Why study ancient Rome? Its heritage is rich, varied and persistent, ranging from its writing system, many proper names and the calendar to legal traditions, political discourse, architectural styles and urban design, the Latin-derived Romance languages that are so widely spoken across the Western Hemisphere, and the Christian denominations that span the globe. Faced with this embarrassment of riches, it can be hard to know where to start.

Our course focuses on several key features that made Roman history unusual by world historical standards or remain of great influence today. The Roman Republic continues to hold the world record for longest-lasting really large republic, won at a time when monarchies were the norm and republican government was confined to small city-states. Rome’s expansion was similarly exceptional, from a small town to an empire as wide as the contiguous United States: driven by bewildering commitment to endless war, this process owed much to techniques of cooption that influenced modern imperialists and colonizers. The mature Roman Empire became the cradle and the launch pad of Christianity: its later prominence was deeply rooted in these formative stages. In the end the empire fell, and unlike in other parts of the globe where imperial rule tended to be return time and again, Rome’s hegemony was permanently replaced by a competitive state system that proved critical to modernizing development.

We explore these features with the help of a conceptual framework organized around the four principal sources of social power – political, military, economic and ideological –, and we do so for both the republican and monarchical phases of Rome’s very long history. We then survey cultural change across the empire, especially in the sphere of religious beliefs and practices. We conclude with the destabilization and gradual unraveling of Roman power in late antiquity, a process that was not fully completed until the fifteenth century.
Many more aspects of Roman civilization would merit attention, but as the saying goes, Rome wasn’t built in a day – nor are we able to cover everything in a quarter. Our Classics department offers more specialized courses that go well beyond this basic introduction, so make sure to look out for them.

The format of this course is pretty straightforward: while lectures provide broad outlines and analytical assessments (and sometimes too much talking by the instructor), the weekly sections introduce you to ancient texts in translation that flesh out key themes and provide room for more discussion. You will find details about the course requirements at the end of this syllabus.

**Required texts (available at the Stanford Bookstore, and on reserve in Green)**

- Handouts will be posted on Canvas

**Schedule and readings**

(* = sections)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mon, April 1</th>
<th>Introduction: Why Rome?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Wed, April 3</td>
<td>What can we know about early Rome? – Bottom-up perspectives</td>
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<tr>
<td>*Fri, April 5</td>
<td>Discussion: What are we told about early Rome? – The fabrication of historical tradition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon, April 8</td>
<td>Governing Rome</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed, April 10</td>
<td>Roman imperialism</td>
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<tr>
<td>*Fri, April 12</td>
<td>Discussion: In search of the perfect constitution</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon, April 15</td>
<td>Belief systems: Cult and ideology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed, April 17</td>
<td>Economic change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Fri, April 19</td>
<td>Discussion: ‘Just war’</td>
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Mon, April 22  
From republic to monarchy: The great transition

*Mellor 478-490; *skim The Romans pp. 154-281

Wed, April 24  
Governing the Roman empire

*The Romans 309-329, 375-386

*Fri, April 26  
Discussion: How did Roman politics really work?

*Quintus Cicero (?), Handbook on Canvassing (handout) (recommended optional supplement: *Mellor 50-65)

Mid-term papers due

Mon, Apr 29  
The military-tributary complex

*Romans pp. 291-294 (again), 329-330, 373 source 10.1; *Mellor 269-273

Wed, May 1  
Provincial worlds

*The Romans 335-339, 374-375; *Mellor 344-351, 388-392; handouts

*Fri, May 3  
Discussion: The Augustan regime

*Mellor 8-9, 254-262, 306-308, handouts

Mon, May 6  
Beyond the borders

*Mellor 301-306, 502-516

Wed, May 8  
Imperial religions: Ruler cult and pluralism

*The Romans 339-345, 386-387; handouts

*Fri, May 10  
Discussion: Emperors, aristocrats, and provincials

*Mellor 6-8, 290-301

Abstracts and preliminary bibliographies due

Mon, May 13  
The Jews in the Roman world

*Mellor 273-288, 380-387; handouts

Wed, May 15  
The creation of Christianity

*The Romans 421-426; *Mellor 360-363, 392-394

*Fri, May 17  
Discussion: Cult, community, and imperial power

*Mellor 360-363, 392-394; handouts

Introduction and extended outlines due

Mon, May 20  
Instability and restoration

*The Romans 427-486; *Mellor 525-526; handouts

Wed, May 22  
Decline and Fall? Transformations of the Roman world

*The Romans 487-518

*Fri, May 24  
Discussion: The Christian takeover

*Mellor 527-543, 573-574
Mon, May 27       Memorial Day (no class)  
Wed, May 29       Continuity and change  
Handouts  
*Fri, May 31      Final paper discussion session  
Mon/Wed, 3/5       No class  
Fri, June 7       Final papers due  

Course requirements

1. Grading
Your grade will be determined by the research paper (40%), a mid-term assignment (20%), and participation in section (40%). Assignments vary depending on whether you take this class for 3, 4 or 5 units, reflecting the required amount of work outside contact hours. This is explained in the following.

2. Research paper
The research paper counts for 40% of the final grade and deals with a topic of your choice, provided that it relates to an aspect of Roman history. We are happy to advise you on your choice of topic and relevant bibliography. Topics should be problem-driven rather than descriptive summaries (i.e., focus on ‘how’ and ‘why’ rather than ‘what’ and ‘when’). For 3 units, the paper will consist of 3,000 to 4,000 words of text; for 4 units, of 4,000-5,000 words; for 5 units, of 5,000-6,000 words (in all cases excluding the bibliography). Your arguments should ideally be based on your own interpretation of ancient primary sources and take account of divergent views in the secondary literature. (The balance between ancient and modern sources should be appropriate to the problem you choose to address, and will vary from topic to topic.)

The research paper will be completed in three steps. First, a one-page abstract outlining the general topic and the specific problems and issues to be addressed in the paper, along with a tentative bibliography of at least five items (including both books and journal articles or chapters in edited volumes) must be submitted by the end of Friday, May 10. These will be returned with comments and/or a brief discussion with the TA. Following the timely return of the abstracts, you will have until the end of Friday, May 17, to submit both an introduction and an extended outline of the final paper. Both of these preliminary assignments will be graded, according to the criteria listed on the relevant handouts (to be distributed in section). The final paper itself is due on by the end of Friday, June 7.

All deadlines are final, and no extensions will be granted except in properly documented cases of illness and other emergencies. Papers submitted at a later date will drop one grade and continue to drop a further grade every two business days thereafter.

3. Midterm assignment
The midterm assignment counts for 20% of the final grade. The mid-term paper should contain c. 1,000 words (for 3 units), c. 1,500 words (for 4 units), or c. 2,000 words (for 5 units), and will address the question ‘How democratic was the Roman Republic?’ The midterm assignment is due by the end of Friday April 26. The same penalties for late submissions apply.
4. Class participation
Class participation in sections counts for 40% of the final grade. This part of the grade will be based on the exercises, short quizzes and reports in section. Each student will present either an oral or a written report on the readings for a particular week. Oral reports should be supported by brief handouts and/or slides. Written reports should contain at least 500 (3 units), 1,000 (4 units) or 1,500 (5 units) words and must be handed in prior to the relevant session. Session attendance is mandatory and unexcused absence will be factored into the relevant portion of the final grade.

5. Students with documented disabilities
Students who may need an academic accommodation based on the impact of a disability must initiate the request with the Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC) located within the Office of Accessible Education (OAE). SDRC staff will evaluate the request with required documentation, recommend reasonable accommodations, and prepare an Accommodation Letter for faculty dated in the current quarter in which the request is being made. Students should contact the SDRC as soon as possible since timely notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. The OAE is located at 563 Salvatierra Walk (phone: 723-1066).

6. A general bibliography will be posted on Canvas.