

“We never understand more than the half of things
when we neglect the science of Rome.”

- Pierre Manent, *The City of Man*

Political Science 7981

Classical and Medieval Political Theory: Rome

Fall 2005

What is liberty, and how does it relate to the common good? Does liberty foster virtue or depend upon it? Is republican government necessary for liberty or for virtue? Is virtue necessary for republican liberty? If republican virtues enable peoples to conquer empires, do empires corrupt the republics that acquire them? How, in short, can liberty be preserved and the common good achieved in a republic that dominates the world?

All of these questions – immediate as they may seem to Americans today – are formulated in terms that derive from Latin and express the political ideals of ancient Rome. Yet the political thought of Rome has been surprisingly absent in America from the study of political thought in the past half-century or more. The revival of political theory in the middle of the 20th century involved especially a rediscovery of the political philosophy of Greek antiquity. Even scholars not enamored of Plato and Aristotle gave the Greek polis pride of place, seeking there the origins of Western politics while acknowledging the vast differences between the little cities of ancient Greece and modern states. Rome, however, was the polis that grew to be an empire covering much of the world known to its inhabitants, the origin of numerous institutions that defined the Western world until only yesterday, and the preeminent model to the founders of modern politics of what can be achieved and what ought to be avoided in political life. In this course, we aim to correct that oversight and investigate the political theory of Rome, both in itself and in its influence on subsequent Western political thought.

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Course requirements:

Four 4- to 5-page papers on topics in the readings: copies for all due at the beginning of class every third week, with final version to be graded due that Wednesday at 9:00 am [40%]

Class attendance and participation [10%]

20- to 25-page seminar paper [50%]

Books available for purchase:

Jones & Sidwell, *The World of Rome* (Cambridge) [0521386004]
Aristotle, *Politics* (Chicago) [0226026698]
Polybius, *The Rise of the Roman Empire* (Penguin) [0140443622]
Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things* (Focus) [0941051218]
Caesar, *The Gallic War* (Oxford) [0192835823]
Sallust (Harvard/ Loeb ed.) [0674991281]
Cicero, *On Moral Ends* (Cambridge) [0521669014]
Cicero, *On the Ideal Orator* (Oxford) [0195091981]
Cicero, *Defence Speeches* (Oxford) [0192825127]
Cicero, *On Duties* (Cambridge) [0521348358]
Virgil, *Aeneid*, tr. Fitzgerald (Vintage) [0679729526]
Tacitus, *The Annals* (Hackett) [0872205584]
Augustine, *City of God* (Penguin) [0140444262]
Addison, *Cato: A Tragedy* (Liberty Fund) [0865974438]
Montesquieu, *Considerations on the Greatness of the Romans...* (Hackett) [0872204960]
Syme, *Roman Revolution* (Oxford) [0192803204]

Library Reserve:

Many of the readings for the course will be made available on reserve in Middleton Library. In addition, we may from time to time place on reserve certain secondary works that I think you might find particularly useful in helping you interpret the authors we are studying. It should go without saying that secondary works are no substitute for the assigned reading; indeed, read without knowledge of the originals they are more apt to mislead than assist you. At the same time, graduate students must begin to engage the scholarly arguments about the interpretation of the leading texts.

SYLLABUS:

- Mon., 8/22 INTRODUCTION: LATIN LITERATURE AND ROMAN POLITICS
Cicero, *Pro Archia* (15 pages; HANDOUT)
- Mon., 8/29 THE ROMAN CONSTITUTION
Aristotle, *Politics*, Book II (ch. 9-12), III (all), IV (all)
Polybius, *The Rise of the Roman Empire*, Book I (pp. 41-51), VI (pp. 302-352)
- Mon., 9/5 LABOR DAY
- Mon., 9/12 THE EPICUREAN VIEW OF POLITICS
Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things*, Book I (all), II (lines 1-61), III (all),
IV (lines 907-end), V (all), VI (lines 1090-end)
Cicero, *On Moral Ends*, Books I-II (pp. 3-64)
- Mon., 9/19 ROMAN IMPERIALISM
Caesar, *Commentaries on the Gallic War*, Books I-II (pp. 3-53);
IV (pp. 69-88); VI.11-28 (pp. 124-133); VII (pp. 142-194)

- Mon., 9/26 CIVIL DISCORD AND THE END OF THE ROMAN REPUBLIC
Sallust, *The War with Catiline* and *The War with Jugurtha* (pp. 1-381 odd)
- Mon., 10/3 THE STATESMAN IS THE ORATOR
Cicero, *On the Ideal Orator*, Books I-II.40 (pp. 57-134)
Cicero, "In Defense of Murena," in *Defence Speeches* (pp. 59-106)
- Mon., 10/10 THE STOIC VIEW OF POLITICS
Cicero, *On Moral Ends*, Books III-V (pp. 65-150)
Cicero, *On Duties*, Book III (pp. 101-147)
- Mon., 10/17 EPIC AND DUTY
Vergil, *Aeneid*, Books I-VI (pp. 1-192)
- Mon., 10/24 EPIC AND EMPIRE
Vergil, *Aeneid*, Books VII-XII (pp. 193-402)
- Mon., 10/31 THE CHARACTER OF THE ROMAN PRINCIPATE
Tacitus, *Annals*, Books I and IV-VI (pp. 1-41; 122-194)
- Mon., 11/7 ROME IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF CHRISTIANITY
Augustine, *On the City of God*, excerpts
- Mon., 11/14 ROME IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT
Addison, *Cato: A Tragedy*
Montesquieu, *Considerations on the Greatness of the Romans and their Decline*
- Mon., 11/21 ROME IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF HISTORY
Syme, *The Roman Revolution* (pp. 1-312)
- Mon., 11/28 Syme, *The Roman Revolution* (pp. 313-524)