

ARTH 311
Ancient Pompeii: Roman Urbanism and Culture
Dr. Christopher Gregg
(he/his/him)

Office: 3204 Horizon Hall
Office Hours: 3-4pm Tuesdays or by appointment

Email: cgregg@gmu.edu

Classroom: Art & Design L008

Tues/Thurs 12:00-1:15

Course Description

Since its rediscovery over 200 years ago, the Roman city of Pompeii has fascinated the modern world. This minor Roman town, entombed by a volcanic eruption in 79 CE, has fired the imagination of both scholars and artists. As an example of Roman civilization, Pompeii gives us a view into a past society that has had a tremendous impact on Western European and North American architecture, art, law and literature. This class will use the unparalleled physical remains of Pompeii's art, architecture and infrastructure as well as primary Roman literary source material in translation to explore the complex urban and cultural environment of this ancient civilization. Class discussion, critical reading of sources, visual analysis, application of critical ideas will all play significant parts in our multi-disciplinary approach to interpreting this familiar yet "foreign" culture. This course satisfies the Mason Core Arts requirement. ARTH 311 can also be taken multiple times so long as the topics are different.

Learning Objectives

- To perceive the interconnected nature of culture and urban form
- To apply basic concepts of civic design within a cultural context
- To obtain an in-depth knowledge of the structure and decoration of Pompeii
- To understand the cultural forces that shaped the urban structure of Pompeii
- To gain an understanding of ancient Roman civilization as manifested through its urban structures

Teaching modality

This course is a face-to-face (f2f) in-person class. We will meet in the classroom for most of our lectures. However, there will be at least two days in the semester (Sept. 14 and Oct. 12) where lectures are delivered only as recorded videos on Blackboard with the opportunity to ask questions the following class day (an arrangement called a 'Flipped Classroom'). I will also employ lecture videos as homework periodically throughout the semester to supplement our class time or if I am unable to teach for any reason.

Textbooks *

Joann Berry, *The Complete Pompeii*. Thames & Hudson.

Any format of Berry (hardback, paperback, or digital) is acceptable. Versions dated after 2007 are reprints, not new editions, so the information is the same in all copies.

Gregory Aldrete, *Daily Life in the Roman City: Rome, Pompeii and Ostia*.
2009. University of Oklahoma Press [also available in digital format]

Blackboard: some readings will be available as pdf documents on our Blackboard (Bb) page under the Course Content tab on the left-hand side of the screen. To login, go to <https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu> and use your Mason username and password (same as email).

*Both the Berry and Aldrete texts are required reading for the class. Reading assignments are listed on the syllabus and should be done prior to the class meeting on the day that they are assigned. You are not required to bring these texts to class. Discussion material will often be found on Blackboard; copies of discussion documents should be brought to class.

Grading Percentages

Exam 1	Sept. 28	20%
Exam 2	Nov. 9	20%
Exam 3	Nov. 30	15%
Reading Quizzes		20% (5 quizzes, lowest grade dropped; 4 at 5%)
City Census Project	Oct. 26	17%
Pass the Garum Assignment	Nov. 7	8%

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)

Exams

Exams will potentially include image identifications, architectural diagrams, terms, dates, and essays. The format will include short answer, fill in the blanks, multiple choice, and true/false as well as an essay (see below). Material will come from textbook, lecture, and digital readings.

The exams for this class will be conducted through Blackboard rather than in the classroom. On exam days, you will not come to class but rather take the test on a computer of your choice. The testing period, however, will be the normal class meeting time (1:30-2:45) plus 10 extra minutes.

I will provide a study guide one week in advance of each exam date. The study guide will include two essay question choices. You should write out **full versions of a response to each essay option** in advance of the testing period; during the test, you will upload your response to the essay that I specify on the exam (you will not be given a choice, so you must be ready for either option).

Attempting to wait and write the essay during the exam will result in either too brief/vague an essay or insufficient time for the rest of the exam questions. You should have both options written out fully: re-read, edit and revise your essay responses as a part of your exam preparation before the test begins so that they are ready to submit at the start of the exam period. Once uploaded, you can proceed to the short answer and objective questions of the exam with plenty of time to complete them.

The essay will count for approximately 40% of each exam, so you need to take these essay questions seriously as they will dramatically affect your grade in the class.

Note-taking

Although the readings in your textbook are essential for the course, class lectures will distill the critical information in the text and include material not found in the textbook; it is from the class lecture that exams will draw most heavily. 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 studying copious notes taken during lecture. Do not assume that showing up to class and simply “listening” will be sufficient to prepare you for exams.

Discussions and Reading Quizzes

As you look through the syllabus schedule, you will see that some class periods are designated as “discussions”. On these days, there may be some lecture, but the bulk of our class time will be spent as a roundtable discourse, talking about the reading assignments for those days. Keeping up with the reading is important for every class meeting, but it is especially necessary in order to have productive discussions. Read the discussion material

carefully before class, take note of essential ideas/concepts and have a copy (digital or printed) of the discussion documents with you in class to facilitate our unpacking of these often-complex texts.

Reading Quizzes will help prepare you for our discussions by stressing certain concepts or facts. The Reading Quizzes will become available at 5:00pm EST the day before the class in which the reading/lecture videos will be discussed; the quiz will remain available until 11:50am the day of the discussion. Each quiz will consist of 3-6 objective questions (multiple choice, fill in the blanks, true/false, etc.) and will be administered through Blackboard, in the Testing Module on our Bb class page.

Over the course of the semester, there will be 5 Reading Quizzes: they are noted on the syllabus' schedule. The lowest Reading Quiz grade will be dropped. The remaining 4 quizzes will each count 5% of your final course grade.

Material from the Reading Quizzes and the discussion questions will appear on exams, so you need to take thorough notes on these discussions.

City Census Project

This project will ask you to research one of the many cities of the Roman Empire as well as travel to and from that city. You will be assigned a city and provided with a PowerPoint template to fill out with specific information. Some research resources will also be provided; other information you will need to research on your own.

Details of this project will be provided later in the semester, during Week 5 or earlier.

It is due in Week 10 **by 5:00 pm EST Thursday, October 26th**.

Pass the Garum Assignment

Food is an essential part of any culture, and Pompeii had surprisingly large number of “fast food” restaurants. The houses of Roman elite were also designed around entertaining spaces, especially areas for banquets. This assignment will acquaint you with Roman cooking through the blog <https://pass-the-garum.blogspot.com> (ignore the link to the ‘new’ website on the homepage). Details will be provided separately; the assignment will be due Week 12, **Tuesday Nov. 7 by noon (start of class) EST**.

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 aggressive, 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).

- 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 and readings vary so keep pace with the syllabus and be aware of deadlines.
- 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.

Finally, all GMU policies on academic honesty will be applicable in this class. If you are unfamiliar with these policies, please visit <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/> and acquaint yourself with them.

Schedule for the Semester

Reading assignments/lecture videos should be completed for the date that they are assigned, *carefully* and *completely* before class. My lectures will assume that you are familiar with the assigned material and will often cover additional topics: on exams, you will be responsible for information from the text as well as lecture.

Blackboard: Readings & Video lectures

Readings not in the textbooks will be available in pdf format in the module named after the week that the reading is due, e.g., “Week 2, Aug. 29-31”. If there are multiple assignments for that week, the readings/lecture videos will be divided into subfolders within that week’s module. Not every week or class will have a video lecture or weblinks, but for those that do, treat these as homework assignments. Take notes and come to class prepared with any questions that you have from these videos.

August

Week 1

Tuesday 22 **Introduction: Why Cities and Why Pompeii?**

Reading

- Aldrete: Chapter 14

Thursday 24 **Cities of Empire: Rome and the Greek East**

Reading

- Aldrete: Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 (through “Brief Survey of Roman History”)

Week 2

T 29 **Hellenization and Romanization of Cities**

Readings on Blackboard:

- Blackboard: Favro & Yegul, “The Question of Romanization: To be or not to be (Roman)?” from *Roman Architecture and Urbanism*, pp. 1-3.
- C.J. Dalgaard et al., “Roman Roads to Prosperity: Persistence and Non-persistence of Public Goods Provision” (2018)

Th 31 **History of Pompeii**

Reading

- Berry: 6-33; 233-243

September

Week 3

T 5 **Discussion: Eruption of AD 79 and its Date**

On Blackboard: Video lectures on Roman Writing and Textual transmission

Readings on Blackboard

- Primary texts excerpted from A. Cooley's *Pompeii and Herculaneum: A Sourcebook*.
- "New Pompeii Graffiti May Rewrite History in a Major Way," Kristina Killgrove, *Forbes Magazine* 16 October, 2018.
- G. Rolandi, A. Paone, M. Di Lascio, G. Stefani, "The 79 AD eruption of Somma: The relationship between the date of the eruption and the southeast tephra dispersion," *The Journal of Volcanology and Geothermal Research*.
Focus on the results of the study and the incorporation of the scientific data with more traditional archaeological and literary sources.

Reading Quiz 1 on Blackboard in this module must be completed by 11:50am EST

Th 7 **Pompeii's Rediscovery and Impact on the Modern Age**

Reading

- Berry: 34-41; 46-63

Week 4

T 12 **Who inhabited the city? The Structure of Roman Society**

Video Lecture on Blackboard:

- Self-Representation in Roman Society: Elite Males (25 minutes)

Reading

- Berry: 86-91; 102-119
- Aldrete: Chapter 5 and Appendix I
- Roman Social Strata and Names 'handout' in Blackboard module

Th 14 **Religion in Pompeii**

Flipped Classroom: on this day, we will not meet in-person but you will need to watch these lecture videos before class next Tuesday.

Video lectures on Blackboard

- "Public Religion at Pompeii"
- "Roman Private Religion"

Take notes as you would in class; write down any questions that you have so that we can discuss them in the following class meeting.

Reading

- Aldrete: Chapter 10
- Berry: 186-209

Week 5

T 19 **Discussion: Religion in Pompeii**

Reading on Blackboard

- Keith Hopkins, “World Full of Gods (Time Travel in Pagan Pompeii, The Roman Context of Christianity)” from *World Full of Gods: The Strange Triumph of Christianity* (2001).

There is no Reading Quiz. We will also discuss the lecture videos assigned for the previous week on Roman religion.

Th 21 **Hydraulics and Bath Culture Among the Romans, part 1**

Reading

- Aldrete: Chapter 8 “Baths”
- Berry: 150-153
- <https://theconversation.com/talking-heads-what-toilets-and-sewers-tell-us-about-ancient-roman-sanitation-50045>

The City Census Project instructions will be available at the end of this week, due in Week 10. See [City Census Module on Bb](#).

Week 6

T 26 **Hydraulics and Bath Culture Among the Romans, part 2**

Review readings from previous class

Th 28 **EXAM 1**

October

Week 7

T 3 **The Forum of Pompeii**

Reading

- Aldrete: Chapter 14, “Public Buildings”
- Berry: 120-123; 126-133

Th 5 **The Forum and Economics of Pompeii**

Reading

- Aldrete: Chapter 14, “Public Buildings”
- Berry: 210-233

Week 8

T 10 Tuesday classes do not meet this week. This day is treated as an “academic Monday” so check your Monday classes to see whether they will meet.

Th 12 **Ancient Roman Spectacles and Entertainment**

Flipped Classroom: on this day, we will not meet in-person but you will need to watch these lecture videos before class next Tuesday.

Video Lectures on Blackboard:

- Entertainment and Spectacles in the Roman World: Hellenization (16:24)
- Roman Spectacles and Entertainment Venues: the Circus Games (36:22)
- Roman Spectacles and Entertainment Venues: Amphitheatral Munera (27:51)

- Entertainment at Pompeii: Sponsoring and Scheduling Spectacles (16:22)

Take notes as you would in class; write down any questions that you have so that we can discuss them in the following class meeting.

Reading

- Aldrete: Chapter 9

We will not meet in person this day

Week 9

T 17 **Entertainment at Pompeii**

Reading

- Berry: 134-149
- Blackboard:
Primary sources on entertainment from Pompeii, excerpted from Cooley, *Pompeii: A Sourcebook* on Entertainment (read the introduction and skim the remainder to get a sense of the types of textual evidence we have)

Th 19 **Discussion: Spectacles and Entertainers in the Roman World**

Reading on Blackboard:

- Robert Knapp, "Fame and Death: Gladiators," from *Invisible Romans* (2011): 265-289.
- "Gladiators at Pompeii" lecture video

Reading Quiz 2 on Blackboard in this module must be completed by 11:50am EST

Week 10

T 24 **Houses: Form, Function and Evolution**

Reading

- Aldrete: Chapter 6, "Domus" and "Insulae"
- Berry: 154-161; 178-185

Th 26 **Domestic Decoration: Fresco and Mosaic**

Video Lectures and Links on Blackboard

- Introduction to Roman Mosaics and Decorative Pavements (14:56)
- Alexander Mosaic video
<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/ap-art-history/ancient-mediterranean-ap/greece-etruria-rome/v/alexander-mosaic-c-100-b-c-e>

Reading

- Berry: 162-177

City Census Project Due by 5:00 pm EST Thursday, October 26th.
Upload through Portal in City Project Module on Blackboard.

Week 11

T 31 **Discussion: Reading and Writing the Roman House**

Readings on Blackboard

- Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, excerpts from *Pompeii: Houses and Society* (pdf)

Blackboard)

- Petronius Arbiter bio: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Gaius-Petronius-Arbiter>
- Petronius, *Satyricon* sections 28-50 (“Banquet of Trimalchio”)

Reading Quiz 3 on Blackboard in this module must be completed by 11:50am EST

November

Th 2 **Villas: From Elite Luxury Living to Agricultural Centers**

Reading on Blackboard

- Eric Moorman, “Villas Surrounding Pompeii and Herculaneum,” from *World of Pompeii* (2007): 435-454.

Week 12

T 7 **Roman Dining**

Video Links on Blackboard

Roman cooking demonstration, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cb2X9QXhdvI>

Note: if you would prefer not to watch meat being prepared for cooking, skip the section between the 8:36 minute mark and 10:45 mark. Everyone can also skip the battle reenactment, which for some reason runs between 10:45 and 14:44 marks!

A Roman banquet re-enactment,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9CqDKkcguDk>

Dining in Pompeii, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BQ5JSbVWiw>

Reading

- Aldrete, 111-113
- Web resource on Roman banqueting,
<http://factsanddetails.com/world/cat56/sub369/entry-6312.html>

Pass the Garum Assignment Due by the start of class (noon). Upload to Portal in the Assignment tab of the class Blackboard page.

Th 9 **EXAM 2**

Week 13

T 14 **Discussion: City planning and Organization of space**

Reading on Blackboard

- Roger Ling, “A Stranger in Town: Finding the Way in an Ancient City,” *Greece and Rome* 37 (1990): 204-214.
- Ray Laurence, “Deviant Behaviour” excerpt from *Pompeii: Space and Society*

Reading Quiz 4 on Blackboard in this module must be completed by 11:50am EST

Th 16 **Discussion: The Neighborhood and Street-life**

Readings on Blackboard

- 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).

Reading Quiz 5 on Blackboard in this module must be completed by 11:50am EST

Week 14

T 21 **Cognitive Mapping and Navigating Urban Spaces in Antiquity**

Video Lectures in Blackboard

- “Navigating to/in the Ancient City: Problems” (17 min.)
- “Cognitive Mapping in the Urban Environments of Antiquity” (27 min.)

Reading on Blackboard:

- William MacDonal, *Architecture of the Roman Empire*, volume II: excerpts on Armatures

Th 21 **Thanksgiving Break, no class**

Week 15

T 28 **The Suburbium and Roman Tombs**

Video link on Blackboard

- Roman Burial video from the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BadpsCmaTR0>

Reading

- Aldrete: Chapter 6, “Burial” and “Funerary Inscriptions”
- Berry: 92-101
- Blackboard:
Petronius, *Satyricon* sections 70-72 (“Tomb of Trimalchio”)

Th 30 **EXAM 3**

Pompeii City Plan

As a part of Exam 1, you will be given a plan of Pompeii. You will need to be able to identify or place the requested structures on that map. You may be required to provide the name for the structure, placing it accurately in the map of the city or, alternately, the structure may be identified by a number, which you then label with the correct name.

Marine Gate
Herculaneum Gate
The Vesuvius Gate
Stabiae Gate
Nuceria Gate
Via dell'Abbondanza
Forum Plaza
Forum Baths
Stabian Baths
Suburban Baths
Temple of Isis
Triangular Forum
Theater
Odeon
Amphitheater
Large Palaestra
Lupanar
Castellum Aquae (small square just inside the Vesuvius Gate)
House of the Faun
Villa of the Mysteries

Also be able to generally define the areas of the 9 Regions of Pompeii.

The plan on pages 8-9 of your Berry textbook includes most of the structural features with a numbered key. The regions are color-coded on this same map.