



AP/HIST-CLST 3135 3.0, Fall Term 2020
SPECTACLE AND SOCIETY IN ANCIENT ROME

Course Director: Professor Jonathan Edmondson

Course Format/Time:

This course will be offered as a fully online course. The lectures will be pre-recorded in short segments and accessible via the course Moodle site, and all assignment guidelines and key information will be posted there weekly. Students will have the opportunity for scheduled, real-time meetings with Professor Edmondson for discussion and feedback at 2.30 p.m. on Thursdays, but these sessions will not be mandatory. All course components will be completed online

Course Description:

The course traces the development of gladiatorial presentations, chariot-races, and other public spectacles in Rome, Italy, and the provinces of the Roman Empire from c. 200 B.C. to A.D. 400. It concentrates on their changing nature, scale, and socio-cultural function. Themes explored include: the social, political, cultural, religious, and penal importance of public spectacles in Roman society; their economic organization; the diffusion of Roman public spectacles in Italy and the wider Mediterranean world as part of the spread of Roman imperial control and the cultural change that engendered; the geographical origins, social status, and everyday life of gladiators, charioteers, and other public performers; cultural attitudes towards gladiatorial presentations and other public spectacles at Rome. The course involves study of a wide range of primary source material –literary sources, inscriptions, visual and archaeological evidence– and a selection of the modern scholarly literature on public spectacle in the Roman world.

Course Organization:

Each week, the Course Director will post the recorded lecture (divided into manageable segments) and any other relevant material, and students can access this material at a time convenient to their schedules. Professor Edmondson will also hold live discussions via ZOOM on Thursdays at 2.30 – 3.30 p.m. during the original class time of this course, for students who are interested in discussing lecture or other class material, but these are not mandatory sessions. Professor Edmondson will also be available for live office hours, or by appointment if students cannot make posted times.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. demonstrate detailed knowledge of the development of public spectacle in ancient Roman society (Rome, Italy, and the Roman provinces) from the mid-Republic to Late Antiquity and develop an awareness of the limited and contested nature of that historical knowledge;
2. identify, describe, and analyze the various methodological and theoretical approaches to this field;
3. acquire a familiarity with the relevant primary sources – literary, inscriptional, visual, archaeological, and numismatic – and demonstrate an understanding of the specific nature of each type of source, identifying and assessing the problems that arise in using them;

4. read and critically assess some of the modern scholarship on public spectacle in Roman society, and demonstrate an understanding of some of the important debates and disagreements in this scholarship, developing an ability to critically evaluate critically these discussions;
5. develop skills in writing clear and effective essays, making use of different sources and following appropriate standards of presentation, and communicate knowledge effectively in examination answers.

Assignments and Grade Breakdown (tentative)

Assessment	Due date	Value (% of final grade)
Online Academic Integrity Tutorial	1 Oct., 11.59 p.m.	0% (but required)
Primary source analysis	22 Oct., 11.59 p.m.	15%
Major paper	26 Nov., 11.59 p.m.	40%
Short Quizzes	1 per module (due by 11.59 p.m. on the last day of the module)	10%
Short Reading Responses	1 per module (due by 11.59 p.m. on the last day of the module)	10%
Final Examination	In the December exam period (9-23 Dec.). Questions will be released at 9.00 a.m. on Mon. 14 Dec. and will be due by upload to the Moodle site by 11.59 p.m. on Sat. 19 Dec.	25%

Textbook (in addition there will be short primary and secondary source readings available via moodle each week)

Eckard Köhne & Cornelia Ewigleben (with Ralph Jackson), *Gladiators and Caesars: The Power of Spectacle in Ancient Rome*, Univ. of California Press, 2000. Available online via Archive.org: https://archive.org/details/bub_gb_5pzs975hnpoc/page/n31/mode/2up

Suggested Weekly Lecture Topics

Part I. Introduction

Module 1. Mechanics of the course. Spectacle and Society at Rome: The Social and Festal Context of Spectacle at Rome.

Module 2. The Anatomy of a Gladiatorial Presentation. Inaugurating the Flavian Amphitheatre ('the Colosseum'), AD 80: One Hundred Days of Festivities.

Module 3. A Day at the Races. The Anatomy of Chariot-Racing.

Part II. The Historical Development of *Munera Gladiatoria*

Module 4. The Roman Republic. Origins and Early Development to 100 BC.

Module 5. The Late Republic. Popular Entertainment or Political Bribery?

Module 6. The Early Empire. The Reforms of Augustus. Towards an Imperial Monopoly.

Module 7. The Emperor, the People and Spectacle. Commodus in the Arena.

Module 8. Municipal Games and the Spread of Roman Culture: Italy and the Provinces.

Module 9. Decline and Fall?

Part III. The Social and Cultural World of the Arena

Module 11. The Social World of the Gladiator and Charioteer. Social/geographic origins. Training and social world of performances. Gender and sexuality.

Module 12. Gladiators, Charioteers and Roman Culture. Elite and popular cultural discourse.