HUMANITIES 2
SYLLABUS

Professor Edward J. Watts (ewatts@ucsd.edu)
Office: Humanities and Social Sciences 4073
Office Hours: Tuesday 8:30-10

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Revelle Humanities II looks at the cultural development of Europe and the Mediterranean from the Roman Empire until the Middle Ages. This is a very long period of time in which one sees not only the rise and fall of an empire that spanned the Mediterranean but the emergence of Christianity, the religion that will dominate Western culture for centuries to come.

The class will attempt to unify this long period by looking at one particular type of literature. We will consider biography as it developed across this period. Authors in the ancient and medieval worlds distinguished between writing a biography of a person and writing a history of the time in which a person lived. In this class, we will focus upon the lives of ancient and medieval men ancient and medieval authors presented them. The lives of all of these people are notable and distinct. The texts describing them, however, were written by authors who share similar ideas about the characteristics that separated an exceptional individual from ordinary people.

This course will use ancient and medieval biographies to reconstruct the lives of prominent people who lived in this period. At the same time, we will use these texts to understand the views of the people who wrote ancient biographies. We will see the issues that concerned them, the actions that they thought important, and the conduct that they found to be despicable. The lectures will include some discussion of the techniques of the ancient and medieval biographer, but most of the assigned reading will be comprised of biographical texts from the Roman, Byzantine, and medieval worlds.

OUTLINE:

The course is divided into four sections. The first looks at Roman political biography and the ways in which biographies were used to both attack and support political personalities. In the second section of the course, we will consider religious biographies written in the Roman Empire and how the biographical form was transformed to describe a holy man. The third section of the class looks at the Christian Roman Empire and how Christian authors living in it adapted Roman biographical literature. The final section of the course looks at Western medieval and Byzantine adaptations of these Roman and Christian Roman models.

EXPECTATIONS:

Regular attendance in section and completion of the assigned reading are both required. Participation will count for 15% of your final grade and will be determined by your TA (who may employ quizzes, attendance records, or other methods to determine it). Students are expected to do extensive reading of ancient and medieval sources (in translation). Students will write three 5-page essays throughout the quarter. Each of these will be worth 20% of your final grade. The final exam in the class will count for 25% of your grade.
MATERIALS:

Students are required to purchase the following books:


All other readings will be made available either online either through TritonED or from outside links.

DUE DATES:

Please note the following dates:

- April 23 (First essay due)
- May 14 (Second essay due)
- May 28 (Third essay due)
- June 11, 11:30-2:30 (Final Exam)

(Theses dates have been italicized on the syllabus for easy reference.)

Essays must be turned in through turnitin.com and in hardcopy by the end of class on the day they are due. No essays, drafts, or outlines submitted to the professor or graders by email will be accepted. Late essays will be penalized 5% for the first day, 10% for the second day. After 2 days (non-class days included), the grade will be recorded as a zero. If you are turning in a late essay, you must make arrangements to do this with your TA. Extensions on essays and make-up examination requests will be granted only in the most extreme circumstances and then only with appropriate documentation that clearly explains their necessity.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:

“Plagiarism—A student must not adopt or reproduce ideas, words, or statements of another person without appropriate acknowledgment. A student must give credit to the originality of others and acknowledge an indebtedness whenever he or she does any of the following:

a. Quotes another person's actual words, either oral or written;

b. Paraphrases another person's words, either oral or written;

c. Uses another person's idea, opinion, or theory; or

d. Borrows facts, statistics, or other illustrative material, unless the information is common knowledge.”

(quoted from Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct, Part III, Student Misconduct, Academic Misconduct)

This is the grossest of academic dishonesty. Plagiarism will earn the student an automatic failing grade in the course. Helping another student to plagiarize is just as bad as plagiarizing. All such cases will be forwarded to the appropriate administrators for disciplinary action.
READING SCHEDULE

SECTION I: ROMAN BIOGRAPHY

Week 1 (April 2 and April 4)
Class 1: **Introduction**

Class 2: **Framing a Life’s Journey**
Readings:
Vergil, *Aeneid*, Books 1-4, in the Fagles translation

Week 2 (April 9 and 11)
Class 3 and 4: **Plutarch’s Alexander**
Readings:

Week 3 (April 16 and 18)
Class 5 and 6: **Plutarch’s Caesar**
Readings:

Week 4 (April 23 and 25)

*April 23
FIRST ESSAY DUE*

Class 7: No Lecture on April 23. You must come to class to turn in your essay to your TA but you may leave after turning it in.

Class 8: **Suetonius’s Good and Bad Emperors**
Readings:
Suetonius, *Lives of Augustus, Caligula, and Domitian* see link at:
[http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Suetonius/12Caesars/home.html](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Suetonius/12Caesars/home.html)
A pdf is also available on TritonED

SECTION II: ROMAN RELIGIOUS BIOGRAPHY

Week 5 (April 30 and May 2)
Class 9: **The Pagan Holy Man**
Readings:
Lucian, *Alexander the False Prophet* (TritonED)

Class 10: **Early Christianity**
Readings:

Week 6 (May 7 and 9)
Class 11 and 12: Jesus and the Structure of Roman Religious Biography
Reading:

SECTION III: CHRISTIAN ROMAN BIOGRAPHY

Week 7 (May 14 and 16)

May 14
SECOND ESSAY DUE

Class 13 and 14: The Christian Empire
Readings:
Eusebius, Life of Constantine—entire text is online at:
http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/NPNF2-01/TOC.htm
There is also a pdf available on TritonED.

NOTE: The webpages begin with Eusebius’ Ecclesiastical History. DO NOT READ THIS! Read only the LIFE OF CONSTANTINE (which begins on page 1152 of the pdf)

Week 8 (May 21 and 23)
Class 15 and 16: The World of Saint Augustine
Readings:
Augustine, Confessions 1-8, see link at:
http://www.ccel.org/ccel/augustine/confessions.toc.html
There is also a pdf available on TritonED.

SECTION IV: MEDIEVAL ADAPTATIONS

Week 9 (May 28 and May 30)

May 28
THIRD ESSAY DUE

Class 17 and 18: Christian Biographies of Barbarian Kings
Readings:
Gregory of Tours, History of the Franks, Book 2.12 (birth of Clovis), 2.25-43 (career of Clovis) (TritonED)
Einhard, *Life of Charlemagne* in *Two Lives of Charlemagne*.

**Week 10 (June 4 and June 6)**

**June 4**

Class 19: **Byzantine Biography**

Readings:

Genesios, *Life of Basil I* (TritonED)

**June 6**

Class 20: **Conclusion: Towards the “Renaissance”**

*June 11, 11:30-2:30*

*FINAL EXAM*