

History (510)405: Ancient History and the Cinema
Tuesday/Thursday 2:30-3:50 P.M. | Conklin Hall 346

Instructor: Scott A. Barnard (sab359@scarletmail.rutgers.edu)

Office: 315 Conklin Hall

Office Hours: Tuesday 1:15-2:15 P.M., Thursday 12:15-1:15 P.M., and by appointment.

REQUIRED TEXT:

Big Screen Rome by Monica Silveira Cyrino. ISBN-13: 978-1-4051-1683-1

THE COURSE:

Today more than ever, images of the ancient world and narratives inspired by ancient history projected onto movie, television, and computer screens invite modern viewers to experience and connect with ancient peoples. Films about antiquity offer spectacular interpretations of history, literature, and mythology that bridge the gap between past and present. This course will provide students with the opportunity to explore the historical contexts and driving socio-political and cultural forces behind the plots of several historical films, as well as the modern circumstances that shaped the ways in which these films were produced and viewed by their contemporary audiences. Students are invited to reflect on the many points of contact between ancient and modern civilizations and to engage with the questions and problems faced by each.

Learning Goals:

- Studying Ancient History involves coming to grips with the ancient Greek and Roman civilizations: their myths and literature; their social, military, political and cultural history; their philosophy; and aspects of their material culture. At every stage, students are led to reflect on the many connections between the people of antiquity and the modern world, and on how these ancient civilizations contributed to shape it. Several elements of the course will encourage students not to see our knowledge of the past as a static entity, but to actively participate in the creation of that knowledge.
- The study of history on film is in reality the study of two moments in time: the historical context within which the plot of a film takes place and the modern circumstances under which a film is produced and received. As such, students are encouraged to make connections between these two moments and consider some of the timeless elements of human civilization.
- This course will focus on comprehending the historical contexts covered in the selected films and on a critical analysis of the films' production and reception. This will be accomplished both through writing (in the form of discussion questions) and public speaking (in the form of class discussions and critical responses to lecture cues). Both the discussion questions and class discussions will emphasize the organic generation of ideas through interaction, cooperation, and debate.

To better understand what studying History entails, students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the core learning goals that motivate the teaching of History, listed on the department website: <http://www.ncas.rutgers.edu/history>.

GRADING:

Each of the following components will determine part of the final grade, which will be calculated out of 500 points or 100%:

- 75 points or 15% - Class Discussion/Participation
- 125 points or 25% - Analysis Paper #1
- 125 points or 25% - Analysis Paper #2
- 175 points or 35% - Final Analysis Paper

Grades are non-negotiable. Extra credit may be offered at the instructor's discretion, and is not guaranteed. Points will be turned into letter grades according to the following scheme:

A	450-500	C+	383-399
B+	432-449	C	352-382
B	400-431	D	303-351

1) **Class Discussion/Participation (75 pts):** All students are expected to play an active role in both class and smaller-group discussions. In addition to fostering an environment that gives voice to a variety of perspectives on the complex issues these films raise, participation in class discussion can help students make use of their classmates as a resource for generating and developing topics and ideas for Analysis Papers.

2) **Analysis Paper #1 and #2 (125 pts. each):** These 5-7 page papers offer students the opportunity to further explore aspects of the course that are of particular interest (e.g. ancient warfare, slavery, sexuality, etc). Students are encouraged to be in contact with the instructor as they develop paper topics. All papers should be double-spaced with one-inch margins and typed in Times New Roman 12-point font; **late papers will not be accepted.**

3) **Final Research Paper (175 pts.):** The final 7-10 page paper should compare and contrast the treatment of a particular issue raised in at least two of the films covered in the course (e.g. heroism in *Troy*, *300*, and *Gladiator*; race and gender in *Spartacus*, *History of the World Part I*, and *A Funny Thing...*, etc.). Students are encouraged to **expand and develop** research undertaken in one or both of their previous research papers and seek approval for their chosen topic from the instructor; **late papers will not be accepted.**

N.B. You must complete every component to receive a grade in this course.

Important: Make sure you are aware of the University's regulations concerning academic dishonesty and plagiarism. You are responsible for adhering to the guidelines in the current Academic Integrity Policy: http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/files/documents/AI_Policy_9_01_2011.pdf

Information and Policies:

Course Website: The course website is accessible through the Blackboard homepage.

Attendance Policy: Attendance is mandatory. Absences for approved reasons (see below) may be excused by the instructor if notice is given in advance. After **four unexcused** absences the course grade will be lowered by ½ a letter for each additional missed class. Any student who misses **eight** or more sessions through any combination of excused and unexcused absences *will not earn credit in this class*. Such students should withdraw from the course to avoid receiving an F.

Authenticated and Unexcused absences: The Rutgers-Newark Undergraduate catalog (http://catalogs.rutgers.edu/generated/nwk-ug_current/pg576.html) states: “The recognized grounds for absence are illness requiring medical attention, curricular or extracurricular activities approved by the faculty, personal obligations claimed by the student and recognized as valid, recognized religious holidays, and severe inclement weather causing dangerous traveling conditions. The president of the university or an official appointed by the president is authorized to cancel classes, or any part thereof, in the event that weather conditions so dictate.

It is the policy of the university to excuse without penalty students who are absent because of religious observances and to allow the makeup of work missed because of such absence. Examinations and special required out-of-class activities ordinarily are not scheduled on those days when such students refrain from participating in secular activities. Absences for reasons of religious obligation are not counted for purposes of reporting. A student absent from an examination because of required religious observance is given an opportunity to make up the examination without penalty.”

If you are a university athlete, please let me know within the first week of class.

Tardiness and leaving class before conclusion: Please arrive to class on time and stay until dismissed. **Three incidents of tardiness and/or leaving early will be counted as one unexcused absence.**

Academic environment: Please be respectful of the academic environment. Engaging in personal conversations, using cell phones, text messaging, web surfing, listening to music, reading newspapers, doing crossword or Sudoku puzzles, sleeping or engaging in other personal diversions during class are, of course, all disruptive. If the instructor catches a student engaging in these behaviors, it will qualify as an unexcused absence. See the policy on such absences below.

Academic Integrity: A full description of the University policy on Academic Integrity is available at: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/policy-on-academic-integrity>. All students are required to sign the Rutgers Honor Pledge. Students must print this pledge on exams and any written assignment: “On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this examination.”

Disabilities: Students with disabilities at Rutgers are entitled to the same benefits, the same quality of student life, and are subject to the same academic requirements as other students. Rutgers is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to meet the needs of eligible students. Any student who believes that s/he may need an accommodation in this class due to a disability should contact the Paul Robeson Campus Center Office of Student Life and Leadership, services for students with disabilities to provide documentation of the disability and to complete the appropriate paperwork. (<http://robeson.rutgers.edu/studentlife/disability.html>). Students must have a letter of accommodation from Disability Services in order to receive accommodations. If you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please inform me immediately. Please see me privately after class, or at my office.

Schedule of Classes:

Each class period will begin with a lecture aimed at contextualizing the historical moment within which that week's film takes place. After portions of the film have been viewed, a brief lecture and discussion on the circumstances under which the film was produced and released will follow. Students unable to attend any class are responsible for viewing the film and catching up on the course notes on their own.

Below is a brief schedule of classes and films to be viewed and discussed; weekly readings from *Big Screen Rome* and other sources will be assigned.

<u>Week One</u> (9/9 & 11)	Course Introduction; Classical Receptions on Film Reading: Cyrino, Introduction (pp. 1-6); <i>Iliad</i> Book 1 (on Blackboard)
<u>Week Two</u> (9/16 & 18)	<i>Troy</i> ; History & the <i>Iliad</i> ; West vs. East, Part I Reading: Solomon, <i>Vacillations in the Troy Myth</i> (on Blackboard)
<u>Week Three</u> (9/23 & 25)	<i>300</i> ; The "Spartan Mirage"; West vs. East Part II Reading: Holland, <i>Mirage in the Movie House</i> (on Blackboard)
<u>Week Four</u> (9/30 & 10/2)	<i>Alexander</i> ; Global & Sexual Politics; West vs. East Part III Reading: Skinner, <i>Alexander & Ancient Sexuality</i> (on Blackboard)
<u>Week Five</u> (10/7 & 9)	Review, Preview, and Peer Editing RESEARCH PAPER #1 DUE Thursday 10/9
<u>Week Six</u> (10/14 & 16)	<i>History of the World: Part I</i> ; "Great Societies" New & Old Reading: Cyrino, Chapter 8 (pp. 194-206)
<u>Week Seven</u> (10/21 & 23)	<i>Spartacus</i> ; Slaves & Civil Rights, Ancient and Modern Reading: Cyrino, Chapter 4 (pp. 89-120)
<u>Week Eight</u> (10/28 & 30)	<i>A Funny Thing...</i> ; How to Laugh at War and Injustice Reading: Cyrino, Chapter 6 (pp.159-175)
<u>Week Nine</u> (11/4 & 6)	<i>Cleopatra</i> ; Colliding Empires and Not-So-Cold Wars Reading: Solomon, <i>In the Wake of Cleopatra</i> (on Blackboard)
<u>Week Ten</u> (11/11 & 13)	Review, Preview, and Peer Editing RESEARCH PAPER #2 DUE Thursday 11/13
<u>Week Eleven</u> (11/18 & 20)	<i>Ben-Hur</i> ; Religious Borderlands Reading: Cyrino, Chapter 3 (pp. 59-88)
<u>Week Twelve</u> (11/25)	<i>Life of Brian</i> ; "What Have the Romans Ever Done for Us?" Reading: Cyrino, Chapter 7 (pp. 176-193)
<u>Week Thirteen</u> (12/2 & 4)	<i>Quo Vadis</i> ; Nero & The <i>Cena Trimalcionis</i> Reading: Cyrino, Chapter 1 (pp. 7-33); Petronius, <i>Satyricon</i> 26-78 (on Blackboard)
<u>Week Fourteen</u> (12/9 & 11)	<i>Gladiator</i> ; What Happens When There's No One Left to Fight? Reading: Cyrino, Chapter 9 (pp. 207-256)

Final Research Paper Due: Thursday, December 18th