



The U50 College Masters' Lecture Series

Vanier College

The War on Terror in the First Century

Dr. Paul Swarney

Emeritus Professor

York University

Wednesday March 18, 2009

6:00 p.m. Reception

7:00 p.m. Seminar

Renaissance Room, 001 Vanier College

Wars against terror – at least as we now appear broadly to define the terms - were notable features in the world of Caesar Augustus and his immediate successors. Attacks in what are now modern Iraq, Israel, Egypt and Germany generated calls for vengeance, retribution and solutions most of which proved as violent and dangerous as the attacks themselves. The era beginning with Augustus and ending with the death of Nero finally concluded with two horrendous acts of vengeance - the complete destruction of Cremona in Italy and Jerusalem in Judea. Reactions often produced internal squabbles among those seeking to right perceived wrongs and dangerous shifts in public opinion about on how to deal with these ancient "terrorists." The outcome of debates about diplomatic or military solutions nearly bankrupted the Roman system and almost destroyed absolutely those who were targeted as terrorists. The use and abuse of terror as instruments for promoting political and even religious agendas in the first century are perhaps distant rumblings, remarkably echoed in our own age.



Paul Swarney, who is currently a senior scholar in Classical Studies, began his academic career in 1961 as a lecturer at Yale, where he attained his degree in 1965. He was at Dartmouth until 1967 when he came to York which, at the time, was more muddy York than a sprawling campus. As a member of both History and Humanities, he helped design and implement York's Programme in Classical Studies over which he served as Director for many years. He has also spent a few happy years at the Classical Institute in London, and the Istituto Papyrologico in Firenze, Italy. Within Classical Studies, he has fussed about in papyrology, which has provided opportunities to publish obscurely and densely, and to deliver learned but obscure papers in out of the way places like Oxford, Rome, Helsinki, Cairo, Athens, Berlin, Vienna, Copenhagen and Naples, and places in North America as well.