

Dr. Nadya Williams
Spring 2017

HIST 4285W: The Roman Empire in the 60's AD

Instructor: Dr. Nadya Williams

Class Time and Location: this course is taught 100% online via CourseDen. You must make sure that you have regular access to the Internet and CourseDen to be able to keep up with the course.

Office Hours: TWTh 12noon-3:00pm (online office hours on CourseDen)
Th 3:00pm-4:00pm – office hours at Gallery Row on the Square

I am also available by appointment to speak with you either over the phone or to meet with you on campus. My campus office location is TLC 3239.

Course Description

In 60 AD, the Roman Empire, then under the rule of Emperor Nero, had already been in control of the Mediterranean world for a quarter of a millennium. Yet the system of one-man dynastic rule was still relatively new to Rome, which remained a Republic until (arguably) just half a century earlier. According to some Roman historians, with each transition of power, the Senate seems to have wondered if restoring the Republic might still be possible. By 70 AD, Rome was a different place, having survived over the course of the decade multiple provincial revolts, and an empire-wide civil war. No one dreamed anymore of restoring the Republic. A new emperor with no connections to the previous dynasty was in charge, and the dynamics of the relationship between the emperor, the army, the people, and the Senate were forever changed.

This course explores what may be one of the most transformative, as well as one of the best documented, decades of Roman history. Moving chronologically and topically through this decade, our topics will include:

- The rule of Nero and the different opinions of him in antiquity and today. Was he truly crazy, or was he a political genius of sorts?
- The rise of the Flavians and the reasons for their success at the end of the decade
- The political dynamics of the relationship between Rome and the provinces, and the reasons for the provincial revolts over the course of the decade – after all, the decade is bookended by two major revolts, in Britain and in Judaea respectively
- The growing power of the army in politics, especially as demonstrated by the disastrous year 69 AD, known as the Year of the Four Emperors
- Social relations in the city of Rome and in the empire more broadly
- The different political and religious philosophies that took hold in the empire over the course of the decade, including early Christianity and the Stoic philosophers. This is the decade in which Paul is finishing up his missionary journeys, just as Seneca the Younger is writing the last of his treatises and letters on Stoicism.

Please note that this is a writing-intensive course. Before panic sets in, however, please be assured that writing does not have to be painful! You will get the

chance to reflect about the material covered in this course in a variety of shorter writing assignments, and will gradually build up to the longer assignments. Thus I hope that while you will be writing a lot in this course, the distribution of the work will make it much more manageable.

Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, you will have acquired the ability to do the following:

1. Demonstrate a thorough knowledge of key events in Roman history during the 60s AD
2. Analyze primary and secondary sources for their historical content and interpretations
3. Demonstrate ability to research according to historical methods
4. Demonstrate writing skills that reflect persuasive historical arguments based on evidence and proper citation

Grading Criteria

Weekly discussions (30%):

Since this is an online upper-level course, class discussions are key to keeping everyone accountable about doing the reading, and learning through discussing crucial aspects of that reading together. I will post several questions each week that I would like us to discuss as a group. You will always have the option, in addition, of posting your own question that you would like to bring up to the rest of the group, and proposing your opinion about it. In grading the discussions, I will look both at the quality of your own main post for the week, and the quality and quantity of your responses to your classmates. For more details, please see below.

Journaling assignment (20%):

One theme that will come across as we study the Roman Empire in the 60's is the diversity of different people's experiences. In order to explore this in greater detail, each student will select a role (see options below), and will write five journal entries in that role, documenting that character's life through the 60's, based on class readings and supplemental research. Each student will write a total of five journal entries, but please note that not all roles will stay alive until 70 AD! Thus you may need to focus on earlier portions of the decade in your journal, depending on when your character dies. Each journal entry should be at least one developed paragraph in length, and should refer to specific events that are covered in the course.

Midterm essay: review of Champlin (20%):

Each student will write a 4-6 page book review of Edward Champlin's biography of the emperor Nero. The review should take a side, relying on other readings from the class: do you agree with Champlin's assessment of Nero or not, and why?

Final Project (30%):

The final project will be the culminating learning experience of the course. The goal of the project is for each student to select a topic of personal interest from the time period covered in the class, and to research that topic in detail. It will then be up to each student to decide on the medium in which to create this final project. Options include a

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traditional research paper of 8-12 pages; a documentary (individual or group); a creative dramatic presentation with your own script (individual or group); an educational website; or an individual or group presentation of your research, lasting 10 minutes for individual presentations or 15-20 minutes for groups. Your final project is due no later than midnight on Monday, May 1st. If your chosen option is an in-person presentation to the professor, you must inform me in advance to schedule a presentation time during the week of May 1st.

Grading turnaround time: Barring any outstanding circumstances or emergencies, I will grade all assignments within one week of the time when you submit them.

Grading expectations for Weekly Discussions:

In grading the weekly discussions, I will consider the following:

- Quality of your own response to the week's material – I will look for a clear argument in response to the week's question; specific examples from the readings to back up your points, sufficient development of the overall argument. The biggest sin at this level of study is vagueness – meaning, students often say something brief and stop there, instead of elaborating in detail and providing examples. Your own response accounts for 75% of the points for the weekly discussions.
- The quantity and quality of your comments for your classmates – For each weekly discussion, you will have to respond to at least two classmates, and part of your discussion grade is both the quantity and the quality of your responses. If you are writing less than a short paragraph in your response, you are probably not writing enough. Your responses should be substantive – meaning, they should advance the discussion, rather than just briefly agreeing or disagreeing with the original poster. Your responses count for 25% of the points for the weekly discussions.

List of roles available for the journaling assignment (please note that most of these roles can only be claimed once. Only those roles that indicate availability for multiple people can be claimed by more than one student):

Emperor Nero
Vespasian
Josephus
Apostle Paul
Gaius Calpurnius Piso
Seneca the Younger
Petronius
Lucan
A Roman senator's wife
A Roman of equestrian census rank, living in Rome
Wife of a Roman merchant
A poor freedman living in Rome
A poor freedwoman living in Rome
A Vestal Virgin
A slave living in Rome

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- A personal slave of Nero
- A wealthy freedman living somewhere in the Roman Empire (your choice) – x2
- A Christian living in Rome at the beginning of the decade
- A member of the Praetorian Guard (the only military force in the city of Rome)
- A soldier in the Roman army, stationed in Britain
- A soldier in the Roman army in Judaea
- A Sadducee living in Jerusalem
- A poor Roman citizen living in one of the provinces (your choice) – x2
- A member of the church at Philippi

Required Books (Additional readings are posted on CourseDen)

I did not order books for this class via the UWG Bookstore. Thus it is up to each of you to purchase the books on your own. All of these items are easily available used, and you may also use a different edition of the primary sources, if you prefer. I include the Amazon links to my preferred editions/translations:

Petronius, *The Satyricon* (https://www.amazon.com/Satyricon-Oxford-Worlds-Classics/dp/0199539219/ref=sr_1_2?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1480962454&sr=1-2&keywords=petronius+satyricon)

Seneca the Younger, *Letters from a Stoic* (https://www.amazon.com/Letters-Penguin-Classics-Lucius-Annaeus/dp/0140442103/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1480962727&sr=1-1&keywords=seneca+letters+from+a+stoic)

Josephus, *The Jewish War* (https://www.amazon.com/Jewish-War-Revised-Penguin-Classics/dp/0140444203/ref=sr_1_5?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1480962612&sr=1-5&keywords=josephus)

Tacitus, *The Histories* (https://www.amazon.com/Histories-Penguin-Classics-Tacitus/dp/0140449647/ref=sr_1_2?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1480962644&sr=1-2&keywords=tacitus+histories)

Edward Champlin, *Nero* (https://www.amazon.com/Nero-Edward-Champlin/dp/0674011929/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1480962546&sr=1-1&keywords=champlin+nero)

N.B. There will be no curve in this course! Final grades will be assigned according to the following scale, keeping in mind that the University of West Georgia does not recognize +/- grades:

- 89.49 - 100 = A
- 79.49 - 89.48 = B
- 69.49 - 79.48 = C
- 59.49 - 69.48 = D

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< 59.48 = F

Class Communication:

Email is the fastest way to reach me, if you have a question or a concern. Unless I am in a work meeting or sleeping or dealing with a toddler tantrum, I will respond to your email very quickly – possibly within the hour. Please feel free to email me any questions or concerns at any time either at the regular UWG email or CourseDen email.

A note on email etiquette: I will always be courteous and professional in my correspondence with you, and expect the same of you. This means, you should address me as “Professor” or “Dr.” in your emails, as well as in person. “Mr.” or “Ms.” are not considered to be polite forms of address for your college professors.

Netiquette (or Online Etiquette):

As students in an upper-level history course, you are all professional academics in training, and that is how I will treat you in this course. This is also how I would like you to think of each other during your interactions in this course. I am sure that we will all disagree at various points about topics of discussion (and professional academics disagree quite frequently in their interpretation of evidence), but my goal is to make sure that all voices in this class are heard and respected. You do not have to agree with each other, but you do have to hear each other out, and be able to defend your own argument with the help of evidence, whenever disagreeing. On a related note, you do not have to agree with everything that I say, but again, I would like you to be able to ground your argument in evidence from the primary sources. If at any point you feel like you are not being respected, please do let me know! It is important for the success of the entire class that all of you will feel respected and included in the discussions.

University Policies for Students:

All Students Please Note!

For important policy information, i.e., the UWG Honor Code, Email, and Credit Hour policies, as well as information on Academic Support and Online Courses, please review the information found in the **Common Language for Course Syllabi** documentation at http://www.westga.edu/assetsDept/vpaa/Common_Language_for_Course_Syllabi.pdf. Additions and updates are made as institution, state, and federal standards change, so please review it each semester.

Academic Dishonesty:

Academic dishonesty on ANY assignment in this course will result in an F for the course, and the referral of the student to the appropriate university committee. There will be no exceptions to this policy! Academic dishonesty can take many shapes, such as cut-and-pasting anything from the Internet. Please avoid inadvertent plagiarism by ALWAYS citing any sources that you use when writing papers or essays. For further information, see <http://www.westga.edu/~handbook/index.php?page=honorcode>

Course Schedule

Week	Topics Covered	Readings (readings posted on CourseDen are marked with *)	Assignments due (unless otherwise indicated, your initial post for each discussion is due by Monday at midnight, and responses are due by Thursday at midnight)
01/09	Background: Roman history in a nutshell; main themes for the semester	Williams, "The Roman World from 753 BCE to 500 CE"*	Discussion 1
01/16	60 AD: the revolt of the Iceni in Britain; introduction to Nero	Champlin, <i>Nero</i> , chapters 1-2; Suetonius, <i>Nero</i> *; Selections on Boudicca's revolt from Tacitus' <i>Annals</i> : http://www.athenapub.com/britsite/tacitus1.htm	Discussion 2
01/23	Roman social relations in the 60s AD; introduction to the journaling assignment	Petronius, <i>Satyricon</i>	Discussion 3; first journal post due
01/30	Life in the provinces; the many faces of early Christianity in the 60s AD	Ephesians, Philippians, Philemon, 1 Peter*	Discussion 4; Journal post (optional)
02/06	A Stoic philosopher's perspective on Roman society: Seneca the Younger	Seneca the Younger, <i>Letters from a Stoic</i>	Discussion 5; Journal post (optional)
02/13	65 AD: The Pisonian Conspiracy	Tacitus on the Pisonian conspiracy; articles TBD	Discussion 6; Journal post (optional) N.B.: a number of the characters for

			whom you are journaling die in 65 AD. You can continue spreading this assignment over a few more weeks, but you will never go past 65 AD
02/20	Nero in Hollywood imagination	<i>Quo Vadis?</i> (1951)	Discussion 7; Journal post (optional)
02/27	Re-evaluating Nero	Champlin, <i>Nero</i>	Discussion 8; Journal post (optional)
03/06	Midterm week	None	Midterm essay due by midnight on 03/06
03/13	Final projects: work on identifying and narrowing down your topic this week!	None	Discussion 9: final project proposals
03/20	SPRING BREAK	Catch up, if needed, on anything you have missed!	
03/27	The Jewish Revolt: part I	Josephus, <i>The Jewish War</i> , pages 1-204	Discussion 10
04/03	The Jewish Revolt: part II	Josephus, <i>The Jewish War</i> , finish the book	Discussion 11; Journal post (optional)
04/10	The Year of the Four Emperors: part I	Tacitus, <i>Histories</i> , pages 1-115; Suetonius, <i>Galba*</i> , <i>Otho*</i>	Discussion 12; Journal post (optional)
04/17	The Year of the Four Emperors: part II	Tacitus, <i>Histories</i> , pages 116-236; Suetonius, <i>Vitellius*</i>	Discussion 13; Journal post (optional)
04/24	70 AD: a new emperor and a new empire	<i>SC de imperio Vespasiani*</i> ; Tacitus, <i>Histories</i> , finish the book	Discussion 14; Completed journals due
05/01	Wrapping up!	None	Final project due by midnight!