

History of Rome: From Romulus and Remus to Romulus Augustulus

April 21, 753 BC to September 4, 476 AD



This course is divided into four segments: the cultural context of Rome's founding; the Kingdom, the Republic, and the Empire periods.

“Now the chief cause of success or the reverse in all matters is the form of a state's constitution; for springing from this, as from a fountain-head, all designs and plans of action not only originate, but reach their consummation.”

- Polybius, Histories VI.2.9-10

Course Descriptions

The rise of Rome from a small, inland city-state to the capital of Europe's first empire spanning three continents provides one of the greatest stories in ancient history. This course will explore the development and cultural evolution of Rome from its legendary founding by the twin brothers of Romulus and Remus to a world super power and its ultimate collapse and demise.

Learning Objectives

- To know the primary historical events of ancient Roman History.
- To be able to critically discuss the historical texts and ascertain what are reliable sources (textual and material) for knowing and understanding ancient Roman culture and history.
- To explain broadly how ancient Rome's politics, society and culture were interconnected.
- To illustrate aspects of Rome's political transformation from its foundation to the time Constantine the Great.
- To be able to identify the factors that brought cultural change from Rome's beginning to its final days.
- To relate, compare, in what ways the Roman system anticipates modern political and cultural problems.
- To explain broadly how the Roman empire's socio-political and cultural transformations impacted the development of Western society.

Conceptual Learning Goals

- How individuals are shaped by their own past and by the past of their society and institutions.
- The role of human agency in bringing about change in society in institutions.
- The operation of large-scale forces responsible for causing change over time, such as politics, economics, and religion.
- The role of diversity and difference in shaping the human experience.
- The nature of cause-and-effect relationships in human affairs as they have played over time and as they continue to operate in the present.

Things You Will Be Able to Do After Taking this Course (or Continue to Work on Doing):

- Strengthen your ability to read and understand a variety of primary sources in comparison to secondary, academic sources.
- Build your ability to analyze information and to construct cause-and-effect relationships from disparate data sources.
- Fine to your ability to write persuasively and communicate more effectively.
- Improve your ability to create effective content that is substantive and accurate that can be delivered to an audience, end user, the public, co-workers, family and friends, etc.

Readings and Materials

The Romans: From Village to Empire, 2nd Edition. By M.T. Boatwright, D.J. Gargola, N. Lenski, and R.J.A. Talbert. Oxford University Press. 2012. (Boatwright et al.)

Roman Historiography: An Introduction to its Basic Aspects and Development. By Andreas Mehl and Hans-Friedrich Mueller (Translator). Wiley-Blackwell. 2011. (Mehl)

▶ **Other Required Readings are Noted Under the Column Heading "Readings" in the Tentative Course Schedule**

▶ **Historical Texts Referenced in the Tentative Course Schedule**

Assignments

Student evaluations based on the following:

- Attendance and Participation (20%): Students will be expected to attend class and complete readings assignments before the lectures the material is covered. Students will also be expected to participate in class discussions.
- Two Short Papers (40%): The two short papers will focus on the following topics: (1) The crisis of the third century and the ultimate collapse of the Roman Empire, and (2) Biography on a Roman life of the student's choosing. Students should be working on these assignments throughout the semester. Both papers will be due toward the end of the semester.
- Biweekly Discussion Thread Assignments (20%): Students are expected to answer questions presented, state informed and well defended opinions incorporating the lessons learned from the class lectures and reading materials, provide external sources that they researched outside of the class materials for that discussion, and engage and interact with other members of the class.
- Group Project and Presentation (20%): Students will be assigned into groups and work together in order to create a digital resource that presents to the public information regarding a chosen topic about the ancient Roman experience.

Tentative Course Schedule

	Topic	Assignments & Primary Texts	Readings
Week 1	Introductions		Mehl Introduction and Chapter 1
	Pre-Roman Italy (Celts, Greeks and Italic Peoples)		Boatwright et al. Chapter 1
Week 2	Pre-Roman Italy (Etruscans)	Discussion Thread Assignment	Etruscan Package (Online)

	Topic	Assignments & Primary Texts	Readings
	Rome's Legendary Founding and Roman Monarchy	Dionysius of Halicarnassus, 4.13-22 Livy, Books 1-5	Boatwright et al. Chapters 2 and 3 Mehl Chapter 2 and 3 The "Hut of Romulus" and Foundations Package (Online)
Week 3	The Dawn of the Roman Republic	Discussion Thread Assignment	Boatwright et al. Chapters 4 to 6
	The 12 Tables		The Nature and Origins of the Twelve Tables in <i>Law from the Tigris to the Tiber</i> by Raymond Westbrook (Online)
Week 4	The Rise of Rome in Italy, the Gallic Sack, and the Virtues of the Romans	Discussion Thread Assignment	
	The First Punic War	Polybius, Histories, 3.22-26, 3.77-118	Punic Wars Package (Online)
Week 5	The Second Punic War	Discussion Thread Assignment	
	Roman Wars in Greece, the Third Punic War, and an Introduction to the Hellenistic World	Hero of Alexandria, Pneumatica, 15, 37, 40, 68 (Online) Diogenes Laertius, Life of Diogenes the Cynic	Mehl Chapter 4
Week 6	Polybius, the Roman Constitution and the Roman Camp	Polybius, Histories, Book 6 Discussion Thread Assignment	
	The Gracchi	Plutarch, Life of Tiberius Gracchus, 8-20	Boatwright et al. Chapters 7 to 8
Week 7	Marius and Sulla	Sallust's Jugurthine War Plutarch, Life of Marius Discussion Thread Assignment	

	Topic	Assignments & Primary Texts	Readings
	Pompey and Cicero - Politics of the 60's, BC that is	Plutarch, Life of Pompey Cicero, Letters 7 (Cicero's conceit), 9 (on the concord of the Orders), 11 (the concord falling apart) Sallust's Monograph of the Catiline Conspiracy	
Week 8	Julius Caesar	Plutarch, Life of Caesar Julius Caesar: The Civil Wars Discussion Thread Assignment	
	The Rise of Octavian	Cicero, Letters 130-1 (on Mutina, Cicero's hope to guide Octavian), 137 (the "generous" honors given to Octavian) Suetonius, Augustus 1-28, 41-45 Plutarch, Life of Antony	Boatwright et al. Chapter 9 Mehl Chapter 5
Week 9	Augustus and the Pax Romana	Suetonius, Augustus, 54-7 (on free speech), 68-9 (on adultery), 98 (on the Alexandrian ship) Augustus, Res Gestae Discussion Thread Assignment	Boatwright et al. Chapter 10 Battle of Teutoberg Forest by John Dornberg (Online)
	The Julio-Claudian Dynasty	Suetonius, Life of Caligula Tacitus, Annals	Mehl Chapter 6
Week 10	The Year of the Four Emperors and the Flavians and the Colosseum	Suetonius, Life of Titus, Life of Domitian Tacitus, Agricola, 38-42 Discussion Thread Assignment	Boatwright et al. Chapter 11
	Pompeii	Pliny, Letters 6.16, 6.20	

	Topic	Assignments & Primary Texts	Readings
Week 11	Nerva-Antonine Dynasty	Historia Augusta, Life of Hadrian Marcus Aurelius, Meditations Discussion Thread Assignment	Boatwright et al. Chapter 12
	The Year of the Five Emperors and the Severan Dynasty	Selected Writings of Cassius Dio and Herodian	
Week 12	Crisis of the Third Century (235-285 AD) and Aurelian's Reforms	Discussion Thread Assignment	Boatwright et al. Chapter 13 The Third Century Crisis in the Roman Empire by A.R. Birley and Frank Taylor (Online)
	The Tetrarchy (284-324)		
Week 13	The Constantine Dynasty	Selected writings of Eusebius Discussion Thread Assignment	
	The Finish Line (Romulus Augustulus Has Left the Building - September 476)		
Week 14	Roman Legacy and the Rise of Christianity	Discussion Thread Assignment	Mehl Chapter 7
		Short Paper 1	
Week 15	Special Topic: Roman Religion and the Cult of Mithras	Discussion Thread Assignment	
	Student Presentations	Group Project and Presentations	
Week 16	Student Presentations	Short Paper 2	

► Primary Sources of Roman History

From the Founding to the Beginning of the Punic Wars (754-261 BCE): Most of this period is legendary, especially before the fourth century. This was the time of kings and then the expansion of Rome into Italy.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus (fl. c.20 BCE)
Livy (c.59 BCE-c. CE 17)
Plutarch's lives of
Romulus
Numa
Coriolanus
Poplicola
Camillus

From the Punic Wars to the Civil Wars Under the Gracchi (264-134 BCE): By this period, there were historical records. This was a period when Rome expanded beyond the borders of Italy and dealt with the conflict between plebeians and patricians.

Polybius (c.200-c.120 BCE)
Livy
Appian (c. CE 95-165)
Florus (c.70-c.140CE)
Plutarch's lives of:
Fabius Maximus
P. Aemilius
Marcellus
M. Cato
Flaminius

From the Civil Wars to the Fall of the Republic (30 BCE): This was an exciting and violent period of Roman history dominated by powerful individuals, like Caesar, who also provides eye witness accounts of his military campaigns.

Appian
Velleius Paterculus (c.19 BCE-c. CE 30),
Sallust (c.86-35/34 BCE)
Caesar (July 12/13, 102/100 BCE-March 15, 44 BCE)
Cicero (106-43 BCE)
Dio Cassius (c. CE 150-235)
Plutarch's lives of
Marius
Sulla
Lucullus
Crassus
Sertorius
Cato
Cicero
Brutus
Antonius

The Empire to the Fall in A.D. 476

From Augustus to Commodus: The power of the emperor was still being defined in this period. There had been the Julio-Claudian dynasty, the Flavian dynasty, and the period of the Five Good Emperors, none of whom was the biological son of the previous emperor. Then came Marcus Aurelius, the last of the good emperors who was succeeded by one of Rome's worst, his son, Commodus.

From Commodus to Diocletian: During the period from Commodus to Diocletian soldiers became emperors and Rome's armies in various parts of the known world were declaring their leaders emperor. By the time of Diocletian the Roman Empire had grown too large and complex for one man to handle, so Diocletian divided it in two (two Augustuses) and added assistant emperors (two Caesars).

From Diocletian to the Fall - Christian and Pagan Sources: For an emperor like Julian, a pagan, religious biases in both directions factor into the credibility of his biographies. Christian historians of late antiquity had a religious agenda which relegated to lesser importance the presentation of secular history, but some of the historians were very careful of their facts, anyway.

Dio Cassius

Tacitus (c. CE 56-c.120 CE?)

Suetonius (c.CE 69-122). Lives of:

Augustus

Tiberius

Caligula

Claudius

Nero

Galba

Otho

Vitellius

Vespasian

Titus

Domitian

Velleius Paterculus

Herodian (c.170-c.240 CE; fl. c.230 CE)

Scriptores Historiae Augustae

Eutropius (4th C.)

Aurelius (4th C.)

Zosimus (5th C.)

Ammianus Marcellinus

Orosius (c.385-420 CE)

Eusebios of Caesarea (260-340 CE)

Socrates Scholasticus (c.379-440 CE)

Theodoret (393-466 CE)

Sozomen (c.400-450 CE)

Evagrius (c.536-c.595 CE)

Codex Theodosianus

Codex Justinianus