



LOYOLA
UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

JOHN FELICE ROME CENTER

CISt 207: Art of the Roman World

Fall 2026 Tuesdays 9:00 AM-12:00 PM on-site +

Instructor: Dr. Albert Prieto (Classics, History, Archaeology), aprieto2@luc.edu

Office hours: before, during, and after class

Introduction and Course Description

This course explores the purposes, meanings, materials, and messages of visual culture in Rome, in the form of art, architecture, and urban organization, from the founding of a village on the Palatine hill in the 8th century BC to the advent of Christianity as the state religion in the early 4th century AD, when the city reached the peak of its development. Emphasis is placed on topography (= spatial organization), chronology, materials/media, and cultural identity as Rome transitions from one of hundreds of competing city-states in Italy, to preeminent power of Italy with interests overseas, to capital of an empire stretching from Spain to Syria and from Britain to North Africa. Consequent changes in the art, architecture, and urban organization of Rome are explored both synchronically (within a given period of Roman history) and diachronically (across periods) in relation to significant historical events and subtle cultural trends. Portrait busts, statuary, wall and floor surfaces, furniture, decorations, utensils of all shapes and sizes, public and private structures, and even the entire city are analyzed as reflections and conveyors of the identity, interests, aspirations, and social, economic, religious, political, and military preoccupations of the human beings who commissioned or “consumed” them.

Learning Outcomes

As a result of this course the student will be able to:

- assess how the visual language of the art and architecture of Rome, both public and private, originated, developed, and changed between ca. 750 BC and AD 350;
- identify and describe the origins, developments, and changes in terms of historical events and personalities, available resources, and internal and external cultural factors representing real and specific human needs and desires;
- describe the visual language of Roman art and architecture in Rome using both broad principles and specific examples illustrated by visits to significant preserved structures and museum collections, as well as the original context and meaning of artworks currently housed in museums;
- identify, define, and describe the most significant recent and historic research issues and methodologies in Roman art, architecture, and urban organization;
- demonstrate a basic proficiency in researching and analyzing issues pertaining to Roman art, architecture, and urban organization.

Required Textbooks and Materials

- S. L. Tuck, *A History of Roman Art*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell 2015. [Available online \(ebook\)](#)
- A. Claridge, *Rome. An Oxford Archaeological Guide*. 2nd edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press 2010. [Available online \(ebook\)](#)



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Attendance Policy

In accordance with the Rome Center mission to promote a higher level of academic rigor, and in compliance with full-time student visa status, all courses adhere to the following attendance policy.

Prompt attendance, preparation and active participation in course discussions are expected from every student and synonymous with academic success. Attendance is mandatory at every class meeting for each course. Lateness or leaving class early will impact the course grade at the professor's discretion. All absences, including medical absences, will be treated the same, unless they are documented long-term conditions or emergencies. Such situations will be evaluated case-by-case by the Academic Affairs office.

Once-a-week classes:

- **After 1 absence, a 2% final grade reduction will be applied for each missed class.**
- **Missing 3 classes or more will result in an automatic failure (F).**

Twice-a-week classes:

- After 2 absences, a 2% final grade reduction will be applied for each missed class.
- Missing 6 classes or more will result in an automatic failure (F).

Three-times-a week classes:

- After 2 absences, a 2% final grade reduction will be applied for each missed class.
- Missing 6 classes or more will result in an automatic failure (F).

Assessment Components and Schedule

Assessment	Date	%
Attendance and participation	N/A	10%
Assignment 1	9/22	15%
Mid-term examination	10/6	25%
Assignment 2	12/1	15%
Final examination	12/8	35%
TOTAL		100%

Assessment Descriptions

The mid-term examination will test the student's understanding of the major concepts covered in the first half of the course. The final examination will test the student's cumulative understanding of the material covered in the course, focusing on the second half. Both exams will be based comprehensively on notes taken during class lectures and discussions, the assignments, and the course readings.

A. The **mid-term examination** will consist of

1. a series of terms (persons, places, concepts, dates) and images to be identified



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briefly (in 2-4 sentences) in relation to their significance for the history of Roman art, architecture, and urban organization;

2. one or more images to be labeled (for example, with the names of features in a Roman city); and
3. one or more timelines of significant events or trends in the history of Roman art, architecture, and urban organization.

B. The **final examination** will consist of

1. a series of terms (persons, places, concepts, dates) and images to be identified briefly (in 2-4 sentences) in relation to their significance for the history of Roman art, architecture, and urban organization;
2. one or more images to be labeled (for example, with the names of features in a Roman city);
3. one or more timelines of significant events or trends in the history of Roman art, architecture, and urban organization; and
4. a short essay (5+ pages) addressing a theme in the history of Roman art, architecture, and/or urban organization.

C. **Assignments 1 and 2** are brief research projects relating the most important information about, and the overall significance of, **(1) a site or monument in the Roman Forum** and **(2) an object in the Capitoline Museums** (date of creation, creator, materials, notable associated events and personalities, etc.) within the context of Roman history, art, public and private architecture, and economic, social, and urban history.

For both assignments the student will

1. compose a brief written summary (minimum 3 double-spaced typed pages of text) of the research to be submitted to the instructor via Sakai or e-mail, and
2. make a brief presentation (about 5 minutes) of the research on-site.

The individual topics for the assignments will be assigned by the instructor, who will also provide guidance on research sources and expected contents.

The paper and presentation for the assignments will be evaluated on

1. the quality and depth of the research and
2. the clarity of expression, both written and oral.

The assignment papers must be submitted in standard document formats (.doc/x, .pdf, or .rtf ONLY).

Grading

The course grade scale is 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 and below = 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 familiarize yourself with Loyola's standards [here](https://catalog.luc.edu/academic-standards-regulations/undergraduate/): <https://catalog.luc.edu/academic-standards-regulations/undergraduate/>



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Students are not allowed to use AI (artificial intelligence) or other such assisted technology for any assignment or deliverable that will be graded as part of the course unless they are specifically authorized to do so by the instructor.

Students are responsible for complying with the LUC Student Handbook.

Late or Missed Assignments & Exam Policy

Late or missed assignments will not be accepted for grading without the authorization of the instructor. **As per the JFRC academic policies, students who miss any scheduled exam or quiz, including a final exam at the assigned hours will not be permitted to sit for a make-up examination without approval of the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs. Permission is given rarely and only for grave reason; travel is not considered a grave reason. Make-up exams will only be given for documented absences.**

Accessibility Accommodations

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

Statement on Title IX

The Rome Center follows Loyola's [Comprehensive Policy and Procedures for Addressing Discrimination, Sexual Misconduct, Retaliation](#) and will comply with those as indicated and instructed.

Class Policies

- All work in class will be based on lectures, readings, assignments, and discussions. As art history is by nature largely subjective and often touches sensitive subjects (race, gender, politics, religion, class, sexuality), there is a lot of room for debate, disagreement, and definition. Be curious and forthright, and always respectful.
- During class smartphones and other personal communication devices should be switched off or set to silent mode.
- Lectures may be recorded for study purposes, but only with the instructor's prior and express permission.
- Students are expected to do all of their assigned work independently.

Disruptive Behavior

The class is a particular environment in which students and faculty come together to promote learning and growth. It is essential to this learning environment that respect for the rights of others seeking to learn, respect for the professionalism of the instructor, and the general goals of academic freedom are maintained. Differences of viewpoint or concerns should be expressed in terms which are supportive of the learning process, creating an environment in which students and faculty may learn to reason with clarity and compassion, to share of themselves without losing their identities, and to develop an understanding of the community in which they live. Student conduct which disrupts the learning process will count significantly against the participation grade component and may lead to disciplinary action and/or removal from class. Disruptive behavior includes, but is not limited to, habitually:

- cross-talking or talking out of turn



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- whispering or talking to classmates
- berating or belittling classmates
- communicating with external parties in any format (phone, text message, VoIP, e-mail, etc.)
- regularly arriving to class late, prolonging breaks, or leaving class early
- being distracted by external stimuli or getting separated from the group

How to do well in this course

- Take good notes.
- Do the readings BEFORE the class in which they will be discussed.
- Jot down questions, observations, and comments about each week's readings and bring them to class, where we will review them. Chronic failure to ask questions about the readings will result in a significant reduction of the participation portion of the final grade.
- Take all assignments seriously. Do not do them at the last minute.
- See the instructor with any concerns about content, expectations, or performance.
- Be present on-time for every class.
- Participate. Ask questions and contribute to the discussion in an informed way.

The importance of the readings and class attendance cannot be over-emphasized. The readings provide both a broad context (Tuck) and specific information (Claridge), while the on-site lectures allow the student to have direct contact with the monuments and objects discussed in the readings, transforming loosely organized abstraction into structured comprehension.

On-site classes

With the exception of the first class and the examination, the course will take place at designated locations in central Rome. Every on-site class is clearly indicated in the Weekly Schedule (see below) and accompanied by a specific meeting point. At the end of every class the instructor will review the nature of the next meeting (classroom or on-site) and, if on-site, provide detailed information about the meeting point and how to reach it most efficiently.

- **Visits by family members, friends, and significant others are not allowed** during class time.
- On the day of an on-site visit, **be alert for e-mails** from the instructor containing information that may affect class, such as a change of meeting point or venue (in cases of extreme weather an on-site class may be held at the JFRC instead), or notice of a public transportation disruption. Such information will be communicated by 8:00 AM.
- **Prepare for your on-site visits.** On the day before, look at the description of the site(s) to be visited and check the weather forecast for the next day. If the majority of a class will take place outdoors, **dress appropriately for the weather:** bring a jacket, sweater/sweatshirt, rain jacket, windbreaker, sunglasses, hat, and umbrella as necessary. Museums can be cooler than outdoors, so bring an extra layer for warmth. **Wear appropriate footwear:** the cobblestone streets are notoriously hard on feet; sturdy or comfortable shoes or sandals are best, while flip-flops will slip and catch in the crevices. **Bring a water bottle**, which can be refilled as necessary from public fountains, **and snacks** (or money to purchase snacks). There will be a 15-minute break, or a series of shorter breaks, during on-site classes for coffee, snacking, restroom use, etc. Some museums and sites do not allow backpacks and employ metal detectors; in these cases the instructor will remind students to pack appropriately the day before. **Review the route to reach the meeting point** and contact the instructor before 8:00 AM if you have any questions or concerns.
- If you use public transportation, **pay attention to the people around you at all times: keep your eyes and ears open for suspicious movements and noises, and beware of "casual" or**



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“random” bodily contact – this is usually sign of a pickpocket or molester. If you are a victim of either, call attention to the situation by shouting and pointing at anyone you can **securely** identify as the person who touched you. Usually other passengers will try to stop the suspect and call the police.

- **Arrive at the meeting point at least 10 minutes early.** Class time is precious, and there is a lot of ground to cover, so we will start work at 9:00 sharp in order to finish by 12:00 sharp. Arriving early allows you to look around, take pictures, get another coffee, use the restroom, etc. **If you are running late, email the instructor by 9:00 to find out where to meet the class.**
- Once on-site, **pay attention at all times.** On-site classes will attempt to cover a lot of ground in a relatively short amount of time, so we will often move fast from location to location. If you get distracted by a cute animal, a street performer, a shop window, a delicious smell, or a passing siren, you might miss a turn and get separated from the class. Downtown Rome is very noisy and chaotic; there will be numerous stimuli competing with the instructor’s voice for your attention and your hearing. If you can’t hear the instructor clearly, move closer. Ask for an extra minute to take pictures.

Public transit information can be found online at <http://www.atac.roma.it/> ([also in English](#)).

Subject to Change Statement

This syllabus and schedule are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances. It is the student’s responsibility to check for announcements made during his/her absence.

Weekly Schedule

All readings beyond the textbooks are available as links to electronic resources from the LUC Libraries.

Week 1 9/1 Course introduction; geography and geology of Italy and Rome; resources and materials; early cultural contacts and influences

Meeting point: JFRC classroom

Readings: Tuck Ch. 2; Claridge 4-60

Week 2 9/8 Republic and triumph

Meeting point: [Largo Argentina](#) (next to the tower)

Sites: Largo Argentina sacred area, Theaters (of Pompey, Marcellus, and Balbus), Porticus of Metellus/Octavia, Temple of Apollo, Forum Holitorium, Tiber Island & bridges, Forum Boarium, Circus Maximus

Readings: Tuck Chs. 3-4; Claridge 197-204, 239-251, 253-258, 275-290

R. B. Ulrich and C. K. Quenemoen, eds., *A Companion to Roman Architecture*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell 2013.

Ch. 2 P. J. E. Davies, “Rome and Her Neighbors: Greek Building Practices in Republican Rome,” 27-44 [ONLINE](#)

Ch. 9 L. C. Lancaster and R. B. Ulrich, “Materials and Techniques,” 157-186 ([sections 1-16 only](#)) [ONLINE](#)



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N. Rosenstein and R. Morstein-Marx, eds., *A Companion to the Roman Republic*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell 2011.

Ch. 24 K. Welch, "Art and Architecture in the Roman Republic," 1034-1111 [ONLINE](#)

Week 3 9/15 Augustan Campus Martius

Meeting point: [Largo Argentina](#) (next to the tower)

Sites: Baths of Agrippa, Pantheon, Aqua Virgo, meridian of Augustus, Mausoleum of Augustus, Ara Pacis

Readings: Tuck Ch. 5; Claridge 204-216, 222-223

J. Coulston and H. Dodge, eds., *Ancient Rome: The Archaeology of the Eternal City*. Oxford: Oxford University School of Archaeology, 2000.

Ch. 4 S. Walker, "The Moral Museum: Augustus and the City of Rome," 61-75 [ONLINE](#)

K. Galinsky, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Augustus*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2005.

Ch. 10 D. Favro, "Making Rome a World City," 234-263 [ONLINE](#)

Week 4 9/22 From Republic to Empire – **Assignment 1 due**

Meeting point: [Piazza del Campidoglio](#) (next to the bronze statue at center)

Sites: Roman Forum

Readings: Claridge 63-123

R. B. Ulrich and C. K. Quenemoen, eds., *A Companion to Roman Architecture*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell 2013.

Ch. 3 I. Nielsen, "Creating Imperial Architecture," 45-62 [ONLINE](#)

Week 5 9/29 Rome 2.0; review for mid-term exam

Meeting point: [Piazza del Campidoglio](#) (next to the bronze statue at center)

Sites: Imperial Forums & Museum

Readings: Tuck Chs. 6-7; Claridge 161-196

Week 6 10/6 Mid-term examination

Meeting point: JFRC classroom

Week 7 10/13 Fall Break **NO CLASS**

Week 8 10/20 Capital of Empire

Meeting point: [Piazza del Campidoglio](#) (next to the bronze statue at center)

Sites: Palatine hill, Domus Aurea, and Colosseum (exterior)

Readings: Claridge 125-159, 301-308, 341-344, 349-350

R. B. Ulrich and C. K. Quenemoen, eds., *A Companion to Roman Architecture*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell 2013.

Ch. 4 C. K. Quenemoen, "Columns and Concrete: Architecture from Nero to Hadrian," 63-81 [ONLINE](#)



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E Buckley and M. Dinter, eds., *A Companion to the Neronian Age*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell 2013.

Ch. 19 H.-J. Beste and H. von Hesberg, "Buildings of an Emperor – How Nero Transformed Rome," 314-331 [ONLINE](#)

A. Zissos, ed., *A Companion to the Flavian Age of Imperial Rome*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell 2015.

Ch. 8 A. B. Gallia, "Remaking Rome," 148-165 [ONLINE](#)

F 10/23 midterm grades due

Week 9 10/27 Imperial Campus Martius

Meeting point: [Largo Argentina](#) (next to the tower)

Sites: Pantheon, Stadium of Domitian, Column of Marcus Aurelius, Temple of Divine Hadrian, Mausoleum of Hadrian/Castel Sant'Angelo

Readings: Tuck Chs. 8-9; Claridge 216-221, 223-239, 410-415

Week 10 11/3 Entertainment and leisure

Meeting point: [Piazza del Colosseo](#) (near base of the Colossus of Sol)

Sites: Colosseum (exterior), Circus Maximus, Baths of Caracalla

Readings: Tuck Ch. 10; Claridge 299-300, 312-319, 324-328, 357-365

J. Coulston and H. Dodge, eds., *Ancient Rome: The Archaeology of the Eternal City*. Oxford: Oxford University School of Archaeology, 2000.

Ch. 9 K. Coleman, "Entertaining Rome," 210-258 [ONLINE](#)

R. B. Ulrich and C. K. Quenemoen, eds., *A Companion to Roman Architecture*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell 2013.

Ch. 5 E. V. Thomas, "The Severan Period," 82-105 [ONLINE](#)

P. Christesen and D. G. Kyle, eds., *A Companion to Sport and Spectacle in Greek and Roman Antiquity*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell 2013.

Ch. 28 S. L. Tuck, "Representations of Spectacle and Sport in Roman Art," 422-437 [ONLINE](#)

Week 11 11/10 Infrastructure and cemeteries

Meeting point: [corner of Viale Aventino and Piazza di Porta Capena](#) (in front of FAO building)

Sites: Neronian aqueduct, Museo della Forma Urbis, Servian wall, pyramid of Cestius, Aurelian wall, Testaccio

Readings: Claridge 383-387, 397-405

J. Coulston and H. Dodge, eds., *Ancient Rome: The Archaeology of the Eternal City*. Oxford: Oxford University School of Archaeology, 2000.

Ch. 8 H. Dodge, "'Greater Than the Pyramids': The Water Supply of Ancient Rome," 166-209 [ONLINE](#)

Ch. 10 J. R. Patterson, "Living and Dying in the City of Rome: Houses and Tombs," 259-289 [ONLINE](#)



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E. A. Friedland, M. Grunow Sobocinski, and E. K. Gazda, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Sculpture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press 2015.

B. C. Ewald, "Funerary Monuments" [ONLINE](#)

Week 12 11/17 Late empire and Christian transformation

Meeting point: [Piazza del Colosseo](#), near Colossus base

Sites: New Basilica, Temple of Venus & Roma, Arch of Constantine, Basilica of S. Clemente

Readings: Tuck Chs. 11-12; Claridge 291-294, 308-312, 373-377

B. E. Borg, ed., *A Companion to Roman Art*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell 2015.

Ch. 7 A. Bravi, "The Art of Late Antiquity" [ONLINE](#)

Week 13 11/24 National Roman Museum

Meeting point: [Piazza della Repubblica](#) (in front of Basilica of S. Maria degli Angeli)

Sites: Baths of Diocletian & National Roman Museum at Palazzo Massimo

Readings: Claridge 391-396, 481-485

B. E. Borg, ed., *A Companion to Roman Art*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell 2015. [ONLINE](#)

Ch. 12 J. Feifer, "Roman Portraits"

Ch. 13 K. Lorenz, "Roman Painting"

Ch. 14 R. Ling, "Mosaics"

Ch. 15 M. Koortboojian, "Roman Sarcophagi"

Ch. 16 F. Sinn, "Decorative Art"

Week 14 12/1 Capitoline Museums – **Assignment 2 due**; review for final exam

Meeting point: [Piazza del Campidoglio](#) (next to Marcus Aurelius statue at center)

Sites: Capitoline Museums

Readings: Tuck Ch. 1; Claridge 259-273, 460-469

B. E. Borg, ed., *A Companion to Roman Art*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell 2015.

Ch. 7 A. Bravi, "The Art of Late Antiquity" [ONLINE](#)

E. A. Friedland, M. Grunow Sobocinski, and E. K. Gazda, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Sculpture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press 2015. [ONLINE](#)

E. R. Varner, "Reuse and Recarving: Technical Evidence"

C. C. Mattusch, "Bronzes"

M. B. Abbe, "Polychromy"

B. Longfellow, "Architectural Settings"

E. E. Perry, "Human Interactions with Statues"

E. Marlowe, *Shaky Ground: Context, Connoisseurship and the History of Roman Art*. London: Bloomsbury, 2013.

"Introduction: Contradictions," 1-11 (PDF on Sakai)

Week 15 12/8 Final examination

Meeting point: classroom 9:00-11:00