

MIT OpenCourseWare
<http://ocw.mit.edu>

21H.402 The Making of a Roman Emperor
Fall 2005

For information about citing these materials or our Terms of Use, visit: <http://ocw.mit.edu/terms>.

21H.402
THE MAKING OF A ROMAN EMPEROR
Fall 2004
MW 11:30-1:00

Prof. Will Broadhead

Focusing on the emperors Augustus and Nero, this course investigates the ways in which Roman emperors used art, architecture, coinage and other media to create and project an image of themselves, the ways in which the surviving literary sources from the Roman period reinforced or subverted that image, and the ways in which both phenomena have contributed to post-classical perceptions of Roman emperors. Material studied will include the art, architecture, and coinage of Augustan and Neronian Rome, the works of Suetonius and Tacitus, and modern representations of the emperors such as those found in *I, Claudius* and *Quo Vadis*.

REQUIRED READING (available at MIT bookstore)

- Suetonius, *The Lives of the Caesars*, transl. C. Edwards (2001).
 - Tacitus, *The Annals of Imperial Rome*, transl. M. Grant (1971).
 - E. Champlin, *Nero* (2003).
 - P. Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus* (1990).

 - Further reading available on the course web-site
-

GRADING

25% Class Participation
20% Paper #1 (5 pages)
20% Paper #2 (5 pages)
35% Paper #3 (10 pages)

CLASS PARTICIPATION

The success of this course depends on the active participation of students in class meetings. The 25% of your overall grade coming from class participation will be based on the following:

- Attendance at all class meetings
- Completion of all reading assignments
- Active participation in seminar discussion

PAPERS

Students will be required to write three papers for this course:

Paper #1 – Due Monday, October 4

Five pages in length and worth 20%, this paper will take the form of a critical analysis of the accounts of Augustus and/or Nero in Tacitus and/or Suetonius. Precise topics will be distributed in due course.

Paper #2 – Due Monday, November 1

Five pages in length and worth 20%, this paper will consist of a critical analysis of a monument of the Augustan Age, chosen from those discussed in Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*. Precise topics will be agreed upon in due course.

Paper #3 – Due Wednesday, December 8

Ten pages in length and worth 35%, this paper will consist of a wider-ranging analysis and will provide students the opportunity, and space, to bring together various aspects of the course in a longer work of synthesis. The grading of the final paper will be broken down as follows: 5% for a substantial outline of the paper, due Monday, November 22; 5% for a short presentation to the class, followed by a brief discussion, of your argument and the evidence on which it will rest (presentations will take place in Week 13); and the remaining 25% for the paper itself.

PROVISIONAL SCHEDULE:

| DATE / TOPIC | READING (items marked*available on course website) |
|---|---|
| Week 1 | |
| W 9/8 Introduction: Studying Roman Emperors | None |
| Week 2 | |
| M 9/13 The Emperors and their Empire | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>OCD</i>³, 'Rome (history)', 'senate', 'praetorians', 'Augustus', 'Nero' * • Zanker, pp. 1-31 |
| W 9/15 Suetonius' Augustus | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suetonius, <i>Augustus</i>, pp. 43-97 • <i>OCD</i>³, 'Suetonius' * |
| Week 3 | |
| M 9/20 Tacitus and Tacitus' Augustus | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tacitus, <i>Annals</i>, 1.1-15, 12.1-13.58 (pp. 31-42, 252-312) • <i>OCD</i>³, 'Tacitus' * |
| W 9/22 Tacitus' Nero | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tacitus, <i>Annals</i> 14.1-16.35 (pp. 312-397) |
| Week 4 | |
| M 9/27 Suetonius' Nero | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suetonius, <i>Nero</i>, pp. 195-227 • Champlin, pp. 36-52 |
| W 9/29 Reading the Written Emperor | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barton, 'The <i>inventio</i> of Nero' * • Syme on Tacitus * |
| Week 5 | |
| M 10/4 Warring images: Octavian, Antony, and Actium | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zanker, pp. 33-77 <p style="text-align: center;">First Paper Due</p> |
| W 10/6 Inventing Augustus | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zanker, pp. 78-100 • <i>Res Gestae</i> * |
| Week 6 | |
| M 10/11 HOLIDAY – COLUMBUS DAY | |
| W 10/13 Shaping Roman Values | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zanker, pp. 101-166 |
| Week 7 | |
| M 10/18 Golden Prosperity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zanker, pp. 167-192 • Virgil, <i>Aeneid</i> excerpts * |
| W 10/20 Making Augustan History | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zanker, pp. 192-238 |

| | |
|--|---|
| Week 8 | |
| M 10/25 Nero makes a spectacle of himself | • Champlin, pp. 53-83 |
| W 10/27 Neronian Myth-making | • Champlin, pp. 84-144 |
| Week 9 | |
| M 11/1 Nero Behaving Badly | • Champlin, pp. 145-177 Second Paper Due |
| W 11/3 Nero's Rome | • Champlin, pp. 178-209 |
| Week 10 | |
| M 11/8 Making a Military Mockery | • Champlin, pp. 210-234 |
| W 11/10 Making Imperial History | • Jenkins, <i>Re-thinking History</i> * • Evans, <i>In Defence of History</i> * |
| Week 11 | |
| M 11/15 The Reel Nero: <i>Quo Vadis?</i> (1951) | • M. Wyke, <i>Projecting the Past</i> , pp. 110-146 * |
| W 11/17 Nero's Christian Afterlife | • Champlin, pp. 1-35 |
| Week 12 | |
| M 11/22 Mussolini's Augustus | • Raaflaub and Toher, 'Editors' preface' to <i>BRAM</i> , xi-xxi • Scott, 'Mussolini and the Roman Empire' * • Aicher, 'Mussolini's Forum' * Outline of Final Paper Due |
| W 11/24 Syme's Augustus | • Syme, <i>The Roman Revolution</i> , excerpts * • Galsterer, 'A Man, a Book, and a Method' * |
| Week 13 | |
| M 11/29 Presentation and Discussion of Final Paper Topics | Reading for Final Paper |
| W 12/1 Presentation and Discussion of Final Paper Topics | Reading for Final Paper |
| Week 14 | |
| M 12/6 <i>I, Claudius</i> | • S. Joshel, ' <i>I, Claudius</i> : Projection and Imperial Soap Opera' * |
| W 12/8 Conclusion: whose emperors? | Final Paper Due |