



HIST 388
The Ancient City

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 He/him

HIST 388 Course Overview

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Please do not use the Blackboard email feature; instead, contact me via email using the address given above.

Virtual Office Hour Meetings will be available by appointment. There will be a standing “Office Hours” session in the class BCU (Blackboard Collaborate Ultra) link on our Blackboard page. Email me to set up a specific meeting day/time.

Important: This is an asynchronous online course, meaning that we do not have any scheduled day/time to meet digitally or in person. All content will be delivered via Blackboard (Bb) through lecture videos. You also have a required textbook for the course (see below) which will be essential in providing background and context for the videos. You also have assignments from one of these textbooks. All deadlines/due dates are scheduled for Eastern Standard Time (EST).

Checking your GMU email account regularly (I would advise at least once a day) is essential, since this is the only way that I can communicate important information to you about the class.

By registering for an asynchronous online course, you are assuming the responsibility of keeping up with all assignments, instructions and communications about the course. You will need to manage your time accordingly and hit the deadlines set out in the syllabus. I will communicate any changes in the schedule to you by email/Bb announcement.

Course Description

Spanning the Mediterranean basin and extending into Europe and North Africa, the Roman Empire included a wide variety of urban spaces. In this course, we will examine what it meant to be a city in this vast empire, with particular attention paid to Rome as capital of that empire. As such it established prototypical monuments which were exported outward. During the Roman Republic, Rome grew haphazardly, shaped by the political ambitions of figures like Julius Caesar. During the Imperial period, motivated by a sense that the city was not appropriately grand, Emperors from Augustus to Constantine intervened in the fabric of the city with the intention of creating a capital suitable to the glory of their empire. Against the backdrop of Hellenistic Greek cities like Pergamon and Alexandria in Egypt, Rome strove to create its own cosmopolitan urban identity. Sites like Ostia, port city of Rome, and Pompeii, with its extensive preservation, reflect the developments in architecture and design in the capital while offering glimpses into a working-class city and a small but prosperous town, respectively, that offer insight into different strata of Roman society. By examining the individual architectural elements and organization from these three ancient cities and others, we will observe the standard forms of urban Romanitas (“Roman-ness”) and its significant variations. This is an asynchronous online course that will include reading assignments with quizzes, online exams, and at least one written project.

Specific Course Learning Objectives

- To gain a basic knowledge of the origins and evolution of cities in Greco-Roman antiquity
- To learn the architectural types that populated the ancient urban environment
- To become conversant with the various forms of design and shapes of ancient cities
- To think conceptually about what makes up the various constituencies of the ancient city

To practice critical analysis and writing skills

Required Textbooks and Readings

1) Gregory Aldrete, *Daily Life in the Roman City: Rome, Pompeii and Ostia*. 2009. University of Oklahoma Press

[also available in digital format] ISBN 0806140275

2) Arjan Zuiderhoek, *The Ancient City*. 2016. Cambridge University Press. Abbreviated “AZ” below.

[also available in digital format] ISBN-13: 978-0521166010

Blackboard: any additional readings will be available as pdf documents on our Blackboard page under the Weekly module that they are assigned for.

To log in to Bb, go to <https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu> and use your Mason username and password (same as email).

IMPORTANT: both the required textbooks are essential. Beginning in Week 2, you will have written assignments that depend on the Zuiderhoek text. These assignments count a substantial portion of your grade (see below), so you need this book immediately. They are available through the campus bookstore and from other vendors, including in digital rental format.

Office of Disability Studies Documentation

Disability Services at George Mason University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students by upholding the laws that ensure equal treatment of people with disabilities. If you are seeking accommodations for this class, please first visit <http://ds.gmu.edu/> for detailed information about the Disability Services registration process. Disability Services is located in Student Union Building I (SUB I), Suite 2500. Email: ods@gmu.edu | Phone: (703) 993-2474

Once you have received your ODS accommodations, send the official documentation (Faculty Contact Sheet) to me as soon as possible; certainly well before the first test if you have accommodations for extra time. Accommodations can only be provided once I have documentation. If you would like to discuss your accommodations with me, please make an appointment for us to meet in BCU

HIST 388: The Ancient City Assignments, Assessments, and Requirements

<u>Graded Components</u>	<u>% of your final course grade</u>
5 chapters from AZ (drop 1, 4 x 12% each)	48%
Exam 1	10%
Exam 2	12%
Exam 3	15%
Ostia project	15%

Grading Scale:

A+ (100-97) A (96-93) A- (92-90) B+ (89-87) B (86-83) B- (82-80) C+ (79-77)
C (76-73) C- (72-70) D (69-60) F (59 and below)

A Note on Grading

On exams, your responses to questions will be graded against the information provided in the video lectures and the readings. You must take notes from the lecture videos so that you have the information to study and

to refer to when appropriate. If you are not certain about some point that was covered in any of these settings, it is your responsibility to ask for clarification. If you do not ask, I can only move forward on the premise that you have full command of the material—meaning that I will grade based on the assumption that you have the correct information at your disposal.

On the AZ and Ostia assignments, grading will be based on 1) how well you follow the directions, 2) how completely you accomplish the tasks, 3) how accurate your work is within each task. As with exams, if you do not understand a part of the assignment, please ask for clarification.

For both exams and assignments, I will be looking for specific, detailed information. Providing a vague, incomplete, or general response will result in the loss of some (or all) points.

Be aware: The use of AI to generate part or all of a response to any exam question or assignment is prohibited in this class. Use of ChatGPT or other AI engine to complete your work will be treated as an Honor Code violation. You will receive, at a minimum, a “0” on the assignment, and the violation may be forwarded to Student Conduct.

At any point during the semester, if you have a question or concern about grading policy, please communicate with me. I want to be transparent about how your grade is determined. I try to be clear by noting point values, percentages, etc. in the Syllabus, on exams, and in assignments. Again, however, if I do not know that you have a question about how the grading works, I cannot answer it for you. Rather than assuming that I will not discuss the topic, please make the effort and ask for clarification.

The AZ Reading Assignments

Your Zuiderhoek (AZ) textbook offers a conceptual analysis of Greek and Roman cities with each chapter devoted to a particular topic. This material is sometimes dense, but it is also a fascinating window into understanding the complexity of the ancient urban environment as well as the evolving scholarly approaches to the topic.

Each student will be responsible for 5 written assignments from AZ based on the chapters. I have divided the class into Group Alpha (odd numbered chapters) and Group Beta (even numbered chapters). The details of that assignment are provided in a separate document in the AZ Assignment Module on our class Bb page, including which group you are in. You are required to write on your assigned chapters, so keep up with which ones “belong” to you.

Together, your AZ assignment count for nearly half of your course grade (48%). Your lowest grade of the five will be dropped so that your highest 4 grades count 12% each. If you miss a deadline, you have a 48 hour grace period to submit with a -10 point penalty applied to your grade in the first 24 hours and a -50 penalty taken if you submit it during the second 24 hours. After 48 hours, your submission will not be accepted and you will receive a 0 on that assignment. You cannot “substitute” a different chapter. Waiting until the last minute and encountering a scheduling or computer problem is not a valid excuse for late work in this assignment since you know the deadlines weeks in advance. It is your responsibility to keep up with the deadlines and submit on time.

Ostia Project

Ostia is a well-preserved archaeological city site. It functioned as the port and a suburb of ancient Rome. The Ostia Project is designed to guide you through a virtual exploration of the site while connecting it to critical ideas of urbanism that we will be covering over the course of the semester. The project will act as a “capstone” for our investigation of the Ancient City.

Detailed instructions will be provided in a separate document in Week 9. The Ostia Project will be due in Week 13.

Exams

Much of our class will focus on looking at, considering and interpreting images of architecture, site plans and artwork within the cultural and historical framework of the ancient city. This means that the three Exams will include images; I will give you an image of a building, a plan, or a reconstruction (etc.) that we have discussed in the lecture videos and ask you questions about it based on the material covered in the video lectures and/or readings. Since the video lecture content follows this same pattern—image, discussion, explanation—you should be used to the approach by the time we get to the first Exam.

Much of what is presented in the content lecture videos will likely be new to you, even if you have a background in ancient culture. Remember: these works of art and architecture are primary source documents that inform us about ancient cities. The purpose of this class is to put those objects/works of art in their original context and understand their relevance to the urban environment in antiquity.

Taking notes from the content lecture videos is essential. Active listening will not be enough; reading the textbook and other assigned documents, while also critical, will not be enough by itself.

Important ideas that synthesize the material will be presented in the lecture videos.

You must study your notes to be prepared for the exam. I have no problem with you consulting your notes and even the readings on the exams, but if you have to look up every answer, you will not finish the exam. No extra time will be given. So, you must study for the exams in advance and use your notes sparingly.

The format of exams will consist of several short answer questions and a number of objective questions (fill in the blanks, multiple choice, true false, matching, sequencing, etc.). In some cases, there may be an essay question; I will provide a review guide and direction for any essay questions ahead of the exam (usually 7 days prior).

Lecture videos will not be available during exams, so you must complete them prior to the exams.

Exams will be run through Blackboard, appearing in the Testing Module. The exams will be timed (60-85 minutes depending on the exam). Each exam will be available for a 24-hour window from noon on the Friday to noon on the Saturday in the week which it is scheduled.

Exam dates:

Exam 1, End of Week 5: available noon Friday Feb. 16 to noon Saturday Feb. 17 EST

Exam 2, End of Week 11: available noon Friday Mar. 29 to noon Saturday Mar.30 EST

Exam 3, end of Week 15: available noon Friday Apr. 26 to noon Saturday Apr. 27 EST

Regarding exam scheduling: Because the exams are open for a long period of time—24 hours— and you know their dates in advance, there would be very few legitimate reasons to miss one. Even if you are working while taking classes, the window for taking quizzes and exams is big enough to accommodate almost any scenario and allows sufficient time to plan your schedule. If, however, you find yourself in extreme circumstances (e.g., death in the family, hospitalization, car accident, etc.) you have 24 hours from the end of the testing window to contact me to discuss whether a make-up quiz or exam is appropriate and possible. For the record, forgetting you had a test or not knowing you had a test or not planning for a test are not extreme circumstances. **If I don't hear from you within 24 hours, you will receive a 0 for that assessment.** Better to take the test and get an F than to receive a 0. Any make-ups must be taken within one week of the scheduled test date unless we determine that your situation makes this impossible.

If you experience a technical problem during an exam, take a screen shot of the problem/error message and email me immediately. If you send your message after the exam window has closed, you may not be eligible for a make-up exam. So long as the technical problem was beyond your control, you will have the opportunity to complete the exam.

Note-taking

I cannot stress this enough, so I will repeat it here. Although the readings in your textbook are critical for the course, video lectures and web resources will distill the essential information in the text and include material not found in the textbook; it is from all of these sources that Exams will be constructed, drawing especially from video lectures and web resources. You must take thorough notes in order to be prepared for the exams. If there are terms on a slide, include the term, its definition and application in your notes. This is a class based on close reading of materials and that means attention to details; most people are not able to retain all of the specific details without taking copious notes during video lectures. You should feel free to pause videos, rewind them and listen to some sections again if you need to in order to get the material.

Study these notes before the exams so that you are prepared. If you need to refer to your notes during the exam, that is allowed (see Exams section above). However, if you are dependent on looking up every answer, you will not have time to finish the exam. Extra time will not be given, so use your notes as a last resort rather than as your first response to the exam questions.

Viewing Graded Material in Blackboard

Once all submissions on a test or assignment are graded, you will be able to see the results of your work.

To do this, follow the instructions here:

<https://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/how-to-view-your-grades-and-instructor-feedback/>

Note that viewing the quiz requires that you **click on the name of the test or assignment in My Grades and, once it has loaded the next page, click on the score (which is in a blue font) there.**

The full test will only be available for 48 hours after I send out the announcement that you may view the test; after that you will only be able to see the questions, the one correct answer, and your response if incorrect.

Finally, Blackboard Grade Center includes a column that it calls 'Grade Total'. It is impossible to hide or delete this column, but it is irrelevant to your grade in this class. Ignore the 'Grade Total' and pay attention to the Running Course Average, which applies the weighted percentages (e.g. 21% for Exam 2) to your earned grades.

Blackboard and Blackboard Collaborate Ultra

Activities and assignments in this course will regularly use the Blackboard learning system, available at <https://mymason.gmu.edu>. Students enrolled in online courses at GMU are required to have regular, reliable access to a computer with an updated operating system (recommended: Windows 10 or Mac OSX 10.13 or higher) and a stable broadband Internet connection (cable modem, DSL, satellite broadband, etc., with a consistent 1.5 Mbps [megabits per second] download speed or higher).

For meetings, I will use Blackboard Collaborate Ultra (BCU) If you are not familiar with BCU, please take a few minutes and familiarize yourself with it using these tutorials, provided by Mason:

<https://help.blackboard.com/Collaborate/Ultra/Participant>

Especially useful will be the links ‘Get Started’, ‘Join Session’ and ‘Participate in Session’.

Keep in mind that GMU clearly states its expectation that online students will do the same amount of work for a course that is held in the classroom (8-10 hours per week); when taught face-to-face, this course meets twice a week for 75 minutes. That does not include time outside of class for reading, studying or carrying out assignments. You should be prepared to spend roughly this same amount of time with the online version of the course.

<https://masononline.gmu.edu/success/>

Other Important Information

- The university is a professional environment. You should treat your interactions with fellow students, faculty and staff as you would interactions in your professional life. Put another way, if your language, tone, actions, or behavior would raise an issue with HR in the workplace, then it is equally inappropriate for the University setting—online or face-to-face.
- The use of inappropriate, belligerent or profane language is not acceptable in the university setting, including on exams. I reserve the right not to grade an offensive exam, which means the grade would be a ‘0’. The situation would also be referred to the Student Conduct Office.
- Since the material in this course is based on the art and literature of other cultures, some topics of violence, gender, and sexuality may be outside of individual comfort zones, but we will deal with these subjects in an academic and intellectual manner.
- As a faculty member and designated “Responsible Employee,” I am required to report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s [Title IX Coordinator](#) per [university policy 1412](#). If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact the [Student Support and Advocacy Center](#) (703-380-1434) or [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) (703-993-2380). You may also seek assistance from [Mason’s Title IX Coordinator](#) (703-993-8730; titleix@gmu.edu).
- You must study to be prepared for exams, but I allow consultation of your notes or textbooks. Use of any material other than your own notes and textbook during tests will be treated as an honor code violation. Talking to anyone else about the exam (during the test or, once you have completed it, but before the other person has taken the test) will also be considered an Honor Code violation. At the very least, you will receive a “0” on the exam.
- Discuss any special academic needs with me at the start of the term. Do not wait until after the first test or later! Most accommodations (e.g. extra time) can be dealt with easily, but I need to know about them well in advance.
- The lengths of the assignments (readings, video lectures, etc.) vary so keep pace with the syllabus and be aware of deadlines.
- Any synchronous meetings in this class may be recorded to provide necessary information for students in this class. Recordings will be stored on Blackboard [or other secure site] and will only be accessible to students taking this course during this semester. Video recordings of class meetings that are shared only with the instructors and students officially enrolled in a class do not violate FERPA or any other privacy expectation.
- Use of an AI engine to produce responses for exams or assignments will be considered an Honor Code violation in this class.
- Extra credit assignments are not usually offered in the course. If I make the decision to offer one to the whole class, I will let the class know. Please do not ask me individually: no individual extra credit assignments will be offered.

HIST 388 Weekly Schedule, Spring 2024

A note on using this schedule:

All assignments (video lectures, readings) should be completed by the end of the week that they are assigned. There is a substantial amount of information presented in this class, and following this schedule will prevent you from falling behind. It will also ensure that you are ready for each exam.

The amount of reading and the number of lecture videos varies by week. You will need to have the required videos finished in time for each exam since the videos are not available during exams.

The AZ assignments are due each week from Week 2 to Week 12 by midnight on the Friday.

Occasionally, there are additional readings to the textbooks. These are included as pdf documents in the Blackboard folder for the week they are due.

I suggest approaching each week in the following way:

- Complete the reading assignment (and the AZ submission if it is your Group's week)
- Watch the lecture videos in the sequence that they are listed on the syllabus/appear in Bb, taking notes as you go

Week 1: January 16-19

Introduction to Greek and Roman Cities

Reading:

- Aldrete, Chapter 1 "Introduction: Roman Cities"
- Aldrete, Chapter 2 "History of Ancient Rome"

Video Lecture:

- Introduction to HIST 388: The Ancient City (17:09)
- HIST 388, Course Mechanics (7:34)
- Virtual Tour of Ancient Athens
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ulAxMLJ7O7M>
- Greek Cities and Amenities (19:31)
- Rome: Historical Context and City Layout (16:26)
- Roman City Design and Greek Influence (16:14)

Week 2: January 22-26

Conceptualizing the Ancient City in Theory and Archaeology

Reading:

- Zuiderhoek, Chapter 1 "Introduction: The Ancient City as Concept and Reality"*
- Aldrete, Chapter 14 "Pompeii: A Time Capsule of Roman Daily Life"
- Blackboard: Favro & Yegul, "The Question of Romanization: To be or not to be (Roman)?" from *Roman Architecture and Urbanism*, pp. 1-3.

Video Lectures:

- Ancient Alexandria in Egypt: A Hellenistic Greek City, parts 1-3
- Romanization (19:32)
- The Founding of Pompeii: 7th-6th cent. BCE (12:40)
- Greek and Roman Influence on Early Pompeii (18:06)
- Pompeii and the Social War of the Late Roman Republic (15:30)

* Group Alpha: your AZ assignment for Chapter 1 is due by midnight (EST) Fri. Jan. 26. See AZ instructions for details.

Week 3: January 29-February 2

Water and the Roman City

Reading:

- Zuiderhoek, Chapter 2 “Origins, Development and the Spread of Cities in the Ancient World”
- Aldrete, Chapter 3 “Infrastructure of Ancient Rome”

Video Lectures:

- Pompeii under the Roman Empire (17:04)
- Roman Hydraulic Engineering (31:51)
- Roman Public Baths: Custom and Engineering (25:51)
- Roman Public Baths: Pompeii (23:28)
- <https://theconversation.com/talking-heads-what-toilets-and-sewers-tell-us-about-ancient-roman-sanitation-50045>

Group Beta: your AZ assignment for Chapter 2 is due by midnight (EST) Fri. Feb. 2. See AZ instructions for details.

Week 4: February 5-9

Life and Death in the Ancient City

Reading:

- Zuiderhoek, Chapter 3 “City and Country”
- Aldrete, Chapter 6 “Living and Dying in Ancient Rome”

Video Lectures:

- Introduction to the Roman Domus and the Morning Salutation (20:47)
- The House of the Faun and the House of the Gilded Cupids (21:23)
- The House of the Small Fountain and the House of the Vettii (19:47)
- On YouTube: Housing and Houses in Ancient Rome - Domus, Insula, Villa
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aDE4H4dhAkI>
[pay particular attention to the information on the Insula and Villa in this video]

Group Alpha: your AZ assignment for Chapter 3 is due by midnight (EST) Fri. Feb. 9.

Week 5: February 12-16

Danger and Death in the Ancient City

Reading:

- Zuiderhoek, Chapter 4 “Urban Landscape and Environment”
- Aldrete, Chapter 7 “Dangers of Life in Ancient Rome”

Video Lectures:

- Julio-Claudians: Nero and the Great Fire of 64 CE
- The Suburbium and Roman Tombs (28:48)
- Roman Tombs, part 2 (26:45)
- Roman Burial video from the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BadpsCmaTR0>

Group Beta: your AZ assignment for Chapter 4 is due by midnight (EST) Fri. Feb. 16.

Exam 1, End of Week 5

Week 6: February 19-23

Political Space in the Ancient City

Readings:

- Zuiderhoek, Chapter 5 “Politics and Political Institutions”
- Aldrete, Chapter 4 “Government of Ancient Rome”

Video Lectures:

- Forum at Pompeii: Origin and Developments (25:55)
- The Forum at Pompeii: Politics (19:00)
- The Forum at Pompeii: Commerce (19:16)

Group Alpha: your AZ assignment for Chapter 5 is due by midnight (EST) Fri. Feb. 23.

Week 7: February 26-March 1

Sacred Space and Ritual in the Ancient City

Reading:

- Zuiderhoek, Chapter 6 “Civic Ritual and Civic Identity”
- Aldrete, Chapter 10 “Religion in Ancient Rome”

Video Lectures:

- Public Religion at Pompeii (21:02)
- Roman Private Religion at Pompeii (19:25)

Group Beta: your AZ assignment for Chapter 6 is due by midnight (EST) Fri. Mar. 1.

Week 8: Spring Break (March 4-8)

Week 9: March 11-15

Social Status in the Roman City

Reading:

- Zuiderhoek, Chapter 7 “Urban Society: Stratification and Mobility”
- Aldrete, Chapter 5 “The People of Ancient Rome”

Video Lectures:

- Self-Representation in Roman Society: Elite Males (25:09)
- Self-Representation in Roman Society: Women (17:22)
- Self-Representation in Roman Society: Free-born and Non-elites (11:29)
- Self-Representation in Roman Society: Slaves and Freedmen (*liberti*) (20:37)

Group Alpha: your AZ assignment for Chapter 7 is due by midnight (EST) Fri. Mar. 15.

Ostia Project will be released this week.

Week 10: March 18-22

Economics and Urbanism

Reading:

- Zuiderhoek, Chapter 8 “The Urban Economy”

- Aldrete, Chapter 12 “The Economy and Ancient Rome”

Video Lectures:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AAIDgGi4vZ0>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NboXuLjnxE>

Group Beta: your AZ assignment for Chapter 8 is due by midnight (EST) Fri. Mar. 22.

Week 11: March 25-29

Imperial Rome

Reading:

- Zuiderhoek, Chapter 9 “City-States and Cities and States”
- Aldrete, Chapter 11 “The Emperors and Ancient Rome”

Video Lectures:

- The Augustan Age: Augustus and the City of Rome
- The Flavian Dynasty: the Flavian Palace on the Palatine
- The Forum of Trajan
- Constantine and the City of Rome

Group Alpha: your AZ assignment for Chapter 9 is due by midnight (EST) Fri. Mar. 29.

Exam 2, End of Week 11

Week 12: April 1-5

Bread and Circuses: Entertaining the Urban Population

Reading:

- Zuiderhoek, Chapter 10 “The End of the Ancient City?”
- Aldrete, Chapter 9 “Entertainment in Ancient Rome”

Video Lectures:

- Spectacles and Entertainment Venues in the Roman World: Hellenization (16:24)
- Spectacles and Entertainment Venues in the Roman World: Circus Games (36:22)
- Spectacles and Entertainment Venues in the Roman World: Amphitheatral Munera (27:51)
- Entertainment at Pompeii: Sponsoring and Scheduling Spectacles (16:22)
- Riot with the Nucerians (12:53)

Group Beta: your AZ assignment for Chapter 10 is due by midnight (EST) Fri. Apr. 5.

Week 13: April 8-12

Streets and Neighborhoods in the Roman City

Reading:

- Viitanen, Eeva-Maria, Laura Nissinen, and Kalle Korhonen. 2012. “Street Activity, Dwellings and Wall Inscriptions in Ancient Pompeii: A Holistic Study of Neighbourhood Relations.”
- J. Hartnett, *The Roman Street* (excerpts from the introduction).

Lecture Video:

- To be announced

Ostia Project due by the end of Week 13

Week 14: April 15-19

Navigating the Ancient City

Reading:

- Roger Ling, "A Stranger in Town: Finding the Way in an Ancient City," *Greece and Rome* 37 (1990): 204-214.

Video Lecture:

- Navigating to/in the Ancient City: Problems (16:43)
- Cognitive Mapping in the Urban Environments of Antiquity (27:01)

Week 15: April 22-26

Wrapping up the Ancient City

Reading:

- Aldrete, Chapter 15 "Conclusion: Three Visions of Roman Urbanism"

Lecture Video:

- To be announced

Exam 3, end of Week 15