

**HIST300/MSTU 343:**  
*Emperors, Bishops, Barbarians – The Transformation of Rome*  
**Loyola University Chicago, John Felice Rome Center**  
Autumn Semester 2019  
Tuesdays & Thursdays | 3:45-5:00pm  
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Office Hours: Tues/Thurs, 2:00-03:00pm, or by appointment

**Course Description**

Rome – Umbilicus Mundi, the navel of the world, the centre of civilisation, by far the greatest city in Antiquity. The “most splendid of splendid cities” counted approximately one million inhabitants in its hey-day. Lavish provisions of food and wine, as well as spectacles and various forms of urban decoration, magnificent temples and public buildings; public baths, gardens, libraries, circuses, theatres and amphitheatres... The citizens of Rome all had access to it! An elaborate network of roads and aqueducts, well-maintained throughout the centuries, all led to the Eternal City. At the time, it must have appeared that Rome would never end!

The third to the eighth centuries AD constitute what was traditionally and until recently regarded as a rather turbulent period. Theories of decline and fall (triggered by phenomena such as barbarian invasions, socio-political, military and economic crises, natural disasters, and even the rise of Christianity) dominated the historiography of this era, and a wide range of scholars believed that Rome actually did come to an end.

This course, however, focusing on the City of Rome itself from the third century up to the reign of Charlemagne, intends to demonstrate that the period concerned was a time of gradual transformation and even a certain degree of continuity. Both literary sources and the archaeology and epigraphy of the City shall be combined to show that barbarian invasions did not destroy the walls of Rome, and that the arrival of Christianity did not cause the fall of classical culture.

Throughout this course, some of the major issues in the study of the city of Rome in this transitory period are more closely examined. History is never a single-minded and uniform matter. The various contributions of numerous scholars, along with the use of the textbook of Peter Brown, are all intended to stimulate the mind to ask further questions, and to start thinking into only few of all the possible directions towards possible answers – or mere hypotheses. Primary sources, as well as secondary literature from a variety of disciplinary perspectives, reveal the drama of the history, society, politics, and culture of the City of Rome. This course is focused on evaluating the validity of various theories, research findings, and attitudes related to issues such as “decline and fall”, “continuity and change”, et cetera.

The key objective of this course is to survey the history of the ancient city of Rome in the period of Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages. One of the main problems concerning the studies of Rome and of the Ancient World in general is always one of evidence. Also in this particular case one has to rely on biased, and often fragmented literary sources. Archaeology and epigraphy supplement the literary evidence, but also provide information that partly stands completely on its own. All the evidence has to be weighed with extreme care and consideration. At the end of this course, students are expected to be aware of all the problems and debates concerning a few key themes taken from this time span, and the sensitivities regarding the evidence at hand. They need to demonstrate an understanding of the working of historical mechanisms. They need to be able to evaluate and critically analyse this historical period, having acquired a set of skills to scrutinize the available source material. They need to demonstrate that they are able to comprehend, paraphrase, summarise, and contextualise both the primary sources and the discussions centred on them.

### Learning Outcomes

On completion of the course students should be able to:

- develop their skills in critical thinking, and their ability to express their ideas and opinions!
- determine the importance of history – no matter how ancient!
- assess the relevance of events and people in ancient times to their own lives!
- identify the authenticity and value of primary sources!
- read, analyse, and interpret secondary literature and scholarly debate – and present the full spectrum of ideas and opinions, including their own, either in the written or spoken word!
- remember all the important dates of historical events and individuals – forever and ever!

### Attendance Policy

In accordance with the JFRC mission to promote a higher level of academic rigour, all courses adhere to the following absence policy. Prompt attendance, preparation, and active participation in course discussions are expected from every student.

- For all classes meeting once a week, students cannot incur more than one unexcused absence.
- For all classes meeting twice a week, students cannot incur more than two unexcused absences.
- For all classes meeting three times a week, students cannot incur more than two unexcused absences.

*Emperors, Bishops, Barbarians* meets **twice** a week, on **Tuesdays and Thursdays from 03:45pm until 05:00pm**, and thus a total of **two unexcused absence(s)** will be permitted. Unexcused absences beyond these will result in a **1% lowering of your final course grade, for every absence after the ‘approved’ limit.**

It is expected of students to contribute a significant part. They are responsible for completing all of the assigned readings, according to the schedule in this syllabus. Class discussions and activities encourage students to generate their own ideas, hypotheses, opinions, theories, questions, and proposals; and develop strategies for seeking and synthesising information to support an argument, make a decision, or resolve a problem. This course has no prerequisites and assumes no prior knowledge of Roman and or Early Mediaeval history, or indeed of the Latin language. It is intended that students acquire a basic knowledge and understanding of the historical background and facts of ancient Rome, as well as that of the working of historical mechanisms, as described above.

It is strongly recommended to take notes, both when reading and listening. These notes are an indispensable part of studying and learning, often the best means to anchor your thoughts with true understanding, transform opinion into knowledge, and establish comprehension rooted in memory. Writing is learning – with half as much effort.

### Exams and Final Essay

There will be **2 (TWO)** exams, as a test of your acquired knowledge and understanding of our textbook, and of the additional literature. The textbook provides a general outline of the developments of Roman history, society and culture in Late Antiquity. The facts and the various backgrounds of events, both in time and in the city, are the framework of any basic historical understanding and mode of thinking.

You are also required to write an essay, which needs to be submitted one week before the end of the semester. It is strongly recommended to start thinking of a suitable topic, including (some of) the appropriate material, right at the beginning of the course. You will in any case be summoned for a consult half way through the course, in order to establish an outline of the final essay. **Essays count 10-15 pages.**

Information MUST under all circumstances be cited. **Plagiarism of any sort will result in a grade of “F” for the assignment, or, depending on the level, perhaps even for the entire course.** See below on university policy regarding Academic Honesty.

### Essay Grading

Written work such as essay assignments, and to a certain extent also the midterm and final exams, meriting the grade of “A” (excellent) must:

- address the central question or topic directly and intelligently;
- demonstrate a careful and considered reading of the texts at hand;
- present a lucid thesis and a persuasive argument in its defense;
- use correct grammar, punctuation, and sentence construction;
- make ample and appropriate use of quotations from the texts;
- weave together thesis and argument, quotations and interpretations;
- reveal thoughtfulness, originality, and insight.

Written work and examinations awarded the grade of “B” (good) adequately fulfil a majority of these criteria, with areas of improvement indicated by grading remarks and comments.

The grade of “C” (average) is given when written work and examinations fail to meet most criteria, therefore indicating to the student that an appointment *should* be made with the professor, before the next essay assignment, to discuss methods for improvement.

Finally, the grade of “D” is assigned to written work and examinations that are simply unacceptable, according to the criteria outlined above, in which case an appointment *must* be made with the professor and arrangements determined for re-submitting the assignments in an acceptable form.

### Assessment Components

- Participation 10%
- Midterm Exam 30%
- Final Exam 30%
- Final Paper 30%

### Grading

- 94-100: A
- 90-93: A-
- 87-89: B+
- 84-86: B
- 80-83: B-
- 77-79: C+
- 74-76: C
- 70-73: C-
- 67-69: D+
- 60-66: D
- 59 or lower: F

### Academic Honesty

Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are unacceptable at the JFRC and will be dealt with in accordance with Loyola University Chicago’s guidelines. Please familiarise yourself with Loyola’s standards here: [http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg\\_academicintegrity.shtml](http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml). You are responsible to comply with the LUC Student Handbook.

### **Late or Missed Assignments**

Late or missed assignments will not be accepted for grading without the authorisation of the instructor.

### **Accessibility Accommodations**

Students registered with the Student Accessibility Center requiring academic accommodations should contact the Office of the Academic Dean at the John Felice Rome Center, the first week of classes.

### **Required Text / Materials**

- Peter Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity* (London 1971; reprinted in 1993).
- Assigned readings posted on Sakai.

## Course Schedule

### **Week 1: The ‘Long Third Century’ – The Roman Response to Crisis**

Tuesday 3 September/Thursday 5 September 2019

- Brown (1971/1993), pp. 11-21.
- Geza Alföldy, ‘The crisis of the third century as seen by contemporaries’, *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 15 (1974), pp. 89-111.

### **Week 2: Why were the Early Christians persecuted?**

Tuesday 10 September/Thursday 12 September 2019

- Brown (1971/1993), pp. 22-33.
- Geoffrey E.M. de Ste.Croix, ‘Why were the early Christians persecuted?’, in: Moses I. Finley (ed.), *Studies in Ancient Society* (London, 1974), pp. 210-249.
- James B. Rives, ‘The decree of Decius and the religion of empire’, *Journal of Roman Studies* 89 (1999), pp. 135-154.

### **Week 3: Constantine the Great and Christianity**

Tuesday 17 September/Thursday 19 September 2019

- Brown (1971/1993), pp. 49-69.
- Bertrand Lançon, *Rome in Late Antiquity*. Trans. A. Nevill (Edinburgh, 2000), pp. 3-30.
- Richard Krauthemer, *Three Christian Capitals. Topography and Politics* (Berkeley, 1982), pp. 7-40.
- John Curran, *Pagan City and Christian Capital. Rome in the Fourth Century* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 70-115.
- *Idem*, ‘The conversion of Rome revisited’, in: Stephen Mitchell and Geoffrey Greatrex (eds.), *Ethnicity and Culture in Late Antiquity* (London, 2000), pp. 1-14.
- Robert Ross Holloway, *Constantine and Rome* (New Haven/London, 2005), pp. 1-18.

### **Week 4: Difficillima tempora?**

Tuesday 25 September/Thursday 27 September 2019

- Brown (1971/1993), pp. 34-48.
- Bertrand Lançon, *Rome in Late Antiquity*. Trans. A. Nevill (Edinburgh, 2000), pp. 45-68, 76-84, 115-120, 146-148.
- John F. Matthews, *Western Aristocracies and Imperial Court, A.D. 364-425* (Oxford, 1975), pp. 1-31.
- Geza Alföldy, “*Difficillima tempora*: urban life, inscriptions, and mentality in late antique Rome”, in Thomas S. Burns & John W. Eadie (eds.), *Urban Centers and Rural Contexts in Late Antiquity* (East Lansing, Michigan, 2001), pp. 3-24.

### **Week 5: The Making of a Christian Aristocracy**

Tuesday 1 October/ Thursday 3 October 2019

- Brown (1971/1993), pp. 70-81.
- Bertrand Lançon, *Rome in Late Antiquity*. Trans. A. Nevill (Edinburgh, 2000), pp. 30-31, 68-75, 98-111.

- John Curran, *Pagan City and Christian Capital. Rome in the Fourth Century* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 260-320.
- Michele R. Salzman, *The Making of a Christian Aristocracy* (Berkeley, 2001), pp. 178-219.

**Week 6 Mid-Term Exam**

Tuesday 8 October/Thursday 10 October 2019

**Week 7 FALL BREAK!!!**

Friday 11 October – Sunday 20 October 2019

**Week 8: Subterranean Rome – Catacombs and Martyr Cult**

Tuesday 22 October/Thursday 24 October 2019

- Bertrand Lançon, *Rome in Late Antiquity*. Trans. A. Nevill (Edinburgh, 2000), pp. 125-129.
- Glen W. Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 1-57.
- John Osborne, 'The Roman catacombs in the Middle Ages', *Papers of the British School at Rome* 53 (1985), pp. 278-328.
- Leonard V. Rutgers, *Subterranean Rome. In Search of the Roots of Christianity in the Catacombs of the Eternal City* (Leuven, 2000), pp. 42-117.

**Week 9: Panis et Circenses**

Tuesday 29 October/Thursday 29 October 2019

- Brown (1971/1993), pp. 82-95.
- Bertrand Lançon, *Rome in Late Antiquity*. Trans. A. Nevill (Edinburgh, 2000), pp. 130-146.
- Michele R. Salzman, *On Roman Time. The Codex-Calender of 354 and the Rhythms of Urban Life in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, 1990), pp. 193-246.
- Richard Lim, 'People as power: games, munificence, and contested topography', in William V. Harris (ed.), *The Transformations of Urbs Roma in Late Antiquity*. Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplementary Series 33 (Portsmouth, Rhode Island, 1999), pp. 265-281.
- John Curran, *Pagan City and Christian Capital. Rome in the Fourth Century* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 218-259.

**Week 10: The Altar of Victory**

Tuesday 5 November/Thursday 7 November 2019

- Brown (1971/1993), pp. 96-114.
- John F. Matthews, *Western Aristocracies and Imperial Court, A.D. 364-425* (Oxford, 1975), pp. 183-219.
- Timothy D. Barnes, 'Augustine, Symmachus, and Ambrose', in Joanne McWilliam (ed.), *Augustine. From Rhetor to Theologian* (Waterloo, Ontario, 1992), pp. 7-13.
- Neil McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan. Church and Court in a Christian Capital* (Berkeley, 1994), pp. 149-157, 263-289.
- Alan Cameron, 'The last pagans of Rome', in William V. Harris (ed.), *The Transformations of Vrbs Roma in Late Antiquity*. Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplementary Series 33 (Portsmouth, Rhode Island, 1999), pp. 109-121.

- Michele Salzman, 'The Christianization of sacred time and sacred space', in William V. Harris (ed.), *The Transformations of Vrbs Roma in Late Antiquity*. Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplementary Series 33 (Portsmouth, Rhode Island, 1999), pp. 123-134.

**Week 9: Decline and Fall?**

Tuesday 12 November/Thursday 14 November 2019

- Brown (1971/1993), pp. 115-135.
- Bertrand Lançon, *Rome in Late Antiquity*. Trans. A. Nevill (Edinburgh, 2000), pp. 35-40.
- Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (London, 1776-1788/repr. 1994), vol. 4, pp. 117-127.
- John F. Matthews, 'Gibbon and the later Roman Empire: causes and circumstances', in Rosamond McKitterick and Roland Quinault (eds.), *Edward Gibbon and Empire* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 12-33.
- Peter D. Garnsey & Caroline Humfress, *The Evolution of the Late Antique World* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 216-227.
- Bryan Ward-Perkins, *The Fall of Rome and the End of Civilisation* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 138-168.
- Ralph W. Mathisen, 'Roma a Gothis Alarico duce capta est: ancient accounts of the Sack of Rome in 410 CE', in Joachim Lipps, Carlos Machado, and Philipp von Rummel (eds.), *The Sack of Rome in 410 AD: the Event, its Context, and its Impact* (Wiesbaden, 2013), pp. 87-102.

**Week 10: Theodoric and Rome – a Barbarian on the Throne?**

Tuesday 19 November/Thursday 21 November 2019

- Mark Humphries, 'Valentinian III and the city of Rome (425-55): patronage, politics, power', in Lucy Grigg and Gavin Kelly (eds.), *Two Romes: Rome and Constantinople in Late Antiquity* (Oxford/New York, 2012), pp. 161-182.
- Michele R. Salzman, 'Leo's liturgical topography: contestations for space in fifth-century Rome', *Journal of Roman Studies* 103 (2013), pp. 208-232.
- Mark J. Johnson, "Toward a history of Theodoric's building program", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 42 (1988), pp. 73-96.
- John Moorhead, *Theodoric in Italy* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 66-113, 140-172.
- Peter Heather, *The Goths* (Oxford, 1996/2006), pp. 216-258.

**Week 11: Gregory the Great – Aristocrat and Bishop**

Tuesday 26 November 2019... Thursday 28 November 2019 we give thanks!!!

- Bertrand Lançon, *Rome in Late Antiquity*. Trans. A. Nevill (Edinburgh, 2000), pp. 42-44.
- Mark Humphries, 'From emperor to pope? Ceremonial, space, and authority at Rome from Constantine to Gregory the Great', in Kate Cooper and Julia Hillner (eds.), *Religion, Dynasty, and Patronage in Early Christian Rome, 300-900* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 21-59.
- Richard Krautheimer, *Rome. Profile of a City, 312 – 1308* (Princeton, 1980/2000), pp. 59-87.
- Robert A. Markus, *Gregory the Great and His World* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 1-16, 83-124.

**Week 12: The Republic of St. Peter**

Tuesday 3 December/Thursday 5 December 2019

- Thomas F.X. Noble, *The Republic of St. Peter. The Birth of the Papal State, 680-825* (Philadelphia, 1984), pp. 15-60, 94-98, 185-211.



JOHN FELICE

**ROME  
CENTER**

- P. Delogu, 'The papacy, Rome and the wider world in the seventh and eighth centuries', in: Julia M.H. Smith (ed.), *Early Medieval Rome and the Christian West. Essays in Honour of Donald A. Bullough* (Leiden/Boston/London, 2000), pp. 197-221.
- Thomas F.X. Noble, 'Topography, celebration, and power: the making of a papal Rome in the eighth and ninth centuries', in: Mayke de Jong, Frans Theuws, Carine van Rhijn (eds.), *Topographies of Power in the Early Middle Ages* (Leiden/Boston/Köln, 2001), pp. 45-91.
- Rudolf Schieffer, 'Charlemagne and Rome', in Julia M.H. Smith (ed.), *Early Medieval Rome and the Christian West. Essays in Honour of Donald A. Bullough* (Leiden/Boston/London, 2000), 279-295.

**Final Essay Due: Thursday, 5 December 2019**

**Final Exams: Saturday, 7 December – Thursday, 12 December 2019**