

## FW22 AP/HIST 4130 6.0A Problems in Roman History

Topic for 2022-23: Augustus and the Restoration of Roman Society after Civil War

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### Expanded Course Description (expanded from course calendar description):



The seminar engages in an in-depth analysis of a pivotal period in Roman history, 31 BC–AD 14, when Julius Caesar’s heir, the man who from 27 BC onwards was known as Augustus (in full, ‘Imperator [Commander] Caesar Augustus son of the Deified One’), gradually crafted a new political system at Rome after emerging victorious from fifteen years of bloody civil war that embroiled the whole of the Roman world, and beyond. His task was to reunify the ‘Roman Republic’ and ensure that the new, autocratic regime proved sufficiently palatable to the key sectors of Roman society: the senatorial elite, municipal elites in Italy and the provinces (the *domi nobiles*), ordinary Roman citizens, the army, and provincial subjects across the Empire. The seminar will explore the ways in which he sought to build that consensus: his devising of a political system that proved acceptable to most; his use of images, monuments, ritual, and literature to boost his own authority and acceptability; his radical redesign of the city of Rome, making it

a worthy imperial capital; his programme of social and moral reform; a series of overseas conquests of his armies that brought more territory than even before under Roman control and boosted Rome’s prestige; and his reforms of provincial administration to ensure the fiscal stability of his new regime. We will also take account at protests and opposition to what he was trying to achieve.

In the seminar, we shall read critically a selection of the most important source material (in translation) for Augustus’ achievements – historical accounts of his reign (esp. Suetonius, Tacitus, Cassius Dio), selections from literature of the Augustan period (Vergil, Livy, Horace, Propertius, Ovid), inscriptions (including Augustus’ own *Res Gestae*), portraits and sculpture, architectural complexes in Rome and elsewhere, coins, and archaeological and iconographic evidence – and some of the rich scholarly discussions of Augustus, to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the varied interpretations that his principate continues to elicit.

## Required Course Text/Readings:

\*TENTATIVE\*

Werner Eck, *The Age of Augustus* (2nd ed.), Wiley-Blackwell's Publishers, 2007. This short book will be read early in the course, as it provides an excellent introduction to the details of Augustus' reign and the topics that we will be tackling.

Jonathan Edmondson (ed.), *Augustus*, Edinburgh University Press, 2009. A collection of key articles on Augustus written between 1958 and 2001.

Both are available as e-books via Scott Library.

In addition, weekly readings of source material and scholarly articles and book chapters will be made available on the course eClass site.

## Weighting of Course:

\*TENTATIVE Grade Breakdown\*

<i>Assessment</i>	<i>Due date</i>	<i>Value (% of final grade)</i>
Ancient source analysis	Late October	15%
Research proposal and bibliography	Mid November	10%
Analysis of an article or book chapter	Mid January	10%
Brief presentation of research project	March	5%
Major research paper	8 April	35%
Brief reading responses (6 in Fall Term, 4 in Winter Term)	September – February	10%
Seminar Participation		15%

## Organization of the Course:

The seminar will meet for a 3-hour session once a week in a face-to-face format. Each week will be devoted to a discussion of a selection of ancient source material and modern scholarship on a range of different topics. Students will be expected to lead the discussion and come to class prepared to discuss the readings.

Consultation with the Course Director about the Major Paper (and all other aspects of the course) will take place in weekly Office Hours (Wednesdays, 1.00-2.00 p.m., or by arrangement).

## **Course Learning Objectives:**

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

1. demonstrate detailed knowledge of the period of Augustus' supremacy (31 BC–AD 14) and have an awareness of the limited and contested nature of that historical knowledge;
2. identify, describe, and analyze the various methodological and theoretical approaches most relevant to this particular field of study;
3. assess critically a range of different types of relevant primary sources – literary, inscriptional, visual, archaeological, numismatic – and demonstrate understanding of the specific nature of each type of source, identifying and assessing the problems that arise for historians in using them;
4. read and critically assess some of the modern scholarship on Augustus, and demonstrate an understanding of the important debates and disagreements in this scholarship;
5. demonstrate skills in proposing a coherent research topic, in identifying and analyzing the primary sources and scholarly discussions that are most relevant to that topic, and in organizing and writing a clear and effective major research paper. In this paper, they should demonstrate that they can make use of different sources, to follow appropriate standards of presentation, and to develop a cogent historical argument.