

High School Humanities: Rome, The Eternal City

In this class, students will seek a deeper understanding of ancient Roman civilization, from the legendary roots of the city's founding in 753 B.C. to the remnants left after the empire's fall in 476 A.D. With this aim, we will read and discuss together key literary, historical, and philosophical texts by prominent Roman authors such as Virgil, Cicero, and St. Augustine of Hippo. Although the two semesters will focus primarily on pre-Christian Rome, the second will also cover the coming of Christ and his Church into the context of a Roman world. Recurring topics of discussion will include the character of the Roman people, the singularity of Rome's achievements, and Rome's role in the continuation of Western civilization, with special regard to the Christian culture of the Middle Ages.

The format of the class will be mainly discussion based with some lectures. Students should expect 40-60 page weekly readings as well as occasional writing assignments, including short essay questions and two 3-5 page papers. I will grade any submitted assignments and evaluate participation; parents, however, are free to determine the weight of each score for the final mark or excuse their students from any assignment altogether. This class may count toward high school credits in literature and/or history.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS

9/14	Group reading and discussion of introductory packet HW: Livy's <i>Early History of Rome</i>, Book 1, pg. 29-62; 78-104
9/21	Discussion of <i>Early History</i> HW: Livy's <i>Early History</i>, Book 2 - 3, pg. 107-224; 193-194; 203-221; 226-230; 233-266
9/28	Discussion of <i>Early History</i> HW: Livy's <i>Early History</i>, Book 4 - 5, pg. 303-307; 384-435
10/5	Discussion of <i>Early History</i> HW: Polybius' <i>Rise of the Roman Empire</i>, pg. 41-53; 214-233; 244-250; 267-276
10/12	Essay assignment; lesson on essay writing; discussion of Polybius' introduction HW: Polybius' <i>Rise</i>, pg. 364-368; 395-406; 427-428; 464-482; 508-513
10/19	Discussion of the 2nd Punic War; group reading of Appian handout HW: Polybius' <i>Rise</i>, pg. 302 - 352, and 12 Tables packet/worksheet
10/26	NO CLASS
11/2	1ST ESSAY DUE; lecture on Rome's constitution; discussion of the 12 Tables HW: Plutarch's <i>Life of Cicero</i>
11/9	Intro to the 1st c. BC and principles of classical rhetoric; discussion of Cicero's character HW: Cicero's orations
11/16	Discussion of Cicero's oratorical style and the Catiline episode HW: Plutarch's <i>Life of Caesar</i> and Shakespeare's <i>Julius Caesar</i>
11/23	NO CLASS

11/30	Discussion of Plutarch's and Shakespeare's portrayals of Julius Caesar HW: Plutarch's <i>Life of Cato the Younger</i> and selections from Lucan's <i>Pharsalia</i>
12/7	Lecture on Latin poetics; discussion of the character of Cato HW: Lyric poetry by Catullus and others
12/14	FLORILEGIUM DUE; discussion of lyric poetry HW: Virgil's <i>Aeneid</i>, Books 1-3, and a short creative writing assignment
	CHRISTMAS BREAK
1/18	Lecture on the age of Augustus; discussion of <i>Aeneid</i> HW: Virgil's <i>Aeneid</i>, Books 4 - 6
1/25	CREATIVE WRITING DUE; discussion of <i>Aeneid</i> HW: Virgil's <i>Aeneid</i>, Books 7- 9
2/1	Discussion of <i>Aeneid</i> HW: Virgil's <i>Aeneid</i>, Books 10 - 12
2/8	Discussion of <i>Aeneid</i> HW: Lucretius' <i>On the Nature of Things</i>, selections from Books 1 - 2
2/15	Discussion of Lucretius and Epicureanism HW: Selections from Epictetus's <i>Discourses</i> and Marcus Aurelius' <i>Meditations</i>
2/22	Essay assignment; discussion of Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, and Stoicism HW: Selections from Tacitus' <i>Annals</i> and Pliny the Younger's letters
3/1	Lecture on the emperors and the growth of Christianity; discussion of the readings HW: Early Christian writings
3/8	NO CLASS
3/15	2ND ESSAY DUE; discussion of early Christian writings HW: St. Augustine's <i>Confessions</i>, Books 1 - 4
3/22	Discussion of <i>Confessions</i> HW: St. Augustine's <i>Confessions</i>, Books 5 - 7
3/29	Discussion of <i>Confessions</i> HW: St. Augustine's <i>Confessions</i>, Books 8 - 9
4/5	Discussion of <i>Confessions</i> HW: Boethius' <i>Consolation of Philosophy</i>, Book 1
4/12	Written reflection assignment; discussion of <i>Consolation</i> HW: Boethius' <i>Consolation</i>, Book 2
	EASTER BREAK
5/3	FLORILEGIUM DUE; discussion of <i>Consolation</i> HW: Recitation practice and written reflection
5/10	REFLECTIONS and RECITATIONS; concluding discussion