

HISTORY 313: THE FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE, 300-700 CE

Prof. Ariel López

Classes : Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:30-10:45 am in PALMER 210

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Office hours: TBA

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course will explore the transformations of the Mediterranean world from the late third century to the seventh century C.E. Major themes to be discussed include the fall of the western Roman empire, the barbarian invasions, the Christianization of the Roman empire, the emergence of monasticism and the cult of the saints, and the rise of Islam. Major characters will include, for example, Constantine, Augustine of Hippo, Attila the Hun, Stilicho, Benedict of Nursia or Muhammad. We will place these characters against a concrete social, geographical and archaeological context.

GENERAL POLICIES:

This class will consist of lectures and discussions. Attendance is mandatory. I allow three unexcused absences for the semester. Each additional unexcused absence will result in the decrease of three whole points from your overall grade. Laptops are not permitted in class unless you have a special dispensation from the college.

I expect you to come to class having read the assigned readings so that we can discuss them, you can ask meaningful questions and answer mine.

GRADING:

Your course grade will be calculated as follows (A = 100-93; A- = 92-90; B+ = 89-88; B = 87-83; B- = 82-80; C+ = 79-78; C = 77-73; C- = 72-70; D+ = 69-68; D = 67-63; D- = 62-60; F = 59 and below):

15% quizzes and participation (this includes your presentation and attendance)

30% midterm exam

30% final exam – Friday May 3rd 8:30 am

25% final paper (assignments to be given later in the semester) – Due on **X**

ASSIGNED TEXTS:

P. Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity*. Norton, 1989.

P. Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom*. Second Edition. Blackwell, 2003. [this has to be the SECOND EDITION]

Other readings marked with an asterisk will be posted in Moodle.

SCHEDULE:

1. Thursday, Jan. 10th: **Introduction to the course.**

2. Tuesday, Jan. 15th: **The Roman Empire**

- WLA, 7-21
- *Aelius Aristides, *Panegyric on Rome*

3. Thursday, Jan. 17th: **Christianity in the Roman Empire**

- WLA, 49-69
- RWC, 58-71
- *Eusebius of Caesarea, *Selections from the Ecclesiastical History*

4. Tuesday, Jan. 22nd: **The Third Century Crisis and Diocletian**

- WLA, 22-33
- RWC, 54-58
- *Lactantius, *On the death of the persecutors*

5. Thursday, Jan. 24th: **Constantine and his Religious Revolution**

- WLA, 34-48; 82-95
- *Zosimus, *New History*, Book 2, selections
- *Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, selections

6. Tuesday, Jan. 29th: **The New Empire: Court, Bureaucracy, and Army**

- *Peter Brown, *Power and Persuasion*, pp. 8-34
- *John Lydus, *On the magistracies*, selections

- *Theodosian Code*, selections

7. Thursday, Jan. 31st: **The Catholic Church**

- RWC, 72-84
- *Theodosian Code, *Selections*
- *Palladius, *Dialogue on the Life of John Chrysostom*, selections

8. Tuesday, Feb. 5th: **Julian and Theodosius: the two sides of the fourth century**

- *Julian, *The Beard Hater*
- *P. Brown, *Power and Persuasion*, pp. 103-114

9. Thursday, Feb. 7th: **The struggle against paganism and the Christianization of society**

- WLA, 70-81
- RWC, 84-92
- *Libanius of Antioch, *For the temples*

10. Tuesday, Feb. 12th: **Monasticism**

- WLA, 96-113
- *Theodoret of Cyrillus, *History of the Monks of Syria*, selections
- *Palladius, *Lausiac History*, selections

11. Thursday, Feb. 14th: **The Cult of the Saints**

- *Ambrose of Milan, Letter XXII
- *Augustine of Hippo, *Confessions*, VI.2 and IX.15-16
- *Gregory of Tours, *Miracles of St. Martin*, selections
- *Jerome, *Against Vigilantius*

12. Tuesday, Feb. 19th: **Rome in Late Antiquity**

- *Ammianus Marcellinus, *History*, selections
- *Jerome, Letter 22, *To Eustochium*
- *Olympiodorus of Thebes, *Fragment on the wealth of Roman senators*
- *Symmachus, *Petition to emperors for the altar of victory*

13. Thursday, Feb. 21st: **Constantinople in Late Antiquity**

14. Tuesday, Feb. 26th: **Review**

15. Thursday, Feb. 28th: **MIDTERM EXAM**

16. Tuesday, March 5th: **The Barbarians and the Empire**

- RWC, 43-52
- *Panegyric on Constantius

17. Thursday, March 7th: **The military crisis I: from Adrianople to the sack of Rome**

- WLA, 114-125

- *Ammianus Marcellinus, *History*, Section on the Battle of Adrianople
- *Zosimus, *New History*, Books 5-6, Selections

18. Tuesday, March 19th: **Attila, the Huns and the end of the western empire**

- RWC, 93-115
- *Priscus, *Mission to Attila*

19. Thursday, March 21st: **A world with open frontiers**

- RWC, chapter 5
- *Patrick of Ireland, *Confession and Letter to Coroticus*

20. Tuesday, March 26th: **The Barbarian Kingdoms: a world of Romans without Rome**

- WLA, 126-135
- RWC, chapter 6
- *Gregory of Tours, *History of the Franks*, selections

21. Thursday, March 28th: **The Roman East and the Age of Justinian**

- WLA, 137-159
- *Procopius, *Secret History*, selections

22. Tuesday, April 2nd: **The Sassanian Empire**

- WLA, 160-171
- *al-Tabari, *History*, selections

23. Tuesday, April 9th: **Eastern Christianities**

- RWC, chapter 7
- RWC, 267-285

24. Thursday, April 11th: **Western Christianities**

- RWC, chapters 10-11

25. Tuesday, April 16th: **The Rise of Islam**

- WLA, 188-203
- RWC, 285-294
- *Ibn Ishak, *The Life of Muhammad*, selections

26. Thursday, April 18th: **Islam conquers the world**

- RWC, chapter 13
- **The Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*

27. Tuesday, April 23rd: **A medieval world**

- WLA, 172-187
- RWC, chapter 9

28. Thursday, April 25th: **Review**

FINAL EXAM: Friday, May 3rd, 8:30 am