



CLAS 355: SEX IN THE CITY
Society, Identity, and Sexuality in Imperial Rome
Course Syllabus

Instructor: Giampiero Bevagna, MA

Credits: 3

Contact Hours: 45

Prerequisites: None

Class Hours: TBA

Office Hours: TBA

Course Type: Standard Course

Lab Fee: 250 €

Course Description

This course aims to explore the ways in which social, political, economic, and cultural conditions produced different ideas about sexuality and gender roles in the Roman world. Students will discover how the ideas about masculinity and femininity shaped Roman culture and eventually formed concepts that are still applied today in modern societies. Students will also learn about men's and women's lives, their relations and roles, the concept of marriage and family, the relationship between morality and sexuality, and the political usage of sexual identity. The class will examine these ancient constructions of social identity, gender, and sexuality through translated Roman literature, ranging from philosophy and history, to poetry and scientific as well as medical texts. Special attention will be paid to archaeological records, such as inscriptions, pieces of art, and architecture, allowing students to approach the subject through a historian and archaeologist lens, utilizing key investigative tools, including reading the texts and examining physical pieces of evidence.

Learning Outcomes and Assessment Measures

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Measures Course requirements that will be used to assess students' achievement for each learning outcome
Explain the major events in the history of ancient Rome	reading assignments, participation and oral presentation
Engage with both primary and secondary sources and to examine how authors of different time periods and social backgrounds present key issues	reading assignments, participation and oral presentation

Describe the use of material remains (archaeological record) in learning about Roman culture	reading assignments, participation and oral presentation
Relate how Roman civilization influenced their culture, and, more generally, the development of world history	reading assignments, participation and oral presentation
Explain the history of classical Gender and Sexuality scholarship	reading assignments, participation and oral presentation
Describe ancient Roman conceptualizations of, and attitudes to, sexuality and gender; and how those conceptualizations and attitudes found expression in their literature and art	reading assignments, participation and oral presentation
Compare and contrast differences/continuities between ancient and modern ways of viewing sexuality and gender	reading assignments, participation and oral presentation
Interpret gender and sexuality in the historical context of a culture	reading assignments, participation and oral presentation

Course Materials

Readings

Two course readers available at local copy shop. See “Umbra Institute Course Materials - Textbooks and Readers” handout provided in the orientation folder for more information.

Further Readings

Additional hand-outs will be provided in classes when needed.

Assessment

Participation	10%
Mid-term exam	20%
Oral reports	40%
Final Exam	20%
Discussion	10%

Grading

Letter grades for student work are based on the following percentage scale:

Letter Grade Range	Numerical Score Equivalent	Student Performance
A	93% - 100%	Exceptional
A-	90% - 92%	Excellent
B+	87% - 89%	Superior
B	83% - 86%	
B-	80% - 82%	
C+	77% - 79%	Satisfactory
C	73% - 76%	
C-	70% - 72%	

D+	67% - 69%	Low Pass
D	63% - 66%	
D-	60% - 62%	
F	59% or less	Fail (no credit)

Course Requirements

Grades are based on:

Participation (10%)

Participation implies an active and constructive attitude from students in each class, especially when discussions are scheduled. The same is valid for the fieldtrip, where respectful and mature behavior is expected.

Written Exams (40%)

The course includes a mid-term (20%) and a final (20%) examination. Items covered on each exam include lectures and readings (on the subjects discussed after the previous exam). Testing format will be multiple choice, T/F questions, glossary quizzes, short answer questions and short essays. Exams also involve identification and discussion of significant passages in the texts read in class or at home. Study guides will be distributed in advance.

Oral Reports (40%)

Each student will give TWO 20-minute oral reports (each worth 20%). I will provide a list of topics, or you may choose your own as long as you receive advance approval from me. Topics will be also determined by the available bibliography in the Institute Library, and guidance will be given throughout. The choice of each student will be discussed with the teacher, in order to provide enough time to think about the research project to do a good job (without stress!). In any case, topics must be selected in agreement with the teacher to avoid too similar papers being done by more than one student. In cases where there are conflicts in topics, the teacher will choose the one(s) that is best prepared. Wikipedia and other online sources are not to be used unless I approve them first. Hand-outs and slideshows are requested.

More detailed guidelines will be provided.

Class Discussion (10%)

During the course, there will be guided peer discussions between students. Each student will organize a class discussion on a specific topic. The student in charge is asked to provide supports such as visual aids and graphic organizers. During the discussion will also support engagement and communication by prompting students to clarify, elaborate, respond to comments, build on each other ideas, ask questions, and participate equitably.

More detailed guidelines will be provided.

Course Content Disclaimer

Some of the reading assignments can get pretty “nasty”. Roman writers had no qualms about talking about sex in all different ways: rape (as a dramatic device, especially), sodomy (to use an old-fashioned word), and even bestiality. Some ancient authors delighted in making very unpleasant sexual insults about both men and women. Roman art as well was quite open in representing sexual acts, even in ways we consider immoral. If this will bother or upset you, this course may not be right one for you.

Additional Course Information

Class sessions will be based on students **having read** the assigned material for class, either from primary sources (what the Romans themselves wrote) or from secondary sources (what moderns have written about the Romans). Classes will be a combination of discussion and lecture, leaning more heavily to discussion when the readings are primary sources.

Sometimes, I will provide open-ended discussion questions before the class meeting. I hope the entire class will prepare answers to the discussion questions and be ready to discuss their answers during class. It is therefore important for everyone to consider the readings carefully, to put some thought into the questions, and to prepare preliminary answers before coming to class.

During class sessions we will study important examples of Roman/Pompeian monuments and pieces of art. These examples will help students to understand and visualize better the fundamental aspects of Roman history and culture. Students are expected to pay great attention to these examples in order to be able to interpret images of Roman civilization and provide an informed, detailed discussion.

Lectures will include material beyond the course readings for which students will be held responsible in the midterm and final exams. Therefore, it is critical for students to take notes, and class attendance is required.

Attendance Policy

Class attendance is **mandatory**. Students are allowed **two “free” absences**, which do not need to be justified. **It is the students’ responsibility to keep them in case of real necessity (sickness or any other unforeseen inconvenience that may prevent students from being in class)**. Each additional absence, unless for a very serious reason, will lower the students’ grade by one grade level (i.e., a final grade of a B+ would be lowered to a B).

If students miss class, they are responsible for obtaining class notes from other students and/or for meeting the professor during office hours. It is also the policy of the Institute that any student who has eight or more

absences automatically fails the class.

Except in the case of medical emergencies, absences are not accepted when tests are scheduled; tests cannot be made up. **Furthermore, scheduled times and dates indicated for exams, quizzes, oral presentations, and any other graded assignments cannot be changed for any reason.** Even if more sections of the same class are activated, students may only take exams during the scheduled times and dates for the section they are enrolled in.

Presence during mandatory field trips is especially important for student performance in class. Missing a mandatory field trip, unless for a very serious reason that is communicated to the professor and Umbra Academic Director in a timely manner, will lower students' final grade by one grade level (i.e., a final grade of a B+ would be lowered to a B).

Academic Integrity

All forms of **cheating** (i.e., copying during exam either from a fellow student or making unauthorized use of notes) and **plagiarism** (i.e., presenting the ideas or words of another person for academic evaluation without acknowledging the source) will be handled according to the Institute Academic Policy, which can be found in the Umbra Institute Academic Policies and Conduct Guidelines.

Classroom Policy

Students are expected to follow the policy of the Institute and demonstrate the appropriate **respect** for the historical premises that the school occupies. Please note that **cell phones** must be turned off before the beginning of each class. **Computers and other electronic devices** cannot be used during class lectures and discussions.

Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Assignments

WEEK 1

Introduction To The Course: Gender and Sexuality in the Ancient World.

Gender and Sexuality in the Roman World

Readings from Course Packet #1

Reading #1

- a) M. E. Wiesner-Hanks (ed.), *Gender in History. Global Perspectives*, 2nd ed., (Wiley Blackwell 2011) 1-10, 13-24
- b) T. K. Hubbard (ed.), *A Companion to Greek and Roman Sexualities*, (Wiley Blackwell 2014) 1-53

WEEK 2

Gender and Sexuality in the Roman World: Sources and Historical Periods

Reading #2

- a) M. B. Skinner, *Sexuality in Greek and Roman Culture*, 2nd ed., (Wiley Blackwell 2014) 1-28
- b) M. Ward – F. M. Heichelheim – C. A. Yeo, *A History of the Roman People*. 6th ed., (Prentice Hall 2016) 1-3, 7-11
- c) M. Ward – F. M. Heichelheim – C. A. Yeo, *A History of the Roman People*. 6th ed., (Prentice Hall 2016) 11-27

The Etruscans.

Reading #3

- a) L. Bonfante, “Etruscan Women,” in E. Fantham, H. P. Foley, N. B. Kampen, S. B. Pomeroy and H. A. Shapiro (eds.), *Women in the Classical World* (Oxford UP 1994) 243-259
- b) V. Izzet, “Etruscan Women: Towards a Reappraisal,” in S. L. James, S. Dillon, eds., *A Companion to Women in the Ancient World* (Wiley Blackwell 2012) 66-77

WEEK 3

The Etruscans: Evidence of Art.

Reading #4

- a) V. Izzet, *The Archaeology of Etruscan Society*, (Cambridge UP 2007) 43-86
- b) G. E. Meyers, "Tanaquil. The Conception and Construction of an Etruscan Matron," in S. Bell and A. A. Carpino (eds.), *A Companion to the Etruscans*, (Wiley Blackwell 2016) 305-320

Gender Roles in Roman Ideology: Roman Mythology.

Reading #5

- a) E. Fantham, H. P. Foley, N. B. Kampen, S. B. Pomeroy and H. A. Shapiro (eds.), *Women in the Classical World* (Oxford UP 1994) 216-242

WEEK 4

The Roman Society. The Roman House.

Reading #6

- a) M. Ward – F. M. Heichelheim – C. A. Yeo, *A History of the Roman People*. 6th ed., (Prentice Hall 2016) 42-48
- b) R. Knapp, *Invisible Romans*, (Profile Books 2011) 50-85
- c) P. M. Allison, "Domestic spaces and activities," in J. J. Dobbins, P. W. Foss, eds., *The World of Pompeii* (Routledge 2007) 269-278

The Roman Religion. The Vestal Virgins at Rome.

Reading #7

- a) M. Ward, F. M. Heichelheim, C. A. Yeo, *A History of the Roman People*, 6th ed., (Prentice Hall 2016) 48-55
- b) L. L. Holland, "Women and Roman Religion," in S. L. James, S. Dillon, eds., *A Companion to Women in the Ancient World* (Wiley Blackwell 2012) 204-214
- c) A. Staples, *From Good Goddess To Vestal Virgins*, (Routledge 1998) 129-156

WEEK 5

Roman Sexualities.

Reading #8

- a) Ray Laurence, *Roman Passions*, (Continuum 2009) 75-86

Reading #9

- a) J. P. Hallett, M. B. Skinner (eds.), *Roman Sexualities* (Princeton University Press 1997) 29-65

- b) C. A. Williams, *Roman Homosexuality*, 2nd ed., (Oxford UP 2010) 3-14

WEEK 6

Roman Homosexuality

Reading #10

- a) T. K. Hubbard, ed., *A Companion to Greek and Roman Sexualities* (Wiley Blackwell 2014) 102-127
- b) T. K. Hubbard, ed., *A Companion to Greek and Roman Sexualities* (Wiley Blackwell 2014) 128-149
- c) Craig A. Williams, *Roman Homosexuality*, 2nd ed., (Oxford UP 2010) 177-246

The Roman Empire. The early Emperors.

Reading #11

- a) T. K. Hubbard, ed., *Homosexuality in Greece and Rome. A Sourcebook of Basic Documents* (University of California Press 2003) 323-325
- b) T. K. Hubbard, ed., *Homosexuality in Greece and Rome. A Sourcebook of Basic Documents* (University of California Press 2003) 383, 387-391
- c) A. J. L. Blanshard, *Sex. Vice and Love from Antiquity to Modernity* (Wiley Blackwell 2010) 79-87

WEEK 7

Review

MIDTERM EXAM

SEMESTER BREAK

WEEK 8

Imperial Women

Readings from Course Packet #2

Reading #12

- a) Sarah B. Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves*, ch. 8, "The Roman Matron of the Late Republic and Early Empire," (Schocken 1995) 149-189
- b) J. P. Hallett, "Women in Augustan Rome," in S. L. James, S. Dillon, eds., *A Companion to Women in the Ancient World* (Wiley Blackwell 2012) 372-384

- c) S. Fischler, "Social Stereotypes and Historical Analysis: The Case of Imperial Women at Rome." in L. J. Archer, S. Fischler, M. Wyke (eds.), *Women in Ancient Societies. An Illusion of the Night*, (The Macmillan Press 1994) 115-132

Prostitution in the Roman World

Reading #13

- a) R. Knapp, *Invisible Romans*, (Profile Books 2011) 203-225
- b) K. Olson, "Matrona and Whore," in C. A. Faraone and L. K. McClure (eds.), *Prostitutes and Courtesans in the Ancient World*, (University of Wisconsin Press 2006) 186-206
- c) T. A. J. McGinn, "Prostitution. Controversies and New Approaches," in T. K. Hubbard, ed., *A Companion to Greek and Roman Sexualities* (Wiley Blackwell 2014) 83-101

WEEK 9

NO CLASS

Pompeian Women

Reading #14

- a) E. D'Ambra, "Women on the Bay of Naples," in S. L. James, S. Dillon, eds., *A Companion to Women in the Ancient World* (Wiley Blackwell 2012) 400-413
- b) F. Bernstein, "Pompeian Women," in J. J. Dobbins, P. W. Foss, eds., *The World of Pompeii* (Routledge 2007) 526-537

Fieldtrip To Pompeii

Reading #15

P. Wilkinson, *Pompeii. An archaeological Guide* (I.B. Tauris 2017) 21-62

WEEK 10

The Pleasures of the Body.

Reading #16

- a) M. Beard, *Pompeii, The Life of a Roman Town* (Profile Books 2010) 216-240
- b) G. G. Fagan, "Leisure," in D. S. Potter, ed., *A Companion to the Roman Empire* (Blackwell 2006) 369-379

Sex in the Archaeological Record.

Reading #17

- a) S. Levin-Richardson, *The Brothel of Pompeii. Sex, Class, and Gender at the Margins of Roman Society* (Cambridge UP 2019) 13-18
- b) S. Levin-Richardson, *The Brothel of Pompeii. Sex, Class, and Gender at the Margins of Roman Society* (Cambridge UP 2019) 64-80
- c) J. Clarke, *Looking at Lovemaking*, (University of California Press 1998) 308-321

WEEK 11

Sex for Sale.

Reading #18

- a) S. Levin-Richardson, *The Brothel of Pompeii. Sex, Class, and Gender at the Margins of Roman Society* (Cambridge UP 2019) 99-147
- b) S. Levin-Richardson, *The Brothel of Pompeii. Sex, Class, and Gender at the Margins of Roman Society* (Cambridge UP 2019) 40-63

The Roman Baths.

Reading #19

- a) G. G. Fagan, "Leisure," in D. S. Potter, ed., *A Companion to the Roman Empire* (Blackwell 2006) 379-384
- b) A. O. Koloski-Ostrow, "The city baths," in J. J. Dobbins, P. W. Foss, eds., *The World of Pompeii* (Routledge 2007) 224-256

WEEK 12

Sex in Art

Reading #20

- a) J. Clarke, "Sexuality and Visual Representation", in T. K. Hubbard (ed.), *A Companion to Greek and Roman Sexualities*, (Wiley Blackwell 2014) 509-533
- b) J. Clarke, *Looking at Lovemaking*, (University of California Press 1998) 206-240

Sex in Art

Reading #21

- a) A. O. Koloski-Ostrow, "Violent Stages In Two Pompeian Houses", in A. O. Koloski-Ostrow, C. L. Lyons (eds.), *Naked Truths: Women, Sexuality, and Gender in Classical Art and Archaeology* (Routledge 2000) 243-266
- b) J. Clarke, *Looking at Lovemaking*, (University of California Press 1998) 145-194

WEEK 13

Sex in Literature: Petronius, Satyricon.

Reading #23

- a) A. J. L. Blanshard, *Sex. Vice and Love from Antiquity to Modernity* (Wiley Blackwell 2010) 40-47
- b) T. K. Hubbard, ed., *Homosexuality in Greece and Rome. A Sourcebook of Basic Documents* (University of California Press 2003) 395-421

Final review

WEEK OF FINAL EXAMS AND SPECIAL ACADEMIC EVENTS

The Final Exam and Special Academic Events Calendar will be provided later in the semester.

Mandatory guided visit at the museum of Perugia (date and time TBA)

Bibliography

- C. S. Mackay, *Ancient Rome. A military and political History*, (Cambridge UP 2004)
- D. S. Potter, ed., *A companion to the Roman Empire* (Blackwell 2006)
- M. T. Boatwright, D. J. Gargola, N. Lenski, *A Brief History of the Romans* (Oxford UP 2013)
- M. Ward, F. M. Heichelheim, C. A. Yeo, *A History of the Roman People*. 4th ed., (Prentice Hall 2003)
- Fantham, Elaine, Helene Peet Foley, Natalie Boymel Kampen, Sarah B. Pomeroy, H.A. Shapiro, *Women in the Classical World: Image and Text*, (Oxford University Press 1994)
- A.O. Koloski-Ostrow, C. L. Lyons (eds.), *Naked Truths: Women, Sexuality, and Gender in Classical Art and Archaeology* (Routledge 2000)
- L. K. McClure, *Sexuality and Gender in the Classical World: Readings and Sources*, (Blackwell 2002)
- M. Johnson, R. Terry, *Sexuality in Greek and Roman Society and Literature. A Sourcebook*, (Routledge 2005)
- M. B. Skinner, *Sexuality in Greek and Roman Culture*, 2nd ed., (Wiley Blackwell 2014)
- Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks (ed.), *Gender in History. Global Perspectives*, 2nd ed., (Wiley Blackwell 2011)
- T. K. Hubbard (ed.), *A Companion to Greek and Roman Sexualities*, (Wiley Blackwell 2014)
- V. Izzet, *The Archaeology of Etruscan Society*, (Cambridge UP 2007)
- Sinclair Bell and Alexandra A. Carpino (eds.), *A Companion to the Etruscans*, (Wiley Blackwell 2016)
- J. Evans Grubbs, *Women And The Law In The Roman Empire*, (Routledge 2002)
- R. Knapp, *Invisible Romans*, (Profile Books 2011)
- A. Staples, *From Good Goddess To Vestal Virgins*, (Routledge 1998)
- Craig A. Williams, *Roman Homosexuality*, 2nd ed., (Oxford UP 2010)
- T. K. Hubbard, *Homosexuality in Greece and Rome*, 2nd ed., (University of California Press 2003)
- Ray Laurence, *Roman Passions*, (Continuum 2009)
- Sarah B. Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves*, (Schocken 1995)
- C. A. Faraone and L. K. McClure (eds.), *Prostitutes and Courtesans in the Ancient World*, (University of Wisconsin Press 2006)
- J. Clarke, *Looking at Lovemaking*, (University of California Press 1998)
- Leonie J. Archer, Susan Fischler, Maria Wyke (eds.), *Women in Ancient Societies. An Illusion of the Night*, (The Macmillan Press 1994)
- J. J. Dobbins, P. W. Foss, eds., *The World of Pompeii* (Routledge 2007)
- J. Berry, *The Complete Pompeii*, (Thames & Hudson 2007)
- M. Beard, *Pompeii, The Life of a Roman Town* (Profile Books 2010)
- A. J. L. Blanshard, *Sex. Vice and Love from Antiquity to Modernity* (Wiley Blackwell 2010)
- S. Levin-Richardson, *The Brothel of Pompeii. Sex, Class, and Gender at the Margins of Roman Society* (Cambridge UP 2019)