

Religion and Politics in the Long Roman Empire, Spring 2023

History 500

Wednesdays 1:20-3:15, Memorial Library, Greek and Latin Reading Room

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Office hours: email for an appointment. I'm happy to meet with you but don't spend a lot of time in my office due to poor internet connectivity.

Course Description:

In the classical Roman Empire religion was not a matter of private, personal belief, but a collective civic project: the separation of church and state would have been inconceivable. Even as the religion of the Roman empire changed from polytheism to Christianity, religious practice continued to be one of the main tasks and purposes for the government. This reading seminar examines the practice of religion by and for the state from the 3rd century BCE through the 13th Century CE, with attention to change and continuities accompanying the transformation of the state religion from polytheism to Christianity. Our explorations of the radically unfamiliar functions and modalities of religious practice in antiquity may help us gain valuable perspective on interactions between religions and governments in our own era.

Learning Goals:

This advanced reading seminar serves as a capstone for the Certificate in History. It aims to be a significant and memorable intellectual adventure.

Content knowledge:

- Features of Roman traditional religion
- Relationship of religion and civic politics in the classical Roman empire
- Christianization of the Roman Empire
- Development & separation of Christianity and Judaism
- Major trends in theories of religion
- Impact of early modern scholarship on contemporary study of religion
- Relationship of religion and civic politics in the eastern Roman empire

Skills:

- Reading quickly to understand argument
- Reading texts using a complex vocabulary and rhetorical structures
- Communicating assessments of complex texts orally
- Assessing complex texts in writing
- Self-awareness of assumptions about religion & politics
- Awareness of and respect for the variety of possibly world views

Activities & Assessment:

This course allows you to build your grade through successfully completing activities. All activities are graded as either meeting specifications and receiving full credit, or not meeting specifications and receiving no credit. All activities can be done as many times as you like in order to receive full credit.

To receive a grade of **C** the following activities are **REQUIRED**:

1. **Core Text Readings:** you must read the Core Texts assigned each week and submit a reading log with notes to Canvas. On weeks 5 and 6 undergraduates will read one of the two books.
2. **Seminar Participation:** you must contribute to the seminar conversation based on your reading of the Core Texts.

To receive a grade of **B** the following **additional** activities are **required**:

1. **Book Report:** Write a 4-6 page book report on either a Core Text book **or** an additional (non-core) book. Two students may write on each book. Undergraduates get first pick of books. Books are noted with * below.
2. **Leading Discussion:** Either alone or with a team, lead the seminar discussion of one of the Core Texts.
3. **Article Report & Presentation:** Write a 2-4 page review and make a class presentation on either a Core Text article or an additional (non-core) article. Articles are noted with ~ below.

To receive a grade of **A**, choose at least 3 of the following 6 options.

1. **Roman Emperor Chronology:** Memorize at least 9 of 11 centuries of the Roman & East Roman emperors in order with at least 90% accuracy. Bragging rights for the dates. Quiz will be on March 1.
2. **2nd Book Report:** Write a 4-6 page book report on either a Core Text book **or** an additional (non-core) book.
3. **3rd Book Report:** Write a 4-6 page book report on an additional (non-core) book.
4. **2 Additional Article Reports & Presentations:** Write 2 a 2-4 page reviews and make a class presentations on either Core Text or additional (non-core) articles.
5. **Readings in Greek** Read a selection of primary sources in Greek. (This option can be expanded to count for all three 'A' activities).
6. **Primary Source Interpretation Paper:** Write a 8-10 page paper interpreting a primary source in light of the course readings.

How Credit Hours are met by the Course This three-credit course meets as a group seminar for 115 minutes each week. You are also expected to spend an average of seven hours per week outside of class time reading, writing, and preparing for class discussions and presentations, for a total of 135 hours over the semester (or 45 hours per credit, according to UW-Madison's credit hour policy).

	Theme	Core Readings	Additional Readings	Presenters & Reports
1/25 1	Introduction			
2/1 2	Stage Setting	<p>Edward Gibbon <i>Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire</i>, chapter 32.</p> <p>J.A Faulkner “Did Mystery Religions Influence Apostolic Christianity” <i>The Methodist Quarterly Review</i>, 73 (1924): 387-403.</p> <p>Max Weber, <i>Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology</i>, selections.</p> <p>Charles Diehl <i>Byzantine Empire</i>, selections</p>	<p>Warde Fowler, William. <i>The Religious Experience of the Roman People</i>, 1911.</p>	
2/8 3	Fundamentals	<p>Sarah Iles Johnston, ed. <i>Ancient Religions</i> (2004): select chapters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “What is Ancient Religion” • “Monotheism & Polytheism” • “Ritual” • “Mysteries” <p>Jonathan Z. Smith. <i>Relating Religion: Essays in the Study of Religion</i>, 2004. Select chapters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ~“Topographies of the Sacred” • ~“A Matter of Class” • ~“Trading Places” • ~“Here, There, and Anywhere” 	<p>~Sarah Iles Johnston, ed. <i>Ancient Religions</i> (2004): “Pollution, Sin, Atonement, Salvation”</p> <p>~Orsi, Robert. “Introduction.” In <i>The Cambridge Companion to Religious Studies</i>, edited by Robert Orsi, 1–13. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.</p>	

2/15 4	90's revolution	<p>~Sarah Iles Johnston, ed. <i>Ancient Religions</i> (2004): John North: "Rome"</p> <p>~North, John. "The Religion of Rome from Monarchy to Principate." In <i>Companion to Historiography</i>, edited by Michael Bentley. 57-68. London: Routledge, 1997.</p> <p>*Scheid, John. <i>The Gods, the State, and the Individual: Reflections on Civic Religion in Rome</i>. 2016.</p>	<p>~Beard, Mary. "Priesthood in the Roman Republic." In <i>Pagan Priests</i>:</p> <p>~Gordon, Richard. "From Republic to Principate: Priesthood, Religion, and Ideology." In <i>Pagan Priests</i>:</p> <p>~Gordon, Richard. "Religion in the Roman Empire: The Civic Compromise and Its Limits." In <i>Pagan Priests</i></p> <p>~Scheid, John. "Polytheism Impossible; or, the Empty Gods: Reasons behind a Void in the History of Roman Religion." <i>History and Anthropology</i> 3, no. 1 (1987): 303-25.</p>	
2/22 5	Early modern structures	<p>*Nongbri, Brent. <i>Before Religion: A History of a Modern Concept</i>. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013.</p> <p>*Cavanaugh, William T. <i>The Myth of Religious Violence: Secular Ideology and the Roots of Modern Conflict</i>. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.</p>	<p>*Pocock, J. G. A. <i>Barbarism and Religion</i>. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.</p> <p>*Stroumsa, Guy G. <i>A New Science: The Discovery of Religion in the Age of Reason</i>. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010.</p> <p>~Judge, E. A. "Was Christianity a Religion?" 2008.</p> <p>Harvey, David Allen. "The Rise of Modern Paganism? French Enlightenment Perspectives on Polytheism and the History of Religions." <i>Historical Reflections</i> 40, no. 2 (2014): 34-55.</p> <p>Bremmer, Jan N. "'Religion,' 'Ritual,' and the Opposition 'Sacred vs. Profane': Notes Toward a Terminological Genealogy."</p>	
3/1 6	Rebuilding Roman Religion	<p>*Padilla Peralta, Dan-el. <i>Divine Institutions: Religions and Community in the Middle Roman Republic</i>. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020.</p>	<p>~Mackey, Jacob L. "Das Erlöschen des Glaubens: The Fate of Belief in the Study of Roman Religion." <i>Phasis</i> 20 (2017): 83-150.</p> <p>~Harrison, Thomas. "Belief vs. Practice." In <i>The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Greek Religion</i>, edited</p>	

		*Champion, Craige. <i>The Peace of the Gods: Elite Religious Practices in the Middle Roman Republic</i> . Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017.	by Esther Eidinow and Julia Kindt, 21–28. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.	
3/8 7	Rebuilding Roman Republican Religion	*Ando, Clifford. <i>The Matter of the Gods: Religion and the Roman Empire</i> . Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008. ~Sarah Iles Johnston, ed. <i>Ancient Religions</i> (2004): “Early Christianity”	*J. Z. Smith <i>Map Is Not Territory: Studies in the History of Religions</i> . Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993. ~Galinsky, Karl. “Continuity and Change: Religion in the Augustan Semi-Century.” In <i>A Companion to Roman Religion</i> , e, 71–82, 2011.	
3/22 8	Comparing Christianity	*Smith, Jonathan Z. <i>Drudgery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity</i> . London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1990.	*Brown, Peter. <i>Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity: Towards a Christian Empire</i> . 1992. ~MacCormack, Sabine. “Loca Sancta”	
3/29 9	Christianity & Judaism	*Boyarin, Daniel. <i>Dying for God: Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism</i> . Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999.	*Paula Fredriksen. <i>Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews: A Jewish Life and the Emergence of Christianity</i> . New York: Knopf, 1999.	
4/5 10	Imperial Cult	*Price, S. R. F. <i>Rituals and Power: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor</i> . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984. ~Lozano, Fernando. “The Creation of the Imperial Gods: Not Only Imposition versus Spontaneity.” In <i>More than Men, Less than Gods: Studies on Royal Cult and Imperial Worship</i> , edited by Panagiotis Iossif, Andrzej Chankowski, and Catherine Lorber, 475–520. Leuven: Peters, 2011. ~Fischler, Susan. “Imperial Cult: Engendering the Cosmos.” In <i>When Men Were Men: Masculinity, Power and Identity in Classical Antiquity</i> , 165–83. London: Routledge, 1998	*Brown, Peter, <i>The Making of Late Antiquity</i> , 1978. ~Petrovic, Ivana. “Deification—Gods or Men?” In <i>The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Greek Religion</i> , edited by Eidinow, Esther and Kindt, Julia, 429–43. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015 Angelov, Dimiter. “Byzantinism: The Imaginary and Real Heritage of Byzantium in Southeastern Europe.” In <i>New Approaches to Balkan Studies</i> , edited by Dimitris Keridis, Ellen Elias-Bursac, and Nicholas Yatromanolakis, 3–23. Dulles: Brassey’s, 2003.	
4/12 11		*Assmann, Jan. <i>Religion and Cultural Memory: Ten Studies</i> . Translated by	*Boyarin, Daniel. <i>Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity</i> .	

		Rodney Livingstone. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006. ~Cameron, Averil. "Byzantium and the Limits of Orthodoxy." <i>Proceedings of the British Academy</i> 154 (2007): 129-52.	Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004.	
4/19 12		~Runciman, Steven. "Byzantium, Russia and Caesaropapism." <i>Canadian Slavonic Papers / Revue Canadienne Des Slavistes</i> 2 (1957): 1-10. *Dagron, Gilbert. <i>Emperor and Priest : The Imperial Office in Byzantium</i> . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.	*Brubaker, Leslie. <i>Inventing Byzantine Iconoclasm</i> . London: Bristol Classical Press, 2012. ~Meyendorff, John. "Justinian, the Empire and the Church." <i>Dumbarton Oaks Papers</i> 22 (1968): 43-60.	
4/26 13	Implications	In-class readings	~Skedros, James. "You Cannot Have a Church Without an Empire." 2017. ~ Drpić, Ivan. "Manuel I Komnenos and the Stone of Unction." <i>Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies</i> 43, no. 1 (2019): 60-82.	
5/3 14	Implications	In-class readings	*Demacopoulos, George, <i>Colonizing Christianity: Greek and Latin Religious Identity in the Era of the Fourth Crusade</i> , 2019.	

Book Review Assignment

Read your assigned book thoroughly. Allow more time than usual for reading your book because it may be complex.

The paper should be a 5-7 page review and analysis of the book. A good review essay will have three sections:

1. Orientation

The orientation section provides background information that can help you assess the book. Try to find out information about your author. Where does she teach? What other books or books has he written? Try to find out if your book is part of an ongoing debate on the topic. Is this the first treatment of the topic or have many other books been written about it already?

2. Summary

The summary section should state the author's position clearly and fairly. What is the question or problem the author is trying to answer or address? What is the thesis of the book? What medieval source information does the author use to help him understand the problem?

3. Analysis

The analysis section contains your reasoned opinion about the argument of your book. Is the author's case convincing? Are the sources used in a responsible way to say something true about the past? Is the argument significant? Was it worth killing a tree to publish it?

The heart of your essay should be the analysis section. You need to do more than summarize the book to write a good essay. Spend time thinking about your book and explain what you think. Don't spend too much time talking about how it makes you *feel*.

Presentation:

The class presentation should have the same basic sections as the paper and take 5-7 minutes. You will not have time to read everything in your paper during the class presentation. Think about what would be most helpful and interesting to your classmates when choosing aspects of your review and analysis to present. Keep in mind that your classmates have not read the book and tell them enough for them to make sense of your analysis.

Book Review Grading Criteria

For this class, papers that meet either the A or B characteristics will receive full credit. Papers falling in the C or D range will receive no credit.

Characteristics of an **A** paper:

- It displays an entirely accurate and nuanced understanding of the assigned book.
- The analysis displays considered and subtle thought about the argument.
- The analysis makes good logical sense.
- The analysis displays historical insight and acuity.
- The conclusions drawn are supported by solid argumentation.
- It amply fulfills the instructions of the paper assignment.
- All claims are supported by citations and explanations of the textual evidence or logical argumentation.
- It has excellent English grammar and usage
- It has a well-organized structure.
- It has no proofreading errors.
- It has correct citations for all sources.

Characteristics of a **B** paper:

- It displays a good understanding of the book.
- The analysis displays thought.
- The analysis is logical.

- It follows the instructions of the paper assignment.
- Claims are supported by textual evidence or argumentation.
- It uses correct English grammar and usage.
- It has good paragraph structure.
- It has adequate citations for all sources.
- It may have some errors in proof-reading.

- Characteristics of a **C** paper:
 - It displays cursory reading or misunderstanding of the book.
 - It does not display significant thought about the book.
 - The analysis is not logical.
 - It does not have clear paragraphs.
 - It does not follow the instructions.
 - It contains unnecessary digressions or vacuous generalizations.
 - The textual evidence cited does not support the claims.
 - It has not been proofread.
 - It contains errors in grammar or usage.
 - The citations of sources are inadequate.

- Characteristics of a **D** paper:
 - It shows that the book has not been read.
 - It displays no thought.
 - It does not fulfill the assignment.
 - It does not have paragraphs.
 - It contains errors in grammar or usage or inadequate proofreading.
 - Claims are unsubstantiated by citation or argument.

STUDENTS' RULES, [RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES](#)

COURSE EVALUATIONS

Students will be provided with an opportunity to evaluate this course and your learning experience. Student participation is an integral component of this course, and your feedback is important to me. I strongly encourage you to participate in the course evaluation.

UW-Madison now uses an online course evaluation survey tool, [AEFIS](#). In most instances, you will receive an official email two weeks prior to the end of the semester when your course evaluation is available. You will receive a link to log into the course evaluation with your NetID where you can complete the evaluation and submit it, anonymously. Your participation is an integral component of this course, and your feedback is important to me. I strongly encourage you to participate in the course evaluation.

ACADEMIC CALENDAR & RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

- See: <https://secfac.wisc.edu/academic-calendar/#religious-observances>

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

By virtue of enrollment, each student agrees to uphold the high academic standards of the University of Wisconsin-Madison; academic misconduct is behavior that negatively impacts the integrity of the institution. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these previously listed acts are examples of misconduct which may result in disciplinary action. Examples of disciplinary action include, but is not limited to, failure on the assignment/course, written reprimand, disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion.

QUARANTINE OR ISOLATION DUE TO COVID-19

Student should continually monitor themselves for COVID-19 [symptoms](#) and get [tested](#) for the virus if they have symptoms or have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19. Student should reach out to instructors as soon as possible if they become ill or need to isolate or quarantine, in order to make alternate plans for how to proceed with the course. Students are strongly encouraged to communicate with their instructor concerning their illness and the anticipated extent of their absence from the course (either in-person or remote). The instructor will work with the student to provide alternative ways to complete the course work.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform faculty [me] of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. Faculty [I], will work either directly with the student [you] or in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA. (See: [McBurney Disability Resource Center](#))

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

[Diversity](#) is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background – people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world.

