

## ANCIENT EMPIRES II

Spring Quarter 2009

Walter Scheidel

Lectures: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12:15 – 1:05 pm, Building 320 – Room 105

**Alice Petty** (Course Coordinator)  
Office: 218 C Sweet Hall (2<sup>nd</sup> floor)  
Office hours: W/F 1-2 or by appt.  
Email: [aapetty@stanford.edu](mailto:aapetty@stanford.edu)

**Anise Strong** (Tech Coordinator)  
Office: 225A Sweet Hall (2<sup>nd</sup> floor)  
Phone: 917-325-8618  
Office hours: M/W 1-3 PM or by appt.  
Email: [akstrong@stanford.edu](mailto:akstrong@stanford.edu)

### Course description

Empire has been a fact of life for the past four thousand years. In the late twentieth century CE, the great European colonial empires fell apart and people all over the world celebrated the imminent end of imperialism...but they were premature. New debates have flared up over whether America is a new kind of empire, and whether empires might, after all, be good things. These debates have been very present-oriented, centering mostly on US foreign policy of the last five years, with an occasional look back to the British Empire. In this course, we suggest that there might be something to learn from looking at history in the very long-term. We focus on some of history's earliest and most famous empires—the Assyrian, Persian, and Roman; and some of the peoples they tried to incorporate—Israelites, Egyptians, and Greeks. We pose a series of questions, looking at how the answers unfolded across roughly a millennium and a half, from the tenth century BCE through the fifth CE. These questions include: *just what is an empire? What kinds of people want to create empires? Why do imperialists think it's acceptable to control other people? Do imperialists ever feel bad about empire? Why do some succeed while others fail? Why do some people resist them while others collaborate? Why do empires collapse?* We will see similarities and differences, not only in the answers to these questions, but also between ancient empires and the modern world's experience. The course straddles the boundary between the humanities and social sciences, drawing on the methods of historians, archaeologists, and historical sociologists.

### Course goals

The programmatic goals of a winter/spring IHUM course are:

1. to address and explore significant issues, themes, ideas, imaginative constructs, and values concerning human existence
2. to build upon the critical, analytic, and close-reading skills learned in Fall quarter IHUM
3. to introduce students in a sustained way to a body of material in a specific discipline
4. to continue improving listening and discussion skills learned in Fall IHUM courses

### Required texts

- Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power, vol. I*. Cambridge University Press, 1986 (from winter quarter) [=Mann]
- Mary T. Boatwright, Daniel J. Gargola, and Richard J. A. Talbert, *A Brief History of the Romans*. Oxford University Press, 2006 [=Brief History]
- Walter E. Kaegi, Jr., and Peter White (eds.), *Rome: Late Republic and Principate* (University of Chicago Readings in Western Civilization, vol. 2). University of Chicago Press, 1986 [=Rome]
- *The Bible*. We strongly recommend *The New Oxford Annotated Bible* (from winter quarter)
- Course Reader [=CR]

All are available in the Stanford bookstore and are on reserve in Meyer library.

### **Assignments:**

The grades are divided as follows:

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| • Research Paper Preliminary Bibliography                      | 5%  |
| • Research Paper Abstract and Annotated Bibliography           | 5 % |
| • Research Paper, 12-15 pages, due in lecture Thursday, May 21 | 30% |
| • Three-hour final exam  | 35% |
| • Seminar participation  | 20% |
| • Map quiz, in class, Tuesday February 10                      | 5%  |

Failure to complete any one assignment will result in a failing grade for the quarter.

### Grading Guidelines

**1. Essays:** IHUM courses foster rigorous inquiry and critical thinking and promote effective written argumentation.

- **A range:** This paper is outstanding in form and content. The thesis is clear and insightful; it is original, or it expands in a new way on ideas presented in the course. The evidence presented in support of the argument is carefully chosen and deftly handled. The argument is not only unified and coherent, but also complex and nuanced.
- **B range:** This paper's thesis is clear; the argument is coherent and presents evidence in support of its points. The argument shows comprehension of the material and manifests critical thinking about the issues raised in the course. The paper is reasonably well written and proofread. The argument, while coherent, does not have the complexity, the insight, or the integrated structure of an A-range paper.
- **C range:** This paper has some but not all of the basic components of an argumentative essay (i.e., thesis, evidence, coherent structure): for example, it may offer a thesis of some kind, but it presents no evidence to support this thesis; or it may present an incoherent thesis; or it may simply repeat points made in class without an overall argument. Such a paper is usually poorly organized, written and proofread.

*A paper lacking more than one of the basic components of an argumentative essay will earn a grade of "D" or below.*

**2. Section participation:** IHUM courses are mandated to encourage vigorous intellectual exchange, the expression of various viewpoints, and the ability to speak effectively and cogently. Participation in discussion will be evaluated on the following guidelines, which stress the quality rather than the mere quantity of contributions to discussion.

- **A range:** The student is fully engaged and highly motivated. This student is well prepared, having read the assigned texts, and has thought carefully about the texts' relation to issues raised in lecture and section. This student's ideas and questions are substantive (either constructive or critical); they stimulate class discussions. This student listens and responds to the contributions of other students.
- **B range:** The student attends participates consistently in discussion. This student comes to section well-prepared and contributes quite regularly by sharing thoughts and questions that show insight and a familiarity with the material. This student refers to the materials discussed in lecture and shows interest in other students' contributions.

- **C range:** The student meets the basic requirements of section participation. This student is usually prepared and participates once in a while but not regularly. This student's contributions relate to the texts and the lectures and offer a few insightful ideas but do not help to build a coherent and productive discussion.

*Failure to fulfill satisfactorily any of the criteria for C-range participation will result in a grade of "D" or below.*

### **IHUM section absence policy**

More than two section absences will severely affect a student's participation grade. If a student has a prolonged illness, varsity athletic competitions, or a personal situation that might lead to more than two absences, the student should contact his or her Teaching Fellow (TF) before missing section. Under certain conditions (such as varsity athletic competitions or prolonged illness), a student may be provided an opportunity to make up the work missed in section. Note: insufficient section attendance will result in failure of the course.

### **Course policies**

Attendance at lectures and sections is required. Papers are due in lecture as indicated on the syllabus. Late papers will be marked down 1/3 grade for each day that the paper is late (ie: a paper that is submitted four hours after the deadline is considered to be one day late and is therefore marked down 1/3 of a grade; e.g. an "A-" paper becomes a "B+" etc.). If you anticipate needing an extension (for a valid reason, such as a documented illness or crisis; poor time management is not a valid reason) please contact your IHUM Fellow in advance of the paper deadline.

### **Provost's statement concerning students with disabilities**

Students who have a disability that may necessitate an academic accommodation or the use of auxiliary aids and services in a class must initiate the request with the Disability Resource Center (DRC). The DRC will evaluate the request with required documentation, recommend appropriate accommodations, and prepare a verification letter dated in the current academic term in which the request is being made. Please contact the DRC as soon as possible; timely notice is needed to arrange for appropriate accommodations (phone 723-1066; TDD 725-1067).

### **The honor code**

Violating the Honor Code ([www.stanford.edu/dept/vpsa/judicialaffairs/honor\\_code.htm](http://www.stanford.edu/dept/vpsa/judicialaffairs/honor_code.htm)) is a serious offense, even when the violation is unintentional. You are responsible for understanding the University rules regarding academic integrity; you should familiarize yourself with the code if you have not already done so. In brief, conduct prohibited by the Honor Code includes all forms of academic dishonesty, among them copying another student's exam, unpermitted collaboration, and representing as one's own work the work of another. If you have any questions about these matters, see your teaching fellow during office hours.

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## LECTURES AND READINGS

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### Week 1

### Creating Rome

Tuesday, March 31 Phoenicians, Greeks, and Etruscans: the western Mediterranean context  
*Brief History* pp. 1-14 (No Section Meetings)

Thursday, April 2 Myths & bones: Roman state formation  
Livy, *History* (CR 1)  
*Brief History* pp. 15-31

### Weeks 2-3

### The sources of social power in Republican Rome

Tuesday, April 7 Military power: the Roman war machine and its competitors  
*Megalensia: Festival of Magna Mater in Rome*  
Ancient sources on the Punic Wars (CR 2)  
Mann pp. 250-259  
for further background, try to skim *Brief History* pp. 32-33, 44-77  
Sections: Handout Research Paper Guidelines, Possible Topics

Thursday, April 9 Political power: assemblies and oligarchs  
Polybius, *Histories*, selections (*Rome* #1)  
*Brief History* pp. 33-44, 78-82

Tuesday, April 14 Economic power: land, trade and slavery  
Ancient sources on the Gracchi and land reform (CR 3)  
*Brief History* pp. 82-98  
Sections: **R.P. Topics Due**

Thursday, April 16 Ideological power: a democratic oligarchy?  
Quintus Cicero (?), *Handbook on Canvassing* (*Rome* #2)  
for further background, try to skim *Brief History* pp. 99-141

### Weeks 4-7

### The sources of social power in the Roman imperial monarchy

Tuesday, April 21 Crisis and restoration: the end of the Republic and the creation of a new world order (A. Strong lecture)  
*Rome's Birthday* – traditionally, Rome is 2,761 years old today! Also Festival of the Parilia  
Ancient sources on Julius Caesar (CR 4)  
for further background, try to skim *Brief History* pp. 142-184  
Sections: Research Librarian Meetings

Thursday, April 23 Crisis and restoration... continued (A. Petty lecture)  
*Vinalia Prioria: Festival of the First Wine*  
Augustus, *Records of His Accomplishments* (*Rome* #9)  
Tacitus, *Annals* (*Rome* #10)  
**Map Quiz (last 10 minutes of lecture)**

- Tuesday, April 28      Military power: the backbone of empire  
*Floralia: Festival of Prostitutes and Spring*  
 Josephus, *The Jewish War* (CR 5)  
 Mann pp. 259-282  
*Brief History* pp. 189-195, 213  
**Section: R.P. Preliminary Bibliography Due.**
- Thursday, April 30      Political power: rulers of the world  
 Ancient sources on provincial government (*Rome* #14, 16)  
*Brief History* pp. 184-189, 201-217, 237-246
- Tuesday, May 5      Ideological power and belief systems I: Religious pluralism and emperor worship (A. Strong lecture)  
 Pliny the Younger, *Panegyric* (*Rome* #12)  
*Brief History* pp. 218-221
- Thursday, May 7      Economic power: the engine of empire  
 Columella, *On Farming* (*Rome* #20)  
 The Bible, *Revelation* 18
- Tuesday, May 12      On the margins of empire  
**Section: Abstract, Annotated Bibliography Due.**
- Thursday, May 14      Ideological power and belief systems II: Judaism  
 Josephus, *The Jewish War* (CR 6)
- Tuesday, May 19      Ideological power and belief systems III: Christianity  
 The Bible, *Matthew 27-28, Acts 19, Galatians 5-6*  
 Pliny the Younger, *Letters* (*Rome* # 26, pp. 260-262)  
*Brief History* pp. 268-271
- Weeks 8-9**      **Imperial transformations**
- Thursday, May 21      Continuity and change: the third and fourth centuries  
*Agonalia: Festival of Initiation into Manhood*  
 Eusebius, *Life of Constantine* (CR 7)  
*Brief History* pp. 273-297  
**RESEARCH PAPER DUE IN LECTURE**
- Tuesday, May 26      The fall...  
*The Theodosian Code* (*Rome* #30)  
 Priscus, *History* (*Rome* #31)  
 Mann pp. 283-295
- Thursday, May 28      ... and decline of the Roman empire  
 Reinhold, 'Classical influences...' (CR 8)
- Week 10**
- Tuesday, June 2      No class
- Tuesday, June 9**      **Final Exam: 3:30-6:30 PM**