

THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE ROMAN WORLD, 300-750 C.E.

2010, Semester 1

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Office Hours: T and Th 3:00-4:00 p.m. and by appointment

Purpose of the Seminar

This research seminar aims to introduce students to the craft of research and writing in history. The seminar's laboratory will be that momentous period from 300 to 750 CE in Western history when the Roman Empire gradually transformed into new civilizations in Europe, western Asia, and north Africa.

Readings will be assigned with four purposes in mind:

- to inform seminarians about the basic contours of this world-historical period;
- to provide examples of current research in the field as model seminar papers;
- To enhance student skills in effective written presentation of their research findings.
- to develop skills in analyzing historical sources in translation.

All students should purchase the following texts:

Barbara H. Rosenwein, *A Short History of the Middle Ages, vol. 1: From c. 300 to c. 1150*, 3rd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009). ISBN 978-1-44260-122-2. This book is intended to provide all students with a common general background to the period.

From Roman to Merovingian Gaul: A Reader, ed. and trans. Alexander Callander Murray. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008. ISBN 978-1-44260-095-9. This book provides a collection of primary source documents on a variety of issues stemming from the transformation of the Roman world.

Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, 6th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2010. This handy booklet will provide tips on research skills and effective writing in history.

In order to learn about the craft of historical research, weekly readings and discussion will also include chapters from the following books in the Transformation of the Roman

World project. The volumes have been placed on reserve in the Hicks Undergraduate Library:

Kingdoms = Kingdoms of the Empire: The Integration of Barbarians in Late Antiquity. Ed. Walter Pohl. TRW 1. Leiden and New York: Brill, 1997. HSSE: 937.09 K59 1997

Strategies = Strategies of Distinction: The Construction of Ethnic Communities, 300-800. Ed. Walter Pohl with Helmut Reimitz. TRW 2. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 1998. HSSE 305.80094 St82 1998

Sixth Century = The Sixth Century: Production, Distribution, and Demand. Ed. Richard Hodges and William Bowden. TRW 3. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 1998. HSSE: 937 Si97 1998

The seminar will also provide students with opportunities to **discuss** historical literature, both primary sources and modern secondary sources. Discussion includes analyzing readings for their meaning and their contributions to our understanding of history. Discussion also, very importantly, includes asking questions, especially of medieval sources. Someone once said, “The past is a foreign country. They do things differently there.” We must try to understand how the past is different and we can begin by asking questions. The discussion portion of the seminar’s work will contribute 40% toward calculating the final grade.

The seminar will also provide students with opportunities to develop skill in historical **writing**. Each student will undertake an independent research project (in consultation with the instructor) on a topic of special interest to the student. Students will read widely in the modern periodical and monographic literature on their topics and prepare an original paper of at least 10 pages in length (exclusive of title page and bibliography; double-spaced; one-inch margins; 12 pt. or smaller font) on the topic. See the Guidelines for Seminar Papers for additional details. In addition, students will be asked early in the semester to write several short, one- to two-page papers. The writing portion of the seminar’s work will contribute 60% toward calculating the final grade

SEMINAR WORK SCHEDULE

WEEK 1: 23 AUGUST

Reading assignment:

Pocket Guide: chs. 1-2

A Short History, preface, glossary (pp. 219-223), Appendix-Lists (pp. 224-233); Web site: www.rosenweinthorhistory.com (especially tour the links to get a sense of online resources for research.

Lectures:

1. Introduction to Course and the a Brief History of the Roman Empire“Problem”

Discussion:

The syllabus? Expectations? Reading assignment.

WEEK 2: 30 AUGUST

Reading assignment:

Pocket Guide: ch. 3-4

A Short History, ch. 1-2

Brief Writing Assignment (due Thursday)

Two pages (double-spaced; 1” margins; 12 pt font): “Three Interesting Things I Learned from *A Short History*, chs. 1-2”

Lectures

2. What happened to the Empire?

Discussion

Reading Assignment

WEEK 3 6 SEPTEMBER

Reading Assignment:

Pocket Guide: ch. 5-6
A Short History, ch. 3-4

Brief Writing Assignment (due Thursday)

Two pages (double-spaced; 1" margins; 12 pt font): "Three Interesting Things I Learned from *A Short History*, chs. 3-4"

Lectures:

3. The Post (Sub) Roman World

Discussion:

Reading Assignment

WEEK 4 13 SEPTEMBER

Reading Assignment:

Pocket Guide: ch. 7
Ian Wood, "Report: The European Science Foundation's Programme on the Transformation of the Roman World and Emergence of Early Medieval Europe," *Early Medieval Europe* 6-2 (1997), 217-227.
Walter Pohl, "Introduction: The Empire and the Integration of Barbarians," *Kingdoms*, pp. 1-11.

Lecture:

4. The Transformation of the Roman World project and How to Evaluate Research and Research Writing

Discussion

Reading Assignments

Note: 16 September--submit note with choice of research topic and preliminary ideas about it.

WEEK 5 20 SEPTEMBER

Reading Assignment:

From Roman to Merovingian Gaul, chs. 1-2
Gerhard Wirth, "Rome and Its Germanic Partners in the Fourth Century," *Kingdoms*, pp. 13-55.

Brief Writing Assignment:

One page (double-spaced; 1" margins; 12 pt font) analysis of Wirth article as a research sample.

Discussion:

Tuesday: *From Roman to Merovingian Gaul*, chs. 1-2
Thursday: *Kingdoms* chapter

WEEK 6 27 SEPTEMBER

Reading Assignment:

From Roman to Merovingian Gaul, chs. 3-4
Peter Heather, "Foedera and Foederati of the Fourth Century," *Kingdoms*, pp. 57-74.

Brief Writing Assignment:

One page (double-spaced; 1" margins; 12 pt font) analysis of Heather article as a research sample.

Discussion:

Tuesday, *From Roman to Merovingian Gaul*
Thursday, *Kingdoms* chapter

WEEK 7 4 OCTOBER

Reading Assignment:

From Roman to Merovingian Gaul, chs. 5-6.
Walter Pohl, "The Empire and the Lombards: Treaties and Negotiations in the Sixth Century," *Kingdoms*, pp. 75-133.

Brief Writing Assignment:

One page (double-spaced; 1" margins; 12 pt font) analysis of Pohl article as a research sample.

Discussion

Tuesday, *From Roman to Merovingian Gaul*
Thursday, *Kingdoms* chapter

WEEK 7.5 11 OCTOBER

Reading Assignment:

From Roman to Merovingian Gaul, chs. 7

Discussion:

Thursday: *From Roman to Merovingian Gaul* and progress reports

Note: 14 October: submit 1-2 page progress report with discussion of thesis of paper + bibliography.

WEEK 8.5 18 OCTOBER

Reading Assignment:

From Roman to Merovingian Gaul, ch. 8

Heather, Peter J. "Disappearing and Reappearing Tribes," *Strategies*, pp. 95-111.

Discussion:

Tuesday, *From Roman to Merovingian Gaul*

Thursday, *Strategies* chapter

WEEK 9.5 25 OCTOBER

Reading Assignment:

From Roman to Merovingian Gaul, chs. 9

Liebeschuetz, Wolf. "Citizen Status and Law in the Roman Empire and the Visigothic Kingdom." *Strategies*, pp. 131-52

Discussion:

Tuesday, *From Roman to Merovingian Gaul*

Thursday, *Strategies* chapter

WEEK 10.5 1 NOVEMBER

Reading Assignment:

From Roman to Merovingian Gaul, chs. 10

Sivan, Hagith. "The Appropriation of Roman Law in Barbarian Hands: 'Roman-Barbarian' Marriage in Visigothic Gaul and Spain." *Strategies*, pp. 189-203

Discussion:

Tuesday, *From Roman to Merovingian Gaul*
Thursday, *Strategies* chapter

WEEK 11.5 8 NOVEMBER

Reading Assignment:

From Roman to Merovingian Gaul, chs. 11
Bertelli, Carlo. "The Production and Distribution of Books in Late Antiquity." *Sixth Century*, pp. 41-60

Discussion:

Tuesday, *From Roman to Merovingian Gaul*
Thursday, *Sixth Century* chapter

WEEK 12.5 15 NOVEMBER

Reading Assignment:

From Roman to Merovingian Gaul, chs. 12

Discussion

From Roman to Merovingian Gaul chapter

Note: 18 November: Submit polished first draft of paper.

WEEK 13 22 NOVEMBER

Individual Reviews of First Drafts: Schedule 30 min. meeting Monday or Tuesday

WEEK 14 29 NOVEMBER

Reading Assignment:

From Roman to Merovingian Gaul, chs. 13-14

Discussion

From Roman to Merovingian Gaul chapters

WEEK: 6 DECEMBER

Reading Assignment:

From Roman to Merovingian Gaul, chs. 15-16

Discussion

From Roman to Merovingian Gaul chapters

Note: 9 December: Submit final, revised version of paper

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Student achievement will be determined by the quality of participation in the weekly discussions and by the quality of the writing project.

EVALUATION OF ACHIEVEMENT IN DISCUSSION (40%)

Discussion, talking about history, provides an excellent means to hone research skills. The vitality of the seminar will depend on the scheduled weekly discussions. Participation in discussion will count 50% (0-40 pts.) in determining overall achievement in the course. Perfect attendance with little discussion will earn 24 of the 40 points (= a passing grade of "D-"). Depending on attendance and level and quality of participation students will earn fewer or more than 24 points for participation in discussion. Absence from weekly discussion earns 0 points for that week's discussion.

EVALUATION OF ACHIEVEMENT IN WRITING PROJECT (60%)

See the separate handout, "Guidelines for Seminar Papers".

SUMMARY

Discussion	40 pts.
Brief Papers	10 pts
Research Paper	<u>40 pts</u>
Total	100 pts.

A+ = 100-96 pts	B+ = 89-86 pts.	C+ = 79-76 pts.	D+ = 69-66 pts.
A = 95-93 pts	B = 85-83 pts.	C = 75-73 pts.	D = 65-63 pts.
A- = 92-90 pts.	B- = 82-80 pts.	C- = 72-70 pts.	D- = 60-62 pts.
F = 59-0 pts.			