



LOYOLA
UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

JOHN FELICE ROME CENTER

ClSt 276: World of Classical Rome

Spring 2026 Wednesdays 2:30-5:30 PM on-site + **Sala Addis**

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

Office hours: before, during, and after class

Introduction and Course Description

This course surveys Rome's history, from ca. 500 BC to ca. AD 400, which saw Roman power and culture expand to cover first Italy and eventually the area from Spain to Syria and from Britain to North Africa, embracing approximately 50 million people. This period includes the epochal transformation of the Roman state from an oligarchic republic led by the aristocratic senate to a military dictatorship led by the emperor. The focus will be the persons, events, activities, attitudes, and structures that most directly contributed to Rome's numerous successes and failures. Some attention will also be given to the centuries preceding the core period covered, in order to understand how Rome was permanently influenced by its origins and the challenges it faced as it acquired control of Italy, and even to the difficult times that followed, which offer important perspective on Rome's achievements and historical impact.

Although most of the course will necessarily be based on the study of names, dates, circumstances, and motives forming the political and social framework required for the comprehension of history, the course will also address broader cultural issues such as religion, gender, ethnicity, slavery, social and physical mobility, occupations, and the ancient economy, in order to illustrate the variety of investigative approaches used to reconstruct a fuller picture of Roman history and civilization. To this end the course will introduce the student to the major sources of information and evidence for Roman "daily life" and "social history," including non-historical literary texts, inscriptions, coins, and other material evidence obtained via archaeological techniques.

Finally, the course leverages the JFRC's location, offering the student a unique opportunity to become familiar with the art, architecture, and urban organization of ancient Rome itself. By the end of the course, the student will understand and appreciate the city as the clearest and most direct expression of Roman culture and civilization.

Learning Outcomes

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

- identify and define the major figures, accomplishments, attitudes, events, institutions, trends, questions, and concerns representing the history, culture, and social, economic, political, and religious organization of Rome and the Roman world between approximately 500 BC and AD 400;
- explain and critically analyze the role(s) that each of these accomplishments, events, attitudes, institutions, figures, trends, questions, and concerns had in, and their effect(s) on, the history and development of the city of Rome and the Roman world during this period, both singly/individually and corporately, in both general and specific terms;
- identify, describe, and critically analyze the various sources available for the reconstruction of Roman history and culture/civilization;
- identify, describe, and analyze the most significant areas and artistic and architectural monuments of ancient Rome in terms of their forms, materials, techniques, meaning, and historical context;



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- apply critical analytical skills to historical, chronological, and cultural issues and questions in clear and concise language.

Required Textbooks and Materials

- P. Aicher, *Rome Alive. A Source-guide to the Ancient City*. Vol. 1. Wauconda: Bolchazy-Carducci 2004. JFRC IC Main Stacks DG13.A37 2004 and [Internet Archive](#) (free, requires registration)
- A. Claridge, *Rome. An Oxford Archaeological Guide*. 2nd edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press 2010. [Available online \(ebook\)](#)
- D. Shotter, *Rome and Her Empire*. London & New York: Routledge 2014. [Available online \(ebook\)](#)
- [Yorescape](#) virtual tour platform by Flyover Zone (**1-year subscription \$29.99**)

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%
Mid-term examination	3/4	25%
Yorescape reflection/reaction papers (x6)	Various	30%
Final examination	4/29	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 briefly (in 2-4 sentences) in relation to their significance for Roman history and civilization;
2. one or more images to be labeled (for example, with the names of features in Rome); and
3. one or more timelines of significant events or trends in Roman history and civilization.

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 Roman history and civilization;
2. one or more images to be labeled (for example, with the names of features in Rome);
3. one or more timelines of significant events or trends in Roman history and civilization; and
4. a short essay (5+ pages) addressing a theme in Roman history and civilization.

C. The **reflection papers** require the student to consume the six virtual tours of sites in ancient Rome available on the Yorescape platform. In each paper, the student will answer a set of prepared questions and/or respond to a prompt in a minimum of two pages (double-spaced, 11-point font).

The reflection papers will be evaluated on

1. the quality and depth of the research (= engagement with the tour) and
2. the clarity of the writing (spelling, grammar, expression).

The reflection 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 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:



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- cross-talking or talking out of turn
- 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 (Shotter) and specific information (Claridge), while the on-site lectures allow the student to have direct contact with the concepts discussed in the readings, transforming loosely organized abstraction into structured comprehension.

On-site classes

Approximately half of 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 in the morning.
- **Prepare for your on-site visits.** In the morning, look at the description of the site(s) to be visited and check the weather forecast for the 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 noon if you have any questions or concerns.



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- 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 “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 2:30 sharp in order to finish by 5:30 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 before 2:30 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 1/21 Course introduction; history of Rome from the foundation through the Early Republic

Meeting point: JFRC classroom

Readings: Aicher sections 1-3; Shotter Chs. 1-2; Claridge 4-60 (skim)

Week 2 1/28 ON-SITE

Sites visited: Largo Argentina sacred area, Temple of Apollo, Sant’Omobono sacred area, Capitoline Hill & Museums

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

Readings: Aicher sections 6, 9-12, 15, 18-20, 81-82, 103, 111-112; Claridge 260-262, 277-279, 282-284

Week 3

W 2/4 The Middle and Late Republic

Meeting point: JFRC classroom

Readings: Shotter Chs. 3-4



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F 2/6 ON-SITE

Sites visited: Largo Argentina sacred area, Porticus of Metellus, Theaters of Pompey and Marcellus, Forum Boarium, Circus Maximus, Tiber Island and bridges

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

Readings: Aicher sections 86-87, 98, 101-102, 104-110, 113, 115, 119-120; Claridge 239-246, 253-258, 275-277, 279-282, 285-288

Week 4 2/11 From Republic to Empire

Meeting point: JFRC classroom

Readings: Shotter Ch. 5

Week 5 2/18 Papal audience **NO CLASS**

YORESCAPE PAPER 1 DUE (Roman Forum)

Week 6 2/25 ON-SITE

Sites visited: Baths of Agrippa, Saeptra Julia, Aqua Virgo, Pantheon, Meridian of Augustus, Mausoleum of Augustus, Altar of Peace; review for mid-term exam

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

Readings: Aicher sections 83, 88, 90, 94-96; Claridge 204-216, 222-223, 226-233

YORESCAPE PAPER 2 DUE (Pantheon)

Week 7 3/4 Mid-term examination

Meeting point: JFRC classroom

Week 8 Spring Break **NO CLASS**

Week 9 3/18 The Early and High Empire

Meeting point: JFRC classroom

Readings: Shotter Chs. 6-8

Week 10 3/25 ON-SITE

Sites visited: Roman Forum, Palatine Hill, Imperial Forums, Colosseum

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

Readings: Aicher sections 21-69, 73-80; Claridge 63-196

YORESCAPE PAPER 3 DUE (Colosseum District)

Week 11 4/1 The Severans and the Crisis of the Third Century

Meeting point: JFRC classroom

Readings: Shotter pp. 359-400



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Week 12 4/8 ON-SITE

Sites visited: Colosseum, Caelian Antiquarium, Baths of Caracalla, Circus Maximus, Walls of Servius Tullius and Aurelian, Pyramid of Cestius

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

Readings: Aicher sections 4-5, 70, 127-128, 130; Claridge 299-308, 312-319, 357-365, 397-401

YORESCAPE PAPER 4 DUE (Baths of Caracalla)

Week 13 4/15 The End of Antiquity

Meeting point: JFRC classroom

Readings: Shotter pp. 400-434

YORESCAPE PAPER 5 DUE 11/30 (Flight over Ancient Rome)

Week 14 4/22 ON-SITE

Sites visited: New Basilica, Arch of Constantine, Basilica of S. Clemente, Capitoline Museums; review for the final exam

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

Readings: Aicher section 71; Claridge 115-117, 308-312, 319-323

YORESCAPE PAPER 6 DUE (Basilica of Maxentius)

Week 15 4/29 Final examination

Meeting point: JFRC classroom, 11:30-1:30