PS 931: Roman Political Thought  
Fall 2018

Thursday, 1:25-3:15, Education 151

3 credits, met via seminar meetings and individual work with instructor

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Office Hours: Monday, 9:30-11:30 in Peet’s Coffee, Memorial Union

I. Scope and Purpose

Why devote a seminar to Roman political thought? On the face of it, such a focus might seem odd; after all, 20th century political theory and philosophy generally focused on Greek political thinkers – we may think of Arendt, Strauss, or MacIntyre, to name but a few. Indeed, Dean Hammer suggests that he wrote his own recent book on Roman political thought in response to a question he was asked: “What ever happened to the Romans?” Not only have the Romans been strikingly absent from 20th century political theory and philosophy, Roman political thinkers – such as Cicero or Seneca – are often viewed as derivative of their Greek predecessors, be they Hellenic or Hellenistic.

This was not always the case: Roman thought was of paramount importance through the 18th century, evident in figures such as Augustine, Aquinas, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Rousseau, Madison, and Burke, to name but a few. And focusing on Roman political thought seems less strange when viewed through other disciplinary lenses: scholars in English, history, the Romance languages, theater, and other fields did not lose interest in the Romans in the same way that political theorists and philosophers did.

Yet Roman political thought has been undergoing something of a revival in recent years, due in part to increased interest in republicanism among political theorists and philosophers (evident in the work of figures such as Quentin Skinner and Philip Pettit), and also due to increased interest in rhetoric and the rhetorical tradition. Beyond republicanism and rhetoric, the Romans would seem to be increasingly relevant to our own politics: after all, Rome was an imperial republic faced with apparent trade-offs between liberty and security.

Increasingly, then, work on Roman writers focuses on them less as sources for – or in conversation with – later writers, and more as rich resources for political theorizing. We will take
the writers we encounter as figures worth studying in their own right, though we will, of course, pay attention to issues of reception and influence. The majority of the writers we encounter will be Romans writing in Latin: the exceptions are Polybius, a Greek who spent time in Rome and wrote for a Greek audience, and Plutarch, a Greek living under Roman rule. We will read texts that fit in the (somewhat narrow) confines of traditional philosophical genres – Cicero’s dialogues, and Seneca’s essays. But we will also read texts from genres that are not philosophical in a narrow sense: works of history, poetry, oratory, and philosophical confession. In the course of studying these texts, participants in the seminar will gain a deep understanding of the Roman ethical, social, and political tradition from the 2nd century B.C.E. to the 5th century C.E. Students will write and present seminar papers engaging with political theory, philosophy, and classical scholarship that are suitable for development into conference papers and ultimately articles or dissertation chapters.

II. Course Objectives

Course objectives described below are course-content specific modifications of program-level outcomes for the Political Science Ph.D. Program. Thus, students enrolled in this course will:

1. Master the state of existing research on Roman political thought through the study of primary and secondary sources.

2. Develop expertise in methods of political inquiry, specifically the study of the history of political thought.

3. Design, conduct, and complete original research dealing with Roman political thought.

4. Communicate effectively, in both speech and writing, complex concepts and arguments related to Roman political thought to multiple audiences.

III. Course Requirements

Students enrolled in the course for credit will write a staged seminar paper. The paper, memos, and the various components of the paper, will be worth 75% of the course grade. The goal is to produce a paper that can be presented at a conference and eventually be suitable for publication. You will, in short, be preparing your own contribution to scholarship on Roman political, social, or ethical thought.

The paper will be broken up into 5 stages:

1. Meeting with me to discuss the topic and a preliminary bibliography. To be completed no later than Monday, September 17.

2. A 10-12 page annotated bibliography, to be turned in to me or placed in my departmental mailbox by Friday, October 12).
3. A detailed outline of the paper (3-5 pages), to be turned in to me or placed in my departmental mailbox on or before Friday, October 26.

4. The final seminar paper (25-35 pages), to be turned in to me or placed in my departmental mailbox no later than Friday, November 30.

5. Two short memos (i.e. between 250 and 500 words), to be turned in to me or placed in my mailbox by Monday, December 17).

   A. The first memo is to be in response to my comments on your paper. You should, in this memo, outline what you take the core of my concerns to be, and how you would go about addressing them. This memo is, in essence, analogous to the memos you will be writing in response to referee reports when you send papers out for review.

   B. The second memo is to be in response to comments made on your presentation. You should, in this memo, try to synthesize these comments, and outline how you would go about addressing them. This memo is, in essence, analogous to what many try to do after presenting papers at conferences.

In addition to the seminar paper, participation will be worth 25% of the course grade. This involves closely and carefully reading the assigned material, and participating in seminar discussion. It also requires each participant to lead discussion once during the semester. Days available are marked with the following symbol: (!).

Auditors will be expected to do all the readings and to lead one discussion during the semester.

III. Incompletes and Academic Dishonesty

Incompletes for this course will only be granted under extraordinary circumstances. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated, and will be subject to severe penalties.

V. Texts

I have ordered 11 books for this course, each of which is required.


VI. Recommended Reading

Listed below is a small number of monographs, essays, and edited volumes that are particularly useful for general reading on Roman political thought, or on Roman political history and culture; a selection of more specific sources will be provided with each week’s readings. This list is very much incomplete, and reflective of my own scholarly predilections (as are the works I note for the specific readings). The general list is also very heavily weighted toward the late Republic and early Principate.

Ando, C. “Was Rome a Polis?”, *Classical Antiquity*, 1999

Arena, V. *Libertas and the Practice of Politics* (Cambridge, 2012)

Balmaceda, C. *Virtus Romana* (UNC, 2018)

Balot, R., ed., *A Companion to Greek and Roman Political Thought* (Malden, 2009)


Connolly, J. *The Life of Roman Republicanism* (Princeton, 2015)

Dressler, A. *Personification and the Feminine* (Cambridge, 2016)


Galinsky, K. *Augustan Culture* (Princeton, 1998)
Hammer, D. *Roman Political Thought and the Modern Theoretical Imagination* (Oklahoma City, 2008)
Hammer, D. *Roman Political Thought* (Cambridge, 2014)
Harris, W.V. *War and Imperialism in Republican Rome* (Oxford, 1979)
Kapust, D. *Republicanism, Rhetoric, and Roman Political Thought* (Cambridge, 2011)
Millar, F. *The Crowd in Rome in the Late Republic* (Michigan, 1998)
Morford, M *The Roman Philosophers* (Routledge, 2002)
Murphy, C. *Are we Rome?* (Houghton Mifflin, 2007)
Nelsestuen, G. *Varro the Agronomist* (Ohio State University Press, 2015)
Nicolet, C. *The World of the Citizen in Republican Rome* (Berkeley, 1980)
Roller, *Constructing Autocracy* (Princeton, 2001)
Straumann, B. *Crisis and Constitutionalism* (Oxford, 2016)
Sullivan, J.P. *Literature and Politics in the Age of Nero* (Ithaca, 1985)
Syme, R. *The Roman Revolution* (Oxford, 1939)
Wirszubski, C. *Libertas as a Political Idea at Rome* (Cambridge, 1950)
Wiseman, T.P. *Remembering the Roman People* (Oxford, 2009)
Zarecki, J. *Cicero’s Ideal Statesman in Theory and Practice* (Bloomsbury 2014)

VII. Schedule of Readings and Seminars

9/6: Setting the Stage

**Reading:** Polybius, *Histories* Book VI
Kapust, “Ecce Romani”, *Political Theory*

**Recommended:**
Murphy, *Are We Rome?*
Hammer, *Roman Political Thought and the Modern Theoretical Imagination*, Chapter 1
Walbank, *Polybius*
Eckstein, *Moral Vision in the Histories of Polybius*
Baronowski, D., *Polybius and Roman Imperialism*
Hammer, *Roman Political Thought*, Chapter 1
Kapust, *Republicanism, Rhetoric, and Roman Political Thought*, Chapter 1

9/13: The Republic in and through History (!)

**Reading:** Cicero, *On the Republic, On the Laws*

**Recommended:**
Powell, ed., *Cicero the Philosopher*
Nicgorski, ed., *Cicero’s Practical Philosophy*
Wood, *Cicero’s Social and Political Thought*
Schofield, “Cicero’s Definition of *Res publica*,” in Schofield, *Saving the City*
Cornell, “Rome: The History of an Anachronism,” in Mohlo, Raaflaub, and Emlen, eds., *City States in Classical Antiquity and Medieval Italy*
Powell, J.G.F. and J.A. North, eds., *Cicero’s Republic*
Atkins, J., *Cicero on Politics and the Limits of Reason*
Zarecki, *Cicero’s Ideal Statesman in Theory and Practice*
9/20: The Rhetorical Republic (!)

Reading: Cicero, *On the Ideal Orator* (Please be sure to read Book 1.1-95; Book 2.1-84, 114-128a, 178-216a; Book 3.1-24, 37b-90, 126-143)

Recommended: May, ed., *Brills Companion to Cicero: Oratory and Rhetoric*
Steele, *Roman Oratory*
Fantham, *The Roman World of Cicero’s De Oratore*
Alexander, “Oratory, Rhetoric, and Politics in the Republic,” in Dominik and Hall eds., *Companion to Roman Rhetoric*
Garsten, B., *Saving Persuasion* (Cicero chapter specifically)

9/27: No regular class meeting; instead of seminar that day, I will expect participants to attend a portion of the first “Reimagining Empire” workshop on 11/2.

10/4: Re-authorizing the Republic

Reading: Cicero, *On Duties*

Recommended: Long, “Cicero’s Politics in *De Officiis,*” in Laks and Schofield, eds., *Justice and Generosity*
10/11: No regular class meeting; instead of seminar that day, I will expect participants to attend a portion of the second “Reimagining Empire” workshop on 12/7.

10/18: The Republic in/and Crisis (!)

Reading:  
Sallust, *War with Catiline*  
Sallust, *War with Jugurtha*

Recommended:  
Wallace-Hadrill, A. “Mutatio morum: the idea of a cultural revolution,” in Habinek and Schiesaro, eds., *The Roman Cultural Revolution*  
Stewart, D. “Sallust and Fortuna,” *History and Theory* (1968)  
Syme, R., *Sallust*  
Yavetz, Z. “The Res Gestae and Augustus’ Public Image,” in Millar and Segal, eds., *Caesar Augustus: Seven Aspects*  
Feldherr, A. *Spectacle and Society in Livy’s History*

10/25: An Epicurean Republic? (!)

Reading:  
Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things* (Skim Books 1, 3 and 4, Read Book 5)

Recommended:  
Clay, D., *Lucretius and Epicurus*  
Gale, M., ed., *Oxford Readings in Classical Studies: Lucretius*  
Gillespie, S., and P. Hardie, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Lucretius*  
Jones, H., *The Epicurean Tradition*  
Lehoux, D., Morrison, A.D., and A. Sharrock, eds., *Lucretius: Poetry, Philosophy, Science*  
Hammer, *Roman Political Thought* (Lucretius chapter)  
Segal, *Lucretius on Death and Anxiety*
11/1: Sickness and Remedy (!)

Reading: Livy, *From the Founding of Rome*, Books I through V

Recommended: Vassaly, *Livy’s Political Philosophy*
Chaplin, *Livy’s Exemplary History*
Ogilvie, R.M. *A Commentary on Livy Books 1-5*
Walsh, P.G., *Livy*
Luce, T.J., *Livy: The Composition of his History*

11/2: Reimagining Empire Workshop (in lieu of regular class on 9/27)

11/8: Empire without an End (!)

Reading: Vergil, *Aeneid*

Recommended: Pandey, *The Poetics of Power in Augustan Rome*
Hammer, *Roman Political Thought* (Vergil chapter)
Fletcher, *Finding Italy: Travel, Colonization, and Nation in Vergil’s Aeneid*

11/9: Stoicism and the Principate (!)


11/15: Reimagining Public Life

Reading: Tacitus, *Dialogue on Orators, Agricola, Germania*

Recommended:
- Connolly, J., “Fear and Freedom: A New Interpretation of Pliny’s Panegyricus,” *Ordine e sovversione nel mondo grece e roman*, ed. Gianpaolo Urso
- Bartsch, S. *Actors in the Audience: Theatricality and Doublespeak from Nero to Hadrian*
- Roche, P., ed., *Pliny’s Praise*
- Pagan, V., ed., *Companion to Tacitus* (KAPUST ON TACITUS AND POLITICAL THEORY, AMONG OTHER CHAPTERS)
- Syme, R., *Tacitus* (2 volumes)

11/29: The Burdens of Rule (!)

Reading: Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*

Recommended:
- Annas, J., *The Morality of Happiness*
12/6: (Re)interpreting Rome (!) (To be held over dinner at my home)

Reading:  Augustine, *Political Writings*

Recommended:  
NOTE: There is an extraordinary amount of scholarship on Augustine (who was both remarkably prolific and is remarkably influential); the following list is very much minimal, and geared towards collections.

Deane, *The Political and Social Ideas of St. Augustine*
Evans, G.R., *Augustine on Evil*
Matthews, G., ed., *The Augustinian Tradition*
Stump, E. and N. Kretzman, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine*
Wetzel, J. *Augustine and the Limits of Virtue*
Pasnau, R., ed., *The Cambridge History of Medieval Philosophy*
Armstrong, A.H., ed., *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy*

12/7: “Reimagining Empire” workshop #2.