

**Gladiators, Games, and Spectacle in the Greek and Roman Worlds**  
**(CLST 260)**  
**M/W/F 2-3,, Barber 182**

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Office Hours: Wednesday 12-1 (Buchanan C210); Friday 3-4 (Forestry 3644) or by appointment

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**Warning:** The material covered in this class can be quite disturbing. It includes discussions of graphic violence, including sexual violence, and cruelty to humans and animals, and a number of other horrible things that people have done. Given the subject matter of the course it is not possible to avoid this material.

**Required texts:** A free, open source textbook of ancient sources/authors covering the Roman spectacles has been provided online at the website for the course <http://seeingspectacles.org/>; it is referred to below as 'Roman Sourcebook.' There is also another source book on Greek spectacles, referred to below as 'Greek sourcebook'.<sup>2</sup>

**Website and Connect Site:** There is a website (<http://seeingspectacles.org/>) and a Connect site available for this course. Assignment instructions, PowerPoints, and some other materials will be posted on the Connect site. The website contain the course readers for download, extra background information, images, links to other websites, further reading suggestions, and copies of assignment instructions, etc. If you have any questions about where to find materials just talk to or email me or the TAs.

**Schedule of Classes and Readings.** Understanding the lectures and participating in discussion will require you to have done the readings *before* class so complete any assigned readings and look at any websites listed below before each lecture.

January 5: Course introduction, outline, and expectations.

January 7: Rome, a (very) brief introduction

Reading: none! But take good notes.

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<sup>1</sup> These are very different locations at opposite ends of the campus.

<sup>2</sup> These are long word documents; if you haven't downloaded a c.200 page one for the Roman spectacles, then you're not getting all the readings and the same for the Greek reader (although that is shorter). Just ask us if you have any questions.

January 9: The origins and development of the gladiatorial *munera*  
Reading: Roman Sourcebook section I.a-b: Origins of the Gladiatorial Games,  
Development of the *Munera*

January 12: Development and design of arenas  
Reading: Roman Sourcebook section I.c: Development and Design of Arenas

January 14: The audience as society: who sits where and why  
Reading: Roman Sourcebook: section I.d Seating in the Arena and Society

January 16: It's costing me *how* much? The economics of Roman spectacle  
Reading: Roman Sourcebook section I.e: Costs of *Munera* and other Spectacles;

January 19: Gladiators: the who, the why, and the where  
Reading: Roman Sourcebook section I.f-g: Getting and Training Gladiators;  
Types of Gladiators

January 21: Female gladiators and *venatores*  
Reading: Roman Sourcebook section I.h: Female Gladiators and *Venatores*

January 23: The spread of the games outside Rome  
Reading: Roman Sourcebook section I.j: Spread of the *Munera* outside Rome

### **Chariot Racing**

January 26: The locations for chariot racing  
Reading: Roman Sourcebook section II.a: Locations: Circuses, Circuses, Circuses

January 28: From morning to evening: a day at the races  
Reading: Roman Sourcebook section II.b: A Day at the Races  
Website: <http://pompacircensis.wordpress.com/>  
This website gives useful a nice map of the route of the *pompa circensis*, useful for understanding the route of this important part of chariot racing.

January 30: Fame, factions, and champions  
Reading: Roman Sourcebook section II.c-d: The Charioteers, the Teams and the Horses; Imperial Fans

February 2: Nika! Nika! Nika! Riots at the Circus  
Reading: Roman Sourcebook section II.e: Riots at the *Munera* and the Circus  
**Assignment I due**

### **Animals in the Arena**

February 4: Exhibiting animals  
Reading: Roman Sourcebook section III.a: Exhibiting Animals

February 6: *Venationes*

Reading Roman Sourcebook section III.b: *Venationes*

**February 9: Family Day, no class**

**February 11: Midterm.**

### **Emperors and the Games**

February 13: Imperial sponsorship of the games

Reading: Roman Sourcebook sections II.d, IV.a: Imperial Fans, Imperial Sponsorship of the Games

**Reading Break: February 16-20**

February 23: All Rome is a stage and I must burn it down: Nero and the games

Reading: Roman Sourcebook section IV.b: Nero

### **A holiday in Greece**

February 25: Greek Sports I

Reading: Greek Sourcebook: Greek sports I: Athletic events

February 27: Greek Sports II

Reading: Greek Sourcebook II: Equestrian Events

March 2: Greek Sports III

Reading: Greek Sourcebook III: Athletes and their Reputations

March 4: The Olympic games I

Greek Sourcebook: The Olympic Games a-b: Foundation Myths & Structure of the Games

March 6: The Olympic games II

Reading: Greek Sourcebook a-b: The Athletes & Celebrating Victory

**Assignment II due**

March 9: Beyond the Olympics: the circuit of games

Reading: Greek Sourcebook: Beyond the Olympics: the Circuit of Games a-d

### **All holidays must end: return to Rome**

March 11: Commodus

Reading: Roman Sourcebook section IV.c: Commodus

## Executions

March 13: *Damnatio ad bestias* (execution by animals)

Reading: Roman Sourcebook section V.a *Damnatio ad bestias*

March 15: Drama in the arena

Reading: Roman Sourcebook section V.b-c. Executions as mythical reenactments; executions of Christians

**Please note the subject matter of this lecture is particularly disturbing; attendance is optional.**

## Theatre and Dance

March 16: The performances and the theatres

Reading: Roman Sourcebook section VI.a-b: development of Roman Theatre and Mime; Roman Theatres

March 18: Factions in the theatre: the great mime riots

Reading: Roman Sourcebook section VI.c: The Great Mime Riots

## War on the Streets and on Stage

March 20: Spectacles of war I: staging battles

Reading: Roman Sourcebook section VII.a: *Naumachiae* and land battles

March 23: Spectacles of war II: the Roman triumph

Reading: Roman Sourcebook section VII.b: The Roman triumph

Website: <http://andreimihailiuk.wix.com/romantriumph>

Useful for understanding the various theories of what the route was for the triumph (a subject of much debate)

March 25: The packaging and selling of gladiators

Reading: Roman Sourcebook section I.i Marketing and Advertising Gladiators

March 27: The exhibition of people

Reading: Roman Sourcebook section VIII: Strange Bodies: the display of people.

Website: <http://spectacularantiquity.wordpress.com/>

This sets the Roman use of 'freak shows' within a modern context

March 30: Spartacus

Reading: Roman Sourcebook section I.k

**Assignment III due**

**April 3: No class**

**April 6: No class**

April 8: Gladiators of the modern day: from swords and sandals to Starz.

April 10: *Review*. **Last day of classes. If you have selected option b (group or term project) for your assignment option, it is due today.**

**Grading breakdown:**

Exams:

Midterm: 30%

Final (open book): 35%

**Written Assignments:**

**Option I:** Short assignment I: 10%

Short assignment II: 10%

Short assignment III: 15%

These short assignments are 1,000-1,500 words in length; instructions and details can be found on the Connect site for the course and on [seeingspectacles.org](http://seeingspectacles.org).

**Or**

**Option II:** You or a group (of no more than 5) may complete a longer individual or group **digital** assignment in consultation with the instructor and TAS. If you wish to take this option you must tell me in email by and arrange a time before to meet with me in person **before January 14<sup>th</sup>**. There are also a limited number of places to work on a project with the HCT lab in the Department of Computer Science on visualizing the Colosseum. **These projects will be due April 10<sup>th</sup>.**

**You must chose to do one or the other of these options: you cannot do both. And you must decide to do option II by January 14<sup>th</sup>; if I do not hear from you by the 14<sup>th</sup> then I will assume that you are doing option I.**

**Important other stuff:**

**Late policy:** Make-up exams will not be given except in cases of **documented** illness and family or domestic emergencies. There will be no exceptions to this rule. You may hand in **one** of the short writing assignments **one week late** without penalty; you must notify me or your assigned TA via email **by midnight of the day before the due date** if you plan to take advantage of this. The one-week deadline will be strictly enforced as will the one paper limit, but no documentation is required.

**Basic class etiquette:**

**Cellphone policy:** Unless you are a superhero<sup>3</sup> your phone should be off and inaccessible during class.

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<sup>3</sup> Please note that proof of your superhero status will be required. All secret identities will be respected.

**Use of laptops:** If you use a laptop or tablet please sit in the back rows to avoid distracting other students; additionally, using your laptop should not be a collaborative experience. If I see a group of you huddling around a laptop I will assume that you are watching videos of pandas sneezing/a cat in a shark suit riding on a Roomba/something else involving hilarity and animals and ask you to do so outside the class.

**Email policies.** Please write professional emails, not messages like this: 'hi can u tell me when the exam is thnx. lol i lost ur syllabus. ☺)' Always give us your full name and the class you are writing about and do not write in text-speak, even if you are emailing from your phone.

Please allow 24 hours for a reply to email; if you don't get a reply within that time-frame, feel free to email me or the TAs again. While we try to reply to all email in a timely fashion, anything requiring a lengthy answer or not really suited to an email reply will result in a request to meet up during office hours or another time that suits everyone's schedules.

**Don't treat class as an opportunity to do group work for other classes.**

**Important note:** The instructor reserves the right to make alterations to this syllabus as necessary.