

Late Antiquity: 284-476 CE

CS 3490G (Winter 2025)

Dr. Alexander Meyer
Classroom: TBA



Course Description

This course will explore the world of the late Roman Empire from the rise of Diocletian in 284 CE to the end of the empire in the west in 476 CE. Throughout the term we will examine the political, religious, intellectual and social history of the late imperial period through literature, documentary texts, and material culture. We will also discuss the internal and external factors that caused Rome's "decline", as well as the rise of Christianity, the persistence of paganism, and the role of the classical tradition in this period. Finally, this course will consider the future of both the East and West after the fall of the western empire and how this affected the development of Europe and the Mediterranean world.

Instructor

Alexander Meyer is an ancient historian with particular interests in epigraphy, travel, migration, communication in the ancient world, timekeeping, perceptions of time and space, and field archaeology. Before coming to Western in 2012, he studied at the University of Pennsylvania, Tufts University and Duke University. He's also taught at Duke and at the Intercollegiate Center for Classical Studies in Rome. He is co-director of an archaeological field school at the Roman fort of Vindolanda on Hadrian's Wall in northern England and director of the Classics Department's Study Tour to Rome.

Contact Information

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Teaching Assistant

TBA

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Office Hours: TBA

Recommended Texts (for purchase)

Cameron, Averil. *The Later Roman Empire, AD 284-430*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993. (Cameron)

Maas, Michael. *Readings in Late Antiquity: A Sourcebook*. 2nd ed. London; New York: Routledge, 2010. (Maas²)

Additional Texts

All readings will be supplied electronically by the instructor through OWL. Be sure to allow yourself sufficient time to access them. Other readings are available on the internet. Links to those resources will be provided on the list of assignments or through OWL. Details will also be provided if you prefer to check these sources out of the library.

Course Objectives and Skills attained

Upon successful completion of this course students are expected to have:

- Extended their detailed knowledge of the Roman world to include the period from the accession of Diocletian to fall of the Western Roman Empire.

- Become familiar with the most important literary and documentary sources for the late Empire and early medieval period.
- Improved their ability to analyze and discuss ancient literary, documentary and archaeological sources critically.
- Conducted detailed research in one aspect of late antiquity.

At the end of this course students should have acquired:

- An understanding of the continuity and change that connect and separate the Late Empire from earlier phases of Roman history and from the early medieval period.
- An appreciation for the complex role of the early church in Roman history.
- An increased awareness of the potential and limitations of ancient sources (literary, archaeological and documentary).

Evaluation

Evaluation for this course will be based on one quiz, two short essays (1000 words), a final examination, in-class participation, and a short research paper (1500-2000 words). The quiz will test students' knowledge of the chronology of the late Empire and will include a finite set of information provided by the professor. The essays will be focused on specific readings and questions provided by the professor. The final exam will take place in the time and place determined by the registrar's office during the final exam period. This exam will be two hours long and include short answer questions and essays. Class participation grades will be determined by the quantity and quality of individual students' involvement in class discussion and group exercises. Each student will also be required to write a short research paper of 1500-2000 words on a subject approved by the professor. These papers should demonstrate familiarity with the relevant ancient sources and include a clear argument. Papers must be delivered digitally using Turnitin and in hardcopy to the professor. **Late submissions will be penalized 5 percent per day.**

Quiz: 5%

Essays: 30%

Final exam: 25%

Paper: 30%

Participation: 10%

Important Policies

Student Absences

If you are unable to meet a course requirement due to illness or other serious circumstances, please follow the procedures below.

Assessments worth 10% or more of the overall course grade:

For work totaling 10% or more of the final course grade, you must provide valid medical or supporting documentation to the Academic Advising Office of your Faculty of Registration as soon as possible. For further information, please consult the University's medical illness policy at

https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration.pdf

The Student Medical Certificate is available at

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf.

Student who miss tests in this course will be given the opportunity to take a make-up exam. The test and exam will not be reweighted.

Absences from Final Examinations

If you miss the Final Exam, please contact the Academic Advising office of your Faculty of Registration as soon as you are able to do so. They will assess your eligibility to write the Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam).

You may also be eligible to write the Special Exam if you are in a "Multiple Exam Situation" (e.g., more than 2 exams in 23-hour period, more than 3 exams in a 47-hour period).

If a student fails to write a scheduled Special Examination, the date of the next Special Examination (if granted) normally will be the scheduled date for the final exam the next time this course is offered. The maximum course load for that term will be reduced by the credit of the course(s) for which the final examination has been deferred. See the Academic Calendar for details (under [Special Examinations](#)).

Note: missed work can *only* be excused through one of the mechanisms above.

Religious Accommodation

When a course requirement conflicts with a religious holiday that requires an absence from the University or prohibits certain activities, students should request accommodation for their absence in writing at least two weeks prior to the holiday to the course instructor and/or the Academic Advising office of their Faculty of Registration. Please consult University's list of recognized religious holidays (updated annually) at

<https://multiculturalcalendar.com/ecal/index.php?s=c-univwo>.

Accommodation Policies

Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Accessible Education, which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities can be found at:

[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic Accommodation_disabilities.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic_Accommodation_disabilities.pdf).

Academic Policies

The website for Registrarial Services is <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>.

In accordance with policy,

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/policies_procedures/section1/mapp113.pdf,

the centrally administered e-mail account provided to students will be considered the individual's official university e-mail address. It is the responsibility of the account holder to ensure that e-mail received from the University at their official university address is attended to in a timely manner.

Scholastic offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously, and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf.

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

Statement on the use of plagiarism-checking software

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Support Services

Academic Advising

Your Home Faculty's Academic Advising Office will support or refer whenever you have an issue that is affecting your studies, including information on adding/dropping courses, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic related matters. Do not hesitate to reach out to them if you are struggling and unsure where to go for help. Contact info for all Faculties is here: https://registrar.uwo.ca/faculty_academic_counselling.html

Mental Health Support

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western (<https://uwo.ca/health/>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Gender-based and sexual violence

Western University [is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence](#) and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced gender-based or sexual violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts, [here](#). To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Accessible Education

Please contact the course instructor if you require lecture or printed material in an alternate format or if any other arrangements can make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Accessible Education at

http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html

if you have any questions regarding accommodations.

Learning Development and Success

Counsellors at the Learning Development and Success Centre (<https://learning.uwo.ca>) are ready to help you improve your learning skills. They offer presentations on strategies for improving time management, multiple-choice exam preparation/writing, textbook reading, and more. Individual support is offered throughout the Fall/Winter terms in the drop-in Learning Help Centre, and year-round through individual counselling.

Digital Student Experience

Western University is committed to a thriving campus as we deliver our courses in the mixed model of both virtual and face-to-face formats. We encourage you to check out the Digital Student Experience website to manage your academics and well-being: <https://www.uwo.ca/se/digital/>.

USC

Additional student-run support services are offered by the USC, <https://westernusc.ca/services/>.