

CLAS 2230: The Romans

TTH 11-12:15, Bate 1014



Prof. John A. Stevens

Office Bate 3303

Office Hours: TTh 8:30-11 and by appt. via [WebEx](#)

Fall 2026

328-6056

stevensj@ecu.edu

Continuity of Instruction: In the event of a disruption to campus services, this face to face class will transition to synchronous online instruction via WebEx in Canvas

Catalog Description: CLAS 2230 The Romans. (3) EE:GL GE:HU. Roman literature from Plautus to Marcus Aurelius. Emphasis on cultural ideals expressed in its epic and lyric poetry, drama, philosophy, oratory, and history.

General Education Objectives:

- HU 1: Distinguish artistic, literary, philosophical, or religious creations from other types of work and describe how they address enduring human concerns and the human condition.
- HU 2: Apply discipline-specific criteria and evaluate the significance of specific literary, artistic, philosophical or religious works to enduring human concerns and the human condition.
- HU 3: Apply discipline-specific knowledge in the humanities to contrast their understanding with that of others of the significance of specific artistic, literary, philosophical or religious works to enduring human concerns and the human condition.

Discipline-Specific Humanities Student Learning Outcomes:

- Knowledge of Classical Humanities. Students can describe the cultural ideals of Classical Rome found in Classical texts or specimens of material culture (HU1).
- Apply the skills of the Classicist (linguistic, textual or cultural analysis, close reading etc.) to evaluate the enduring significance of a Classical text or specimen of material culture (HU2).
- Apply knowledge of the Classics to argue for or evaluate a specific interpretation of a Classical text or specimen of material culture regarding enduring human concerns and the human condition (HU3).

Course Objectives:

- Knowledge of the main events, historical leaders, literature and philosophy of Roman civilization.
- Ability to situate events and leaders in their historical time and place; ability to situate literary / fictional characters in their text and cultural context.
- Understanding of the Latin concepts behind the main cultural ideals of Roman civilization.
- Introductory familiarity with higher order skills of the Classicist: interdisciplinary analysis, appreciation of historiography, and modes of composition / narration.

Textbooks: all readings are online in Canvas

Grading:

- Class discussion 20%
- Daily Reading Quizzes (1% each): 20%
- In class writing assignments (10% each): 20%
- Take-home Midterm: 20%
- Take-home Final: 20%

Grade ranges:	B+ 86.50-89.49	C+ 76.50-79.49	D+ 66.50-69.49	
A 92.50-100	B 82.50-86.49	C 72.50-76.49	D 62.50-66.49	
A- 89.50-92.49	B- 79.50-79.49	C- 69.50-72.49	D- 59.50-62.49	F 0-59.49

20% of the course grade will be based on attendance, doing the assigned reading, and contributions to class discussion. There are daily reading quizzes of 3-5 questions, 1% each, 20% total. There are two in-class writing assignments 10% each, and a midterm and final (20% each), which will feature some identification of concepts (matching), some passage identification by author, title, and speaker, and some short answer. For the class discussion grade, you will have to read and reflect on each day's assignment. Those who receive an A will have good questions, advance the discussion, and refer to relevant passages in the text. Attendance alone will not guarantee a good grade for this section; it is primarily based on your oral contributions to the discussion. If you are absent an unreasonable amount, however, (more than 4 or 5 classes), you can expect a poor grade in class discussion. It will also have the effect of making you unprepared for the midterm and final. To succeed in this class, read, attend, talk, and take notes. If you do, I am confident Roman Literature will be one of the most interesting classes you take at ECU.

For information about severe weather and university closings, see [The ECU Alert page](#). East Carolina University seeks to comply fully with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with verifiable disabilities. In order to take advantage of available accommodations, students must be registered with the Department for Disability Support Services located in Slay 138, 252-737-1016. [Accommodation Information & Processes](#). Academic integrity is expected of every East Carolina student. Cheating, plagiarism (claiming the work of another as your own, including not just copied text, but even ideas rephrased in your own voice from online sources, books, and articles without attribution), falsification, will be considered a violation of [Academic Integrity](#). If you must be absent for a university event, fall ill or become subject to quarantine, or find yourself dealing with a personal crisis, please tell me in a timely fashion so we can make plans about how to prevent you from falling into academic difficulty.

Assignments:

- 8/18 Introduction
- 8/20 Livy *Histories* bk 1 on the founding of Rome.
- 8/25 Livy *Histories* bk 21 on Hannibal in the Second Punic War
- 8/27 Plutarch *Life of Cato the Elder* (Censor).
- 9/3 In class movie: "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum" (mash-up of the *Poenulus*, *Curculio*, *Pseudolus*, *Miles Gloriosus*, and *Mostellaria* of Plautus.)
- 9/8 Sallust, *War of Catiline*. Caesar and Cato the Younger debate the fate of the Catilinarian conspirators, 63 BC.
- 9/10 Catullus poems 85, 13, and separately, poem 64.
- 9/15 In class writing on Livy, Plutarch, Plautus, Sallust, Catullus.

- 9/17 Julius Caesar on the Invasion of Britain, the Druid 'Burning Man,' and excerpts from his life by Suetonius
- 9/22 Cicero's *De Legibus*, on the Stoic theory of natural law.
- 9/24 Horace, *Epode* 7, *Odes* 2.7, 1.37; on the civil wars of 49 BC (Pharsalus – Caesar vs. Pompey), 42 BC (Philippi – Antony, Octavian, Lepidus vs. Brutus, Cassius and the Senate), 31 BC (Actium – Octavian vs. Antony and Cleopatra).
- 9/29 Vergil, *Aeneid*, Bk 7.
- 10/1 **Midterm.**
- 10/6 **Fall Break, no class**
- 10/8 Ovid *Metamorphoses* Bk 1.1-746. Creation, Apollo and Daphne, Io. Content Warning: stories deal with sexual stalking.
- 10/13 Ovid *Metamorphoses* Bk. 2.1-343, Bk 3 138-252, 339-510. Phaethon, Narcissus, Actaeon
- 10/15 Ovid *Metamorphoses* Bk 10.1-105, 11.1-145, 15.60-236, 745-879. Orpheus, Midas, Pythagoras, Caesar
- 10/20 Seneca, *Hercules Furens* 1-661.
- 10/22 Seneca, *Hercules Furens* 662-end
- 10/27 In class writing on Ovid and Seneca.
- 10/29 Lucan, *Pharsalia*, excerpts Books 1,
- 11/3 Lucan, *Pharsalia*, excerpts from Books 7-9
- 11/5 Petronius' *Satyricon* "Trimalchio's Dinner," Books 2-4
- 11/10 Pliny the Younger, Eruption of Mt. Vesuvius
- 11/12 Tacitus, *Agricola*
- 11/17 Apuleius, "Cupid and Psyche" from *The Golden Ass* or *Metamorphoses* IV.28-end of VI
- 11/19 Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* 4
- 11/24 Last day of class. Discussion and Film, "The Fall of the Roman Empire" (1964).
- 11/26 Thanksgiving break. No Class.
- 12/8 Final Exam.