Forty-five years ago, at a conference held in Madrid on the Roman emperors of Spain, Sir Ronald Syme, the renowned historian of ancient Rome, argued the case for Hadrian the Intellectual. He began the brief paper with his characteristically curt judgment that some found the personality of Hadrian to be ‘enigmatic.’ Syme concurred. The conflicting opinions about Hadrian, both ancient and modern, only made the curious emperor more fascinating. Alluding to Marquerite Yourcenar’s *Memoirs of Hadrian*, Syme likened Hadrian to a character in a modern novel. This capstone seminar will take its inspiration from this essay (and novel) as well as from the recent success of the exhibition on Hadrian (Life Love Legacy / Hadrian Empire and Conflict) organized by the British Museum in 2008.

Today, Hadrian remains a complex and contradictory figure. Some extol him as the inspired builder of the Pantheon and the largest and most beautiful imperial Villa, the first traveling emperor of the provinces, and the admirer of Greek culture and literature; others deride him as the conceited and jealous designer who killed his own architect, the accursed annihilator of the Jews (who prayed ‘Crush his Bones’), and the lover and obsessed mourner of the youth Antinous. Nonetheless, Hadrian is also reckoned as one, sometimes the best, of the so-called Good Emperors, the middle of the five rulers from Nerva to Marcus Aurelius. The chief aim of this capstone seminar will be to explore and assess the political and cultural achievements of this enigmatic emperor and man.

The seminar will be structured into weekly themes, mostly taken from the chapters of Thorsten Opper’s brilliant companion piece to the British Museum exhibition, *Hadrian. Empire and Conflict* (2008), a required text. The first three weeks will be introductory,
laying the foundation with a close analysis of the extant ancient sources and a historical review of Hadrian’s rule (117-138 C.E.). Students will be divided into groups of three to introduce weekly readings and assess reviews of recent books on Hadrian. In addition, each group will choose one modern biography of Hadrian and discuss its approach. In Week 4, students will begin to give individual PowerPoint reports on specified topics (25 minutes length), which need to be chosen no later than the end of the first week. As a class, we will read the 1951 novel by the French author M. Yourcenar, Memoirs of Hadrian and consider the popular reception of Hadrian (Week 9). At the same time we will discuss the plans to make a film version of the popular novel, with the current James Bond actor Daniel Craig in the role of the bisexual emperor. The seminar will culminate in a research paper of 12-15 pages. A draft of the paper will be due by Week 8, and its final version by the end of Finals Week. Students will be asked to submit a 1-2 page abstract of their papers to place on the departmental website.

Required Texts:

Ancient sources and modern articles will be available as pdf files on the Course Website.

Course Assignments and Grading:
Group Reports 15%  
Individual PowerPoint Report 25%  
Class Participation 10%  
Final Research Paper (12-15 pages) 50%

syllabus

Week 1 Introduction
April 1

Reading: M.T. Boatwright. ‘Hadrian’ in Barrett, Lives of the Caesars.

Topics: Aims and Structure of the Seminar  
Introduction to Hadrian  
Research in Classics (YRL and on-line databases)

Week 2 The Ancient Sources
April 8

Scriptores Historiae Augustae. The Life of Hadrian.
**Week 3 Becoming Hadrian**
April 15

**Readings:** T. Opper. *Hadrian*, 199-205.
M.T. Boatwright. ‘The imperial women of the Early Second Century AD.’

**Topics:** Imperial Succession
Vibia Sabina (wife of Hadrian) **ORCHID**

**Week 4 War and Peace**
April 22

M.T. Boatwright. *Hadrian and the Cities of the Roman Empire* (reviews)

**Reports:** Hadrian’s Wall **BREEANN**
Hadrian and the Jews **EMILY**
Hadrian and the Christians (The Rescript of Hadrian) **JESUS**
BIRLEY Hadrian. *The restless emperor* 1997 (biography group report)

**Week 5 Architecture and Identity**
April 29

**Readings:** T. Opper. *Hadrian*, 98-129.
M.T. Boatwright. *Hadrian and the City of Rome* (reviews)

**Reports:** The Pantheon **JONATHAN**
The Temple of Venus and Rome
Week 6 Literature
May 6

R. Syme. ‘Hadrian the Intellectual.’

Reports: Letters and Speeches of Hadrian
Hadrian and Athens (architecture) CHRISTINA
Arrian ALAN
GREGOROVIUS The Emperor Hadrian. A Picture of the Greco-Roman World in his Time 1898 (biography group report)

Week 7 Hadrian’s Villa
May 13

W. MacDonald and J. Pinto. Hadrian’s Villa and its Legacy (reviews)

Reports: Journeys of Hadrian ANDREW
Hadrian’s Villa (2) YOUNG and TOM
DANZINGER Hadrian’s Empire 2005 (biography group report)

Week 8 Trip to LACMA – Pompeii and the Roman Villa
May 20
Week 9 Antinous
May 27

C. Vout. ‘Romancing the Stone: the story of Hadrian and Antinous.’
M. Yourcenar, Memoirs of Hadrian (reviews)

Reports: Antinous: Gay Icon and God JULIANNA
Marguerite Yourcenar and Hadrian SERAPHINA
LAMBERT Beloved and God 1984 (biography group report)

Week 10 Death and Legacy
June 3


Reports: Hadrian’s Mausoleum and the Pons Aelius JENNIFER
The Temple of the Divine Hadrian MATT
OPPER Hadrian. Empire & Conflict 2008 (biography group report)

Bibliography

Ancient sources (all on course website)

Scriptores Historiae Augustae. Augustan History. Translated by David Magie.

Anon. *Epitome de Caesaribus.* **PA6966 A2 1911**

**Modern sources (* YRL Grad Course Reserve)**


