California State University, Sacramento
Paganism in the Roman World
Spring 2015

Humanities and Religious Studies 117-01  Dr. Jeffrey Brodd.  Email: jbrodd@csus.edu
Mendocino 4004 Office: Mendocino 2024.  278-7703.  Hours:
Tuesday and Thursday, 12:00-1:15 M, W 11:00-11:45; T 4:00–5:45; and by appt.

Catalog Description: Survey of ancient Roman paganism, the wide variety of religious beliefs, practices, and institutions found throughout the Roman world. Topics include Greek influences, traditional religion, state and ruler cults, healing cults, oracles, astrology, mystery religions, priests and priestesses, prayer, sacrifice, and religious philosophies.
• HRS 117 counts toward Area C2: Humanities of the CSUS General Education requirements

Along with examining various religious forms and functions, the course will explore the place of religion within ancient political, socioeconomic, and private life, and its significance for members of various groups (e.g., citizens, non-citizens, women, children, slaves, and members of various ethnic groups). Emphasis will be on primary sources: ancient texts, archaeological sites, and artistic and other material evidence (ritual objects, inscriptions, coins, etc.). Lectures will be supplemented by visual presentations and by class discussion.

Learning Objectives

Students who successfully complete HRS 117 will be able to:
• Describe the basic features of religious belief and practice in Roman antiquity through critical analysis of a wide variety of classical literary sources (e.g. a novel, historical and philosophical writings, political speeches, personal letters, inscriptions, and graffiti) and of various forms of material evidence.
• Explain the functions of Roman religious institutions and the place of religion within ancient political, socioeconomic, and private life, including its significance for members of various groups (e.g., citizens, non-citizens, women, children, slaves, and members of various ethnic groups).
• Describe the significant historical developments of Roman religious beliefs, practices, and institutions over the course of one thousand years, from the founding of Rome to the decline of classical paganism.
• Explain the relationship of religious beliefs and attitudes to general cultural values of the Roman world.
• Demonstrate analytical reading skills, the ability simultaneously to extract and construct meaning when reading diverse works relating to paganism in the Roman world.
• Demonstrate written communication skills, through using appropriate structure, development, usage, and reference sources to write clear, purposeful, analytical prose.
• Demonstrate critical thinking skills, through comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion.

Texts

Required
Everett Ferguson, Backgrounds of Early Christianity, 3rd edition
Valerie M. Warrior, Roman Religion: A Sourcebook
Marvin W. Meyer, ed., The Ancient Mysteries: A Sourcebook of Sacred Texts

Standard reference works (not required for course)
SacCT and Turnitin

Our course SacCT 9.1 site will provide access to the syllabus, instructions on papers and other handouts, and grades. Papers are to be submitted via Turnitin (instructions will be provided).

Requirements and Grading

Active engagement with course content—readings, visual representations, lecture material—is essential. All reading assignments are to be completed prior to the meetings for which they are listed (see “Schedule and Assignments” below). Vocal participation in class is encouraged. Formal requirements and their correlative grade percentages consist of the following:

- Attendance and quality of participation: 5%
- First assigned paper (app. 1,500 words): 25%
- Midterm exam: 20%
- Second assigned paper (app. 1,500 words): 25%
- Final exam: 25%

A passing grade in the course requires (at a minimum) completion of the midterm exam, the final exam, and both assigned papers. Late papers will be accepted within two days of the due date only, with a reduction of one full letter grade. Exams must be taken at their scheduled times. Attendance is required; consult with the instructor if ever there is a need to miss class. Compliance with rules prohibiting cheating and plagiarism along with principles of courteous conduct are required (i.e., turn off cell phones and pagers, no ‘chatting’ during class, no leaving class without prior permission, no walking in front of the instructor if ever one needs to arrive late) (for the University’s policy on plagiarism, see: http://library.csus.edu/content2.asp?pageID=353).

Grades for assignments and for the course will be based on the following (e.g., 92% and above is an A):

- A 92, A- 88, B+ 84, B 78, B- 74, C+ 70, C 64, C- 60, D+ 56, D 50, D- 46, F below 46

Note: If you have a disability and require accommodations, you need to provide disability documentation to SSWD, Lassen Hall 1008; 278-6955. Please discuss your accommodation needs with the instructor after class or during office hours early in the semester.

Schedule and Assignments (reading assignments are underlined and are to be completed by date listed)

Introduction to the Roman World

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading Material</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tues 1/27</td>
<td>Preliminaries</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thur 1/29</td>
<td>Overview of Roman political history. Roman Religion (RR), 15-18 (2.1-3); Backgrounds of Early Christianity (BEC), 20-47; Golden Ass, Bk 1</td>
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<td>Tues 2/3</td>
<td>The Roman social order. Primary Roman values. BEC, 48-96; Golden Ass, Bk 2</td>
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<td>Thur 2/5</td>
<td>Aspects of Roman culture. Apuleius and The Golden Ass. BEC, 96-147; Golden Ass, Bk 3</td>
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<td>Tues 2/10</td>
<td>The myth of Cupid and Psyche. Golden Ass, Bks 4-8</td>
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<td>Thur 2/12</td>
<td>Lucius transformed. The Golden Ass as historical source. Golden Ass, Bks 9-11</td>
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Traditional Paganism of the State and the Public Sphere
Thur 2/26  Sacred time and sacred space. Religious aspects of war and games. \textit{RR}, 71-81, 89-90 (two sections on the games to Apollo, previously assigned), 115-125
Tues 3/3  Worship of the emperor. \textit{BEC}, 199-212; \textit{RR}, 127-138

Traditional Paganism of the Domestic and Private Spheres
Thur 3/5  Religion in the home and countryside. Magic, witchcraft, and astrology. \textit{BEC}, 177-182, 227-243; \textit{RR}, 24-30, 139-150

The Mysteries
Tues 3/17  Introduction to the mysteries. \textit{BEC}, 251-259; \textit{Ancient Mysteries (AM)}, 1-14
Thur 3/19  First paper due. Introduction to the mysteries (cont.)

(Spring Break; 3/31 is Cesar Chavez Day)
Thur 4/2  Eleusinian Mysteries. \textit{BEC}, 254-259 (previously assigned); \textit{Ancient Mysteries (AM)}, 17-45
Tues 4/7  Mysteries of Dionysos. \textit{BEC}, 259-265; \textit{AM}, 63-81; 99-109
Tues 4/14  The Great Mother and her consort. \textit{BEC}, 277-287; \textit{RR}, 91-97; \textit{AM}, 113-130
Thur 4/16  The Great Mother and her consort (cont.). Mysteries of Isis and Osiris. \textit{AM}, 130-154 (includes account from the \textit{Golden Ass}), 157-172
Tues 4/21  Mysteries of Isis and Osiris (cont.). Sarapis. \textit{BEC}, 266-276; \textit{RR}, 107-111 (includes account from the \textit{Golden Ass}); \textit{AM}, 172-196 (includes account from the \textit{Golden Ass})
Thur 4/23  The Cult of Mithras (cont.). \textit{BEC}, 287-296; \textit{RR}, 111-113; \textit{AM}, 199-221

Philosophy as Religion
Tues 5/5  Pythagoreanism and Platonism in the Roman world. \textit{BEC}, 379-395
Thur 5/7  Apuleius the Platonist. Introduction to \textit{The Golden Ass}, sections V-VII (xxx-xliii)
Thur 5/14  Second paper due. Summary and review

Final exam: Tuesday 5/19, 12:45–2:45 p.m.