

California State University, Sacramento
Rome 2011 Study Abroad
“Empire without End”: Augustan Rome and the Founding of the Principate

Program Overview

In the opening book of the *Aeneid*, the classical poet Vergil has Jupiter declare that the Romans are destined to achieve “empire without end.” Vergil composed the *Aeneid* during the reign of Augustus; it became one among many literary and other works of Augustan culture that provided a foundation on which Rome’s first emperor managed to establish the new era. The influence of Augustus’ “empire without end” persists even today. But we shall travel back to the period of its founding, to consider Augustan culture as it was made manifest in the emperor’s program of reform. The reign of Augustus stabilized a country, launched an empire, and left some of the most intriguing and enduring landmarks in a great world city.

This program combines the best of both academic exploration and urban travel adventure. During our two-week stay, participants will live in comfortable, furnished apartments in Rome, with easy access to the most famous and intriguing sites of the ancient city. Our days will be spent visiting monuments, archaeological sites, and museums, typically moving about, like the ancient Romans themselves, by foot (especially given Rome’s famous seven hills, participants should be ready for physical rigor), other times by the more modern means of metro and bus. Our visits will be complemented each day by discussion of the interrelationship of sites with important literary works (to be studied prior to departure) and of their pertinence to Augustan culture. Free time is built in to allow for exploring the city’s other monuments, as well as the intriguing markets, abundant shops, and inviting restaurants.

“Empire without End” is led by Jeffrey Brodd and Monica Roberts. Together they led this study program in 2010, and both have extensive prior experience traveling in Rome and other important sites in the Roman world. Professor Brodd regularly teaches courses on Roman studies in the Department of Humanities and Religious Studies, including Culture of Classical Rome (HRS 114), Paganism in the Roman World (HRS 117), and Religions of the Roman Empire (HRS/LIBA 224). Accommodations, study facilities, and other arrangements for Rome 2011 are overseen by the American Institute for Roman Culture, which specializes in planning and assisting with study courses in Rome.

Course Overview

This course is a focused study of Roman cultural history of the Augustan period and early empire, conducted in relaxed settings at some of the most notable sites of ancient Rome. Emphasis will be on understanding Augustan values through attention to the *Aeneid* and other literature, visual arts, architecture, and governmental, social, and economic policies that helped to establish the principate according to Augustus’ vision. The course can be audited or taken for 3 units credit as either HRS 196A (undergraduate) or HRS 296A (graduate). While there are no formal prerequisites for the course, familiarity with Vergil’s *Aeneid* and with the general historical framework of the late republican and early imperial periods is assumed.

In setting forth the grandiose vision of an “empire without end,” Vergil draws as much on history as on poetic or mythic ideas, and while clothing it as prophecy for a distant future,

he actually is describing his own times. Violent strife had stricken Rome for decades, culminating in the assassination of Augustus' father, Julius Caesar, and the thirteen years of civil war that followed in its aftermath. The rule of Rome and its vast territories had settled into the able hands of one man, and the result seemed to Vergil and his contemporaries to be newfound peace and prosperity – the dawning of a “Golden Age,” as Vergil puts it later on in the *Aeneid*.

As a participant in this course, you will use primary and secondary sources as a foundation to tour Rome and learn how completing the building projects of the deified Julius Caesar helped Augustus cement his position as the *divi filius* (“son of the deified”). You will see how Augustus' first monuments and the building programs of his trusted general Agrippa transformed the Campus Martius from a military training ground into an Augustan “theme park.” You will experience the magic of “The Eternal City” while gaining an appreciation of why it is eternal. “Empire without End” will travel to the signature monuments of the early principate, including the *Ara Pacis* and the Pantheon, and visit Rome's most important museums. The focus on the *urbs* of Rome will be augmented by excursions to relevant sites nearby, including the ancient port city of Ostia Antica, the archaeological site of Lavinium, the sanctuary of Diana at Lake Nemi, and the Villa of Livia at Prima Porta.

Students will gain an understanding and an appreciation of the late republican and early imperial periods, traditional Roman values and how these values were manifested in Augustan culture, and Augustan influence on subsequent historical developments, as manifested in cultural features of Rome.

Options

Bay of Naples. Following the two-week course and our stay in Rome, participants who opt for this additional excursion will travel to the Bay of Naples to explore two of the world's most famous and best preserved archeological sites, the ancient and doomed cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum, preserved under a blanket of volcanic debris that rained down during the eruption in 79 CE of Mount Vesuvius. The excursion will include visits to the National Archeological Museum in Naples, which houses the majority of finds preserved by the eruption, and to the imperial resort villa of Sperlonga.

HRS 199 or 299. As a means of earning 3 units credit in addition to the standard course, students can arrange with Professor Brodd to complete an independent study project drawing upon our time in Rome and, if participating in the optional trip, in Pompeii, Herculaneum, and Naples.