

Course Info

- “Can any one be so indifferent or idle as not to care to know by what means, and under what kind of government, almost the whole inhabited world was conquered and brought under the dominion of the single city of Rome?”
— POLYBIUS

HIA 321: History of Ancient Rome. *3 hours, 3 credits.* In this course we will explore the foundation and development of the Roman state, including the rise and decline of the Roman Republic and the establishment and fall of the Empire, with emphasis on its political, economic, social, and cultural achievements.

Details HIA 321-A81 (55239), cross-listed with HIA 721-A81 (55243) and LEH 354-A18 (61052). Spring 2021.
Online only. Online meetings: Thursdays 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

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Rationale

The colossal achievement of the Romans—a single city indelibly suffusing its unique sensibility through the entire ancient Mediterranean world—is only part of the Roman story. The people of Rome gained economic, political, military, and cultural dominance over the ancient West and laid the foundations for the medieval and modern worlds through a fascinating mixture of synthesis and adaptation, on the one hand, and unshakable faith in the Roman identity, on the other. How the Romans acquired an empire, and how that empire constantly reshaped Roman society, tells us not only about the Western civilization that descended from them, but about the dynamics of society, empire, and power.

Specific Learning Objectives

In this course we'll be pursuing a number of goals, including:

- Exploration of the emergence of Roman civilization and its implications for humanity;
- Relation of the cultures and beliefs of other ancient Mediterranean societies to Rome's;
- Understanding the transformation of Roman social, military, religious, and other norms from the emergence of Rome as a city-state to its dominion of the Mediterranean world;
- Discussion of the relationship between the ideals of Roman tradition and the modern Western ethos; and
- Development of the skills associated with the study of history, including the interpretation of primary sources and other evidence.