

History 1030:
The Long Fall of the Roman Empire
SYLLABUS

Prof. Jonathan P. Conant

Wilson Hall 101
TuTh 10:30-11:50 p.m.
Fall 2014

The collapse of the Roman Empire was the crucible in which the cultures of the medieval West, Byzantium, and Islam were forged. This class examines the tensions and transformations within Mediterranean society between AD 250 and 1000 and how these tribulations gave birth to new identities, boundaries, economies, and religious beliefs. We will explore too the points of contact between the emerging Latin, Byzantine, and Islamic worlds and how people living in the late ancient and early medieval Mediterranean sought to devise solutions to the challenges that confronted them as their worlds collapsed, expanded, and changed. The class will also take us inside the historian's workshop, exposing us to the tools, texts, and objects from which historians construct their interpretations of the late Roman and medieval past. Class meetings will interweave narrative and thematic lectures with student analysis of primary sources in translation. Topics include barbarian invasions and the fall of the Western Roman Empire; the rise of Islam; the early medieval Papacy; Justinian; Charlemagne; the Vikings; slavery; sanctity and monasticism.

GETTING IN TOUCH:

E-mail: Jonathan_Conant@Brown.edu Office Hours: Tu 1:00–2:00 p.m. at Annmary Brown
Phone: x3-5121 Memorial, 21 Brown St.
Office: Peter Green House (PGH) 010, Th 1:30–3:30 p.m. at PGH 010, and by
79 Brown St. appointment
Teaching Assistants: Amiri Ayanna (Amiria_Ayanna@Brown.edu)
Sam Caldis (Sam_Caldis@Brown.edu)

REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING:

1. Informed participation, preparation of required readings, and periodic quizzes and short written assignments on weekly readings (as assigned): 20%
2. Written assignments:
 - A project proposal or a pre-paper (2½ pages) presenting a historical critique of a late Roman or early medieval primary source in translation, chosen in consultation with the teaching staff: 10%
 - A final project or a term paper (10 pages) that will develop, deepen and extend the analysis of the primary source critiqued in the pre-paper: 25%
3. Exams:
 - One midterm examination: 20%
 - Final examination: 25%

SECTIONS: *Sections are required.* Section assignments will be worked out in the second week of class

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GRADUATE STUDENTS: In lieu of the requirements detailed above, graduate students taking the class for credit will be asked to prepare the assigned readings, take part in weekly discussions, and produce a substantial piece of written research. They will also be expected to read three additional scholarly books on different aspects of the late ancient or early medieval world, to be selected in consultation with Prof. Conant, and to meet three times during the semester for 1½ to 2 hours per meeting to discuss this additional reading. Interested students should contact Prof. Conant as soon as possible to work out the precise details.

REQUIRED TEXTS AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE:

The following texts will be available for purchase at the Brown Bookstore:

Basil of Caesarea, *On Social Justice*, trans. C. Paul Schroeder (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2009). ISBN: 0-881-41053-5. Price: \$15.00 new

Einhard, *Life of Charlemagne*, trans. Sidney Painter (Ann Arbor: U. of Michigan P., 1960). ISBN: 0-472-06035-X. Price: \$13.95 new

Prokopios, *The Secret History*, trans. Anthony Kaldellis (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 2010). ISBN: 1-603-84180-6. Price: \$13.95 new

Bryan Ward-Perkins, *The Fall of Rome and the End of Civilization* (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 2005). ISBN: 0192807285. Price: \$19.99 new

Chris Wickham, *The Inheritance of Rome: Illuminating the Dark Ages 400-1000* (New York: Penguin, 2010). ISBN: 0-143-11742-4. Price: \$20.00 new

You may be able to find these books (new or used) for less through an online vendor such as amazon.com. Readings not available for purchase will be available online through e-reserves.

For students who have never studied Roman history, I would also recommend: Christopher Kelly, *The Roman Empire: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2006), ISBN 0-19280-391-3, price \$9.95 new.

LECTURE PLAN

*** Please come to class prepared to discuss the readings on the day indicated ***

Week 1

1. Sept. 4 Introduction

Week 2

2. Sept. 9 "The Immeasurable Majesty of the Roman Peace"
Reading: Suetonius, "Life of Augustus" (e-reserves)
3. Sept. 11 The Roman World in Crisis
Reading: Wickham, *Inheritance*, pp. 3-49

Week 3

4. Sept. 16 The Christian Empire
Reading: Eusebius, *Life of Constantine* (e-reserves); Wickham, *Inheritance*, pp. 50-75
5. Sept. 18 SECTION 1: The Early Persecutions
Reading: Martyrdom Accounts (e-reserves)

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Week 4

- 6. Sept. 23 The Bishop and His City
- 7. Sept. 25 SECTION 2: Poverty and Leadership
Reading: Basil of Caesarea, *On Social Justice* (complete)

Week 5

- 8. Sept. 30 Barbarians
Reading: Ammianus Marcellinus, "The Battle of Hadrianopolis" (e-reserves); Wickham, *Inheritance*, pp. 76-108 and 150-169
- 9. Oct. 2 SECTION 3: The Sack of Rome, 410
Reading: Sources on the sack of Rome (e-reserves)

Week 6

- 10. Oct. 7 Romans and Non-Romans in the New Mediterranean
- 11. Oct. 9 SECTION 4: The End of Civilization?
Reading: Ward-Perkins, *Fall of Rome* (complete)

Week 7

- 12. Oct. 14 Globalism, Localism, and the Making of the Middle Ages
Reading: Wickham, *Inheritance*, pp. 202-251

- 13. Oct. 16 **Midterm**

Week 8

- 14. Oct. 21 Rome Restored?
- 15. Oct. 23 SECTION 5: Justinian and Theodora
Reading: Prokopios, *Secret History* (complete)

Week 9

- 16. Oct. 28 Religion and Society in the Sixth and Seventh Centuries
Reading: *The Rule of St. Benedict* (e-reserves); Wickham, *Inheritance*, pp. 170-202 and 255-278
- 17. Oct. 30 Islam
Reading: "Islam" (e-reserves); Wickham, *Inheritance*, pp. 279-297
➤ **Pre-paper or project proposal due at the beginning of class**

Week 10

- 18. Nov. 4 From Gaul toward France
Reading: Wickham, *Inheritance*, pp. 111-150
- 19. Nov. 6 SECTION 6: The Papacy in the Early Middle Ages
Reading: Life of Pope Stephen II and the *Donation of Constantine* (e-reserves)

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Week 11

20. Nov. 11 The New Empire of Charlemagne
Reading: Wickham, Inheritance, pp. 375-426
21. Nov. 13 SECTION 7: Einhard's Charlemagne
Reading: Einhard, Life of Charlemagne (complete)

Week 12

22. Nov. 18 The Fury of the Northmen: Aggression, Discovery, Settlement
Reading: Wickham, Inheritance, pp. 427-452, 472-480 and 529-551
23. Nov. 20 SECTION 8: The Saint and Her City
Reading: Miracles of St. Foy (e-reserves)

Week 13

24. Nov. 25 The Violent Edge of Empire
Reading: Wickham, Inheritance, pp. 453-471 and 480-507
- Nov. 27 **No Class: Thanksgiving Break**

Week 14

25. Dec. 2 Medieval Society in Crisis
Reading: Wickham, Inheritance, pp. 298-371 and 508-528
26. Dec. 4 Conclusions
Reading: Wickham, Inheritance, pp. 552-564
- **Term paper or final project due at the beginning of class**

IMPORTANT DATES:

- October 16: Midterm exam
- October 30: Pre-paper or project proposal due at the beginning of class
- December 4: Term paper or final project due at the beginning of class
- December 20: Final exam, 2 p.m.

All assignments are due at the beginning of class

Key to Grading Abbreviations	
√ = Good point	Rel.? = Is this relevant to your thesis?
* = Expand this idea	Rd = Redundant
Awk = Awkward wording	Ref? = Footnote/citation needed
C = Clarify/explain further	Sig.? = What is the significance of this?
Evid.? = Where is the evidence?	Sp = Spelling error
F = Factual error	T = Explain thesis or link to thesis
G = Gramatical error	VT = Verb tense
O = Improve organization	Vg = Vague
P = Paragraph unfocused/incomplete	WW = Wrong word
PN = Unclear pronoun	X = Logical error
PV = Passive Voice	<u>Underlined</u> = See notes in margin
Q = Interpret/introduce quotation	

The Fine Print:

By taking this class, you are agreeing to the following terms:

- 1. Attendance and participation:** Informed participation accounts for 20% of a student's final grade in this class; thus regular, punctual attendance is expected of all students. If you are going to miss class for any reason, please call or e-mail your section leader *ahead of* the scheduled class meeting time to let him or her know (see "Getting in Touch," above). Students may take one excused absence without affecting their participation grade; further excused absences may negatively affect a student's grade. Any unexcused absences will result in a penalty of 12.5% of the student's participation grade per section missed. Excused absences for medical reasons require a note from Brown Health Services indicating that the student has been sick.
 - 2. Students with disabilities:** Students requiring accommodation for disabilities should contact Student and Employee Accessibility Services at 20 Benevolent Street (401-863-9588 or SEAS@Brown.edu), and inform the instructor—either after class or during office hours—at least two weeks in advance of the accommodation needed in order to ensure that proper arrangements can be made.
 - 3. Academic integrity:** All students enrolled in this class are expected to abide by Brown University's Academic and Student Conduct Codes.
 - 4. Submission of late work:** Late work will be penalized one grade fraction per day late (thus an A paper submitted one day late will receive an A-; two days late, a B+; three days late, a B; and so on). Work submitted two weeks or more after the deadline will receive no credit.
 - 5. Make-up examinations:** Make-up examinations will be given only in case of medical emergency, three or more finals scheduled within a 24-hour period, or other similar catastrophe. Problematic travel plans do not count as a catastrophe.
 - 6. Changes to this syllabus:** This syllabus is provisional; the instructor reserves the right to make changes to it as necessary throughout the course of the semester.
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