

**Gonzaga-in-Florence**  
Fall term 2011  
**HIST 391: Etruscans and Romans (3 credits)**

Professor **Erika Bianchi**  
[erikabianchi3@libero.it](mailto:erikabianchi3@libero.it)

Mon/Wed, 2 - 3:30 pm

**Course description**

**Description:** This course is a dynamic survey of the extraordinary history, culture and society of two of the most important civilizations of the ancient Mediterranean, the Etruscans and the Romans. To unravel the historical significance of these two great races we will look at literature and religion, urbanism and architecture, art and philosophy. When possible, we will give a privileged place to primary sources in translation, letting the characters of this great historical drama speak for themselves. Lectures will be complemented by site visits (to Etruscan and Roman sites in and outside Florence) and a special class field trip to Rome with your instructor to explore sites at first hand in the Eternal City, including the forum, the Colosseum and the Palatine hill.

The first half of term focuses on the Etruscans, a fascinating and ‘mysterious’ civilization whose great cities occupied the area of modern Tuscany and northern Lazio in Italy. As their language remains mostly undeciphered, they are known to us primarily from the remains of their material culture, and so our investigation of the Etruscans draws on a wide range of sources, from the views of Greek and Roman authors, their funerary monuments, inscriptions, monumental architecture and pottery styles. We will study the emergence of Etruscan cities from the Villanovan Iron Age through their domination of the neighboring city of Rome as independent political entities and their eventual eclipse under Roman expansion. This will lead us to a multi-disciplinary examination of the different aspects of cultural contact, highlighting the extent of the Etruscan influence on their conquerors, the Romans.

In the second half of the course our concern is with the history and culture of the Roman world, from its beginnings in myth and legend through its rise to domination of the Mediterranean world, its violent conversion from a Republic to an Empire, and the long success of that Empire down to its collapse in the fifth century A.D. We will focus not only on the development of Roman institutions and Rome’s political system, but also on the social structure of the Roman Empire and the daily life of its people.

**Learning Objectives:**

- to define the basic events of Etruscan and Roman History, becoming familiar with the daily life, values and social attitudes of both ancient civilizations
- to trace the origins of many aspects of Western European culture and of modern Western society in general
- to place artworks and other archaeological evidence in the context that created them
- to critically analyze the political, religious and intellectual heritage of Roman society and use it as a means of interpreting the human experience through history

- to translate historical knowledge from the narrow focus of the course to the much wider context of being active and acquainted citizens of today's world

**Instructional Format:** Class meets twice a week for 14 weeks. Our lectures will be supplemented by slide shows, in-class workshops and discussions, visits to museums and archaeological sites of interests, videos, and a field trip to Rome.

Participation in the field trip is mandatory. Missing it will result in an absence.

**Form of Assessment:** Reading, class participation, written work and a class presentation are all required of students. Your grade will be calculated to reflect your attendance and participation (including your ability to discuss issues raised by reading or written assignments and to give your contribution in a workshop), a mid-term exam, an oral presentation (including an illustrated handout), and a final exam. The content, criteria and specific requirements for each assessment category will be explained in greater detail in class. However, you must complete all grading assessment categories to receive a grade for this course.

Class Participation	10%
Oral Presentation (and illustrated handout)	25%
Workshop	15%
Midterm Exam	25%
Final Exam	25%

Class Participation (10%): The grade will be calculated to reflect your participation in class discussions, your capacity to introduce ideas and thoughts dealing with the texts, your ability to interpret different uses of literary language and to express your analysis in intellectual, constructive argumentation. When determining your class participation grade, traditional criteria such as material preparation, completed reading before class, and collaborative group work are also evaluated. But it is the active, meaningful and informed verbal and written contribution that you make that is most important to your overall participation grade. Whereas attendance and punctuality are expected and will not count positively towards the grade, laxity in these areas will have a negative effect on your grade.

Oral presentation (25%): The presentation focuses on a work of art (a statue, a vase, a collection of pottery etc.) to be chosen among the pieces collected in the Archaeological Museum of Florence. You will be expected to choose the object of your presentation from a list of works of art (illustrated by a slide show) that will be handed out on the second week of class. Your choice of the museum piece should be made using books/articles available in the library, as well as the Internet. Depending on the number of students and the composition of the class, you will work on single pieces individually, in pairs or in groups.

Once you've chosen or been assigned a piece, you're ready to begin your research. On the class before the presentation day, we'll visit the Archaeological Museum of Florence together. After an introductory lecture, you'll have time to study your work of art *in situ*. Remember to take your notebook and your camera with you. Focus on the characteristics of your piece, its layout, its historical relevance. Write an interpretative essay that can help you in your presentation. With the help of library

resources and electronic articles, prepare a 15-20 minutes oral presentation, to give on the following day of class.

Workshop: The Roman Republic and its Political Legacy to Modern Western Civilizations (15%). The American Constitution of the Founding Fathers is strongly based on the Constitution of the Roman Republic. In order to critically analyze similarities and differences between the ancient and modern political systems, students will read Polybius 6.11.11-6.18.3, search for web resources on the Constitution of the USA, complete the class written assignment provided by the instructor and participate in a class discussion on the topic.

Midterm and Final Exam (25% each): The midterm and final exams will be based on lectures and on the assigned readings. The midterm exam will cover the material studied up to that time, and the final exam will cover the material studied after the midterm. The general format of both exams will be multiple choice, fill-in-the-blanks, matching short answers, maps, planes and slides identification.

**Attendance Policy:** Every student is expected to attend all scheduled class sessions on time and be thoroughly prepared for the day's class activities. A maximum of two days of accumulated absences due to sickness, personal emergency, inevitable transport delay and other related impediments will be tolerated.

**Required Readings:** The required readings come from a course reader that students will have to purchase before the first day of class, and that contains a number of different materials necessary for the course such as maps, tables and primary sources in translation as well as material from the books listed below:

Christiansen, E., *A History of Rome*, Copenhagen, 2004.

Davies Lloyd, M., *Polybius and the Founding Fathers: the Separation of Power*, <http://www.mlloyd.org/mdl-indx/polybius/intro.htm>, 1999

Goodman, M., *The Roman World*, Routledge 1997.

Grant, M., *The Ancient Mediterranean*, New York, 1969.

Haynes, S., *Etruscan Civilization*, London, 2000.

Heurgon, J., *Daily Life of the Etruscans*, New York, 1964.

Le Glay, M., J. L. Voisin and Y. Le Bohec, *A History of Rome*, 4th edition, Blackwell, 2009.

Scarre, C., *Chronicle of the Roman Emperors*, Thames & Hudson, 2000.

Scullard, H.H., *The Etruscan cities and Rome*, New York, 1998.

Spivey, N., *Etruscan Art*, London, 1996.

Ramage, N. and A., *Roman Art: Romulus to Constantine*, 2004.

**Etruscans & Romans  
Course Content**

Session	Topic	Student Assignment
Week 1 Mon, Sept 19 Wed, Sept 21	<b>Introduction to Course</b> Setting the Historical & Geographical Context: Greeks, Etruscans & Romans	<b>Readings:</b> Reader pp. 5-10 (Grant, 231-41)
	Earliest Italy: Pre-Roman background, Villanovan & Etruscan Origins	<b>Readings:</b> Reader pp. 11- 20 (Her. I, 94; Grant, 241-8)
Week 2 Mon, Sept 26 Wed, Sept 28	Art among the Etruscans: bucchero pottery, jewelry and sculpture	<b>Readings:</b> Reader pp. 21-8 (Spivey, 25-39); 52-4
	Funerary art 1: the Cerveteri tombs	<b>Readings:</b> Reader pp. 29-37 (Haynes, 71-9)
Week 3 Mon, Oct 3 Wed, Oct 5	Funerary art 2: the Tarquinia tombs	<b>Readings:</b> Reader pp. 38-51 (Haynes, 221-33; 185-7)
	Etruscan "Mysteries" : Language, Literacy & Literature	Students must start preparing for oral presentations, due in a week. <b>Reading:</b> Spivey, 149-82 (library).
Week 4 Mon, Oct 10 Wed, Oct 12	The Archaeological Museum of Florence <b>SITE VISIT CLASS</b>	Oral presentations and paper due next class
	<b>STUDENTS' ORAL PRESENTATIONS:</b> Etruscan treasures (Chimaera, François vase, Orator etc.)	<b>Readings:</b> Reader pp. 58-70 (Scullard, 221-242).
Week 5 Mon, Oct 17 Wed, Oct 19	The Settlement & Rise of Etruria: The social structures	<b>Readings:</b> Reader pp. 71-8 (Heurgon, 34-7; Christiansen, 57-65)
	The mythical origins of Rome The foundation legends	<b>Readings:</b> Reader pp. 79-88 (Professor's material + Dionysius' and Livy's accounts + Christiansen, 65-9)
Week 6 Mon, Oct 24  Wed, Oct 26	From the Seven Kings to the Republic: Rome's expansion and Imperialism	<b>Readings:</b> Reader pp. 89-97 (Le Glay <i>et al.</i> , 26-39; 90-9)
	Etruscan and Roman Fiesole and the birth of Roman Florence	<b>Readings:</b> Reader pp. 98-100 Leonardo Bruni <i>History of the Florentine people</i> , XII. 19
Week 7 Mon, Oct 31 Wed, Nov 2	<b>Review and MIDTERM EXAM</b>	<b>Readings:</b> Reader pp. 101-4 (Polybius 6.1-18)

Week 8 Mon, Nov 7 Wed, Nov 9	<b>WORKSHOP:</b> The Roman Republic and its Political legacy to modern Western civilizations	<b>Readings:</b> Reader pp. 105-7 (Scarre, 8-11). <b>Suggested reading:</b> Le Glay <i>et alii</i> , 209-224; 244-49, library
	From Republic to Empire	<b>Readings:</b> Reader pp. 108-14 (Christiansen, 119-31)
Week 9 Mon, Nov 14 Wed, Nov 16	Augustus to Nero	<b>Readings:</b> Reader pp. 115-20 (Ramage 116-21)
	The Flavians	<b>Readings:</b> Reader pp. 121- 136 (Professor's material + Suetonius and Tacitus' accounts + Ramage 155-164)
<b>Friday, Nov 18th</b>	<b>FIELD TRIP TO ROME</b>	
<b>Mon, Nov 21 Class cancelled for the field trip to Rome</b>		
<b>Wed. November 23<sup>rd</sup>-Fri 25<sup>th</sup> THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY (no class)</b>		
Week 11 Mon, Nov 28 Wed, Nov 30	The Antonines and the Golden Age of the Roman Empire	<b>Readings:</b> Reader pp. 137-56 (Ramage 188-97; 213-16 + Professor's material)
	Life in ancient Pompeii and the 79 AD eruption of Vesuvius	<b>Readings:</b> Reader pp. 160-8 (Pliny the Younger, Book 6, letters 16-20)
Week 12 Mon, Dec 5 Wed, Dec 7	The fall of Rome. Conclusions	<b>Readings:</b> Reader pp. 169-74 Christiansen, pp. 158-181
	<b>Review class</b>	
<b>April 12-16</b>	<b>FINAL EXAM WEEK</b>	