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Office Hours: T 2:30-3:30 and W 1-2

**Classics 191 Hadrian: The Enigmatic Emperor**  
**Wednesday 2-4:50pm Public Affairs 2325**  
**Spring 2009**



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:**

Opper, Thorsten. *Hadrian. Empire and Conflict* (2008). Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Pres.  
Yourcenar, Marquerite. *Memoirs of Hadrian* (2005 [1951]). Translated by Grace Flick. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

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

**Readings:** Dio Cassius. *History of Rome*. Epitome Book 69.  
Sextus Aurelius Victor. *On the Caesars* 14. *Epitome On the Caesars* 14.  
*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

**Readings:** T. Opper. *Hadrian*, 62-97.  
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

The Coinage of Hadrian **ELIZABETH**

HENDERSON *Life and Principate of the Emperor Hadrian* 1923 (biography group report)

### **Week 6 Literature**

May 6

**Readings:** P.J. Alexander. 'Letters and Speeches of the Emperor Hadrian.'

R. Syme. 'Hadrian the Intellectual.'

**Reports:** Letters and Speeches of Hadrian

Hadrian and Athens (architecture) **CHRISTINA**

Arrian **ALAN**

GREGOROVIVUS *The Emperor Hadrian. A Picture of the Greco-Roman World in his Time* 1898 (biography group report)

### **Week 7 Hadrian's Villa**

May 13

**Readings:** T. Opper. *Hadrian*, 130-65.

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

**Readings:** T. Opper. *Hadrian*, 166-98.

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

**Readings:** T. Opper. *Hadrian*, 206-29.

**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)**

Dio Cassius. *Roman History*. Translated by Earnest Cary. Volume VIII. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

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

\*Sextus Aurelius Victor. *Liber de Caesaribus*. Trans. with an Introduction and Commentary by H.W. Bird. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press. **PA6104 P773E 1994 YRL**

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

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Princeton: Princeton University Press. **DG295 B62 2000 YRL**

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**\*Danzinger, Danny and Nicholas Purcell (2005)**. *Hadrian's Empire. When Rome  
Ruled the World*. London: Hodder & Stoughton. **DG295 D36 2005**

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**DA146 B74 1987 YRL**

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*Smith College Studies in History* 4.3: 139-209.

**\*Gregorovius, Ferdinand (1898)**. *The Emperor Hadrian. A Picture of the Greco-Roman World in his Time*.  
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London: Phoenix Giants. **DG292.7 A57 L36 1984b YRL**

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New Haven: Yale University Press. **NA327 T5 M23 1995 ARTS**

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Metcalf, William E. (1980). *The Cistophori of Hadrian*. ANSNS 15. New York.

Opper, Thorsten (2008). *Hadrian. Empire & Conflict*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

\*Perowne, Stuart (1960). *Hadrian*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, Publisher. **DG 295 P38 1976 YRL**.

Ridley, R.T. (1989). 'The fate of an architect: Apollodorus of Damascus.' *Athenaeum* 77: 551-65.

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Swain, S. (1991). 'Plutarch, Hadrian, and Delphi.' *Historia* 40: 318-30.

Syme, Ronald (1997) [1958]. *Tacitus*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. **PA6716 S98t YRL**

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