

# LS 810: Self and Society: The City of Rome in the Western Intellectual Tradition

Fall 2020

**Mondays 6:30-9:30 PM**

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## **Course outline:**

**Rome** – the eternal city, *caput mundi* and the place where all roads lead. This course explores the extraordinary power this city has exercised over the intellectual culture of the West. We begin our exploration by studying a series of ancient, medieval and Renaissance texts that shaped in fundamental ways the visions and experiences of later authors. We will spend the bulk of the course in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, examining works by some of Europe and America's most celebrated intellectuals. In the final weeks, we will move into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries and add film to our discussions. To help give focus to this chronologically wide-ranging course, we will give particular (though not exclusive) attention to examining how our texts speak to the following six themes (and, in the process, speak to one another):

1. Rome as a physical space (including architecture and the interaction between nature and the man-made environment)
2. War, violence and destruction
3. The spiritual landscapes of Rome and the city as a site of self-discovery
4. Art – its purpose, power and meanings
5. Time and history
6. Migration and the immigrant experience of Rome

This class will be taught remotely. (Please note that almost all teaching at SFU in Fall 2020 will be conducted through remote methods.) Class discussions will take place Monday evenings on Zoom (6:30 – 9:20 p.m., with breaks). Our discussions will be paired with occasional short background lectures; and each week, we'll devote some class time to analyzing together a work of Roman art or architecture.

Written assignments for the course will consist of three analytical papers. The first paper requires you to examine a single text or a set of short readings from one week in the course. The second paper asks you to put in conversation with one another texts from different weeks (and different time periods). The third paper asks you to write on a single theme (or aspect of that theme) that we have discussed in the course and to draw on a number of texts to develop your analysis. You will have the option of writing this final paper in a

format other than a standard academic essay. Additional details about these assignments will be provided during the semester and well in advance of their due dates.

## READINGS

Our readings for LS 810 consist of the following five books and a selection of shorter readings (e.g. poems, essays, selections from larger ancient works). I will be supplying you with electronic copies of the shorter readings once the semester begins (if you are interested in seeing any of them in advance, please get in touch with me). You will be able to stream the two films through the SFU library. The five books listed below are available in paperback or electronic editions or both. You'll find them on Amazon.ca, Amazon.com, and/or Indigo.ca. If you'd like to order your books from a local bookstore, try Pulp Fiction, a favourite of GLS students in recent years. Here's their website: <http://pulpfictionbooksvancouver.com/>

**Charles Dickens, *Pictures from Italy***

Recommended edition: Penguin Classics, 1998. ISBN-13: 987-0140434316 (but any edition will do) (Note: the SFU library has an electronic copy of the Cambridge University Press edition, with unlimited user access).

**Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe, *Italian Journey***. Penguin Classics. Reissue edition, 1992. ISBN-13: 987-0140442335

**Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Marble Faun***

Recommended edition: Oxford World's Classics, Oxford University Press Reissue edition, 2009. ISBN-13: 987-0199554072 (but any edition will do)

**Amara Lakhous, *The Clash of Civilizations over an Elevator in Piazza Vittorio***. Europa editions, 2008.

**Percy Bysshe Shelley, *The Cenci***

Recommended edition: Kessinger Publishing, 2005 (but any edition will do)  
ISBN -13: 9781425464936

## DRAFT SCHEDULE OF WEEKLY READINGS

### Sept. 14th – Week I

**Livy, *History of Rome* (29 BCE – 17 CE), Book I. 1-16**

**Virgil, *The Aeneid* (30-19 BCE), Book I. 1-296; Book VI, 752-97; Book VIII**

**Dionysius of Halicarnassus**, *Roman Antiquities* (c. 7 BCE), I. 9, 31, 45, 60, 77, 84, 89; II. 56

**Plutarch**, *Parallel Lives* (between 46-119 CE), Life of Romulus

**Cicero**, *De Republica* (54 BCE), II. 2-7

**Propertius**, *Elegies*, IV. 1 (after 16 BCE) (especially lines 1-76)

Sept. 21st – Week II

**Livy**, *History of Rome* (29 BCE – 17 CE), Book V – on the sack of Rome (390 BCE)

**Horace**, *Satires* (c. 35 BCE), Satire II. 6 – on life in Rome

**Ovid**, *Tristia* (after 8 CE), Books I.I, I.III – on his exile from Rome

**Pliny the Elder**, *Natural Histories* (77-79 CE), Books 1 and 36 – Rome's buildings

**Juvenal**, *Satires* (early 2nd century CE), Satire III – on life in Rome

Sept. 28 – Week III

**Augustine**, *Confessions* (c. 398-400 CE), VI. 8

*City of God* (c. 413-426 CE), Books 1 – 3, selections

**Francesco Petrarca (Petrarch)**, *Familiars* (1337), II. 14; VI. 2; *Seniles*, IX. 1

**Boccaccio**, *Decameron* (1348-53), Book I, second story

**Raphael**, *Letter to Pope Leo X* (1519)

**Joachim Du Bellay**, *The Antiquities of Rome* (1553-8)

“Description of Rome” (1553-8)

Oct. 5th – Week IV

**Johann Joachim Winckelmann**, selected essays: “Description of the Torso in the Belvedere in Rome” (1759); “Essay on the Capacity for the Sentiment for the Beautiful in Art” (1763); “Instructions for the Connoisseur” (1759); “On Grace in Works of Art” (1759)

**John Dyer**, *The Ruins of Rome* (1740)

**Edward Gibbon**, *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776-89), selections on the city of Rome from Vols. 1, 3, 4, 6

Oct. 12th - THANKSGIVING

Oct. 19th – Week V

**Lord Byron**, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Canto IV (1812-16) (our focus will be on Stanzas 78-186)

**Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe**, *Italian Journey* (1816) (especially 128-76; 346-498 in the Penguin Edition)

Oct. 26th – Week VI

**Percy Bysshe Shelley**, *The Cenci* (1819); and “The Coliseum” (1818)

**Mary Shelley**, “Valerius: the Reanimated Roman” (1819)

Nov. 2nd – Week VII

**Charles Dickens**, *Pictures from Italy* (1846)

**Margaret Fuller**, *Dispatches from Rome* (1848), selections TBA

Nov. 9th – Week VIII

**Nathaniel Hawthorne**, *The Marble Faun* (1860)

Nov. 16th – Week IX

**Mark Twain**, *The Innocents Abroad* (1867), Chapter 1; Chapters 26-28

**Thomas Hardy**, selected poems (1887): “Rome: the Vatican: Sala delle Muse”; “Roman Gravemounds”; “Rome: On the Palatine”; “Building a New Street in the Ancient Quarter”; “At the Pyramid of Cestius near the Graves of Shelley and Keats”

**Oscar Wilde**, selected poems (1880s- 1900): “Rome Unvisited”; “Burden of Itys”; “Urbs Sacra Aeterna”

**Henry James**, *Italian Hours*, essays on Rome (1872-1909): “Roman Rides”; “Roman Holiday”; “The After-Season in Rome”; “From a Roman Notebook”;

Nov. 23rd – Week X

**Roberto Rossellini** (dir.), *Rome, Open City* (1945; Criterion Collection; 2009)

**Pier Paolo Pasolini**, selected poetry: “Tears”

Nov. 30th – Week XI

**Vittorio De Sica** (dir.), *Bicycle Thieves* (1948; Criterion Collection, 2007)

**Alberto Moravia**, *Roman Tales* (1954), selected stories: “The Baby”; “The Terror of Rome”; “Don’t Delve Too Deeply”; and “The Girl from Ciociaria”

**Pier Paolo Pasolini**, selected poetry: “The Holiday Over”; “The Weeping of the Excavator”; “The Privilege of Thinking”; “Roman Evening”; “Triumph of the Night”

Dec. 7th – Week XII

**Amara Lakhous**, *The Clash of Civilizations over an Elevator in Piazza Vittorio* (2008)