews: A Jewish Life and the Emergence of Christianity*. New York: Vintage, 2000.

Goffart, Walter. *Barbarian Tides: The Migration Age and the Later Roman Empire*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006.

Harper, Kyle. *From Shame to Sin: The Christian Transformation of Sexual Morality in Late Antiquity*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013.

Harper, Kyle. *The Fate of Rome: Climate, Disease, and the End of an Empire*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017.

Jenkins, Philip. *A Storm of Images: Iconoclasm and Religious Reformation in the Byzantine World*. London: Reaktion Books, 2022.

Procopius. *The Secret History*. Translated by G. A. Williamson. Revised with an introduction and notes by Peter Sarris. London: Penguin Classics, 2007.

Watts, Edward J. *Hypatia: The Life and Legend of an Ancient Philosopher*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017.

Woolf, Greg. *Rome: An Empire's Story*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

James, Simon. *The Atlantic Celts: Ancient People or Modern Invention?* Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1999.

#### Great Courses Series & Episodes

The Foundations of Western Civilization (<https://www.kanopy.com/en/cuyahoga/video/14193400/>)

History of the Ancient World: A Global Perspective (<https://www.kanopy.com/en/cuyahoga/video/148927/>)

The Mysterious Etruscans (<https://www.kanopy.com/en/cuyahoga/video/239710/>)

Building the Roman Republic (<https://www.kanopy.com/en/cuyahoga/video/5943510/>)

The Death of the Roman Republic (<https://www.kanopy.com/en/cuyahoga/video/148983/>)

Cicero and the Art of Roman Oratory (<https://www.kanopy.com/en/cuyahoga/video/5665071/>)

Ancient Rome: Ideas Roadshow Compilation (<https://www.kanopy.com/en/cuyahoga/video/10956915/>)

The Roman Empire: From Augustus to the Fall of Rome (<https://www.kanopy.com/en/cuyahoga/video/5943510/>)

Hypatia Dies for Intellectual Freedom (<https://www.kanopy.com/en/cuyahoga/video/6523073/>)

Comparative Armies: Rome, China, Maya (<https://www.kanopy.com/en/cuyahoga/video/149005/>)

Traveling the Roman Empire (<https://www.kanopy.com/en/cuyahoga/video/13172838/>)

Books that Matter: The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire (<https://www.kanopy.com/en/cuyahoga/video/5689238/>)

#### Films

Agora (<https://www.kanopy.com/en/cuyahoga/video/15504571/>)