Course Description
This course examines the transformation of the Roman/Mediterranean world from an ancient society to a variety of medieval societies from AD 300-700. Among the topics we will explore are the rise of Christianity and Islam, the reasons the Roman Empire fell in the West (but not in the East!), the development of saints' cults and holy men, the development of western barbarian kingdoms, and, especially, how best to characterize this complex period.

Student Learning Objectives
• SLO 1: Students demonstrate critical historical thinking (evaluating historical arguments and evidence, discerning historical perspective, placing an event in historical context, etc.).
• SLO 2: Students demonstrate competency in applying historical skills (relevant historical skills may include conducting research, differentiating between primary and secondary sources, periodization, conducting an oral history interview, etc.)
• SLO 3: Students communicate historical information effectively in written expression.

Welcome to what I hope will be a great semester!

Course Requirements and Evaluation

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage of Final Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>Book/Article Reviews (12)</td>
<td>60%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
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Book/Article Reviews: Each student will submit a 2-3 page critical review of each week's readings (with the exception of the last day, when the final paper is due). These are to be submitted electronically on Blackboard by the beginning of class on the day the readings are due, and should also be brought to class for use in discussion. Reviews should include a summary of the work's major arguments, plus your own assessment of these arguments. During weeks when we read multiple articles or chapters from multiple books, your review may
be an extensive look at one or a comparison of more than one of these readings. Suggestions will be given alongside the reading list. Do also find out what you can about the authors; it could be relevant to understanding their approaches. Late reviews will not be accepted without prior arrangement. Students may drop their single lowest grade.

Final Paper: Each student will submit an 8-10 page final paper reflecting on the content of the entire course. Papers should address the concept of Late Antiquity and how you think we should characterize this period, and why you think so, using examples from at least three main topics we covered in the course and citing the relevant readings. No outside research is required. Please also include any important lessons learned about doing history and how you might apply the content and/or historiographical themes to other areas of history. If you are a public school teacher, this part of your essay can be a lesson plan, either detailed or simply a description of how you might teach about this period. If you work in public history, this part may be a description of how you might present this period to the public.

Class Participation: Class sessions will be entirely discussion, and mostly based on your contributions. This class will not function if you do not come prepared to go over the basic content of the reading, analyze the historiographical context, and evaluate the validity of the reading's argument. Please come with questions you have about any of the above, and offer your own understandings for your classmates' questions. I do not expect anyone to be an expert on the day's topic, nor to agree on the many challenging issues we will cover. As with the papers, you get one free absence without penalty. Further absences will affect your grade.

All assignments must be submitted at the beginning of class on the assigned due date. I may not accept late submissions; if I do, they will be given only partial credit. Assignments not handed in will receive a zero. Page counts are based on the standard 12pt. double-spaced formatting.

Grading Scale:

- A 90-100%
- B 80-89%
- C 70-79%
- D 60-69%
- F 0-59%

Required Books

1. Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982). ISBN: 9780226076225. This is a classic that's been reprinted many times, but not changed, so any year/reprint is fine. – **ebook available through the library; also on reserve in Edinburg**
2. Peter Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1989). ISBN: 978-0-393-95803-4. This is a classic that’s been reprinted many times, but not changed, so any year/reprint is fine. — **on reserve on both campuses**


9. There will also be some articles, either available electronically at the UTRGV library or uploaded to Blackboard.

**Schedule**

* This is a guide to the topics and readings for the full semester, and I reserve the right to make adjustments.*  
* Readings and assignments are due at the beginning of class on the day listed.*

**Week 1 (Tue. 8/29):**  **Introduction and Background**

**Read:** NO READING. This is the one time I will lecture to provide some background based on what you do/don’t already know about the period and what questions you have.

**Week 2 (Tue. 9/5):**  **What is “Late Antiquity?” 1: Peter Brown**

**Read:** Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity*, all.

**Week 3 (Tue. 9/12):**  **The Later Roman Empire**

**Read:** Sarris, *Empires of Faith*, ch. 1

Cameron, *The Mediterranean World*, introduction & chs. 1 & 2

**Review suggestion:** Compare the approach of the two authors.
Week 4 (Tue. 9/19):  The Fall of Rome 1: Narrative and Barbarian Impact  
**Read:** Sarris, *Empires of Faith*, ch. 2 all & ch. 3 sections 3.1 and 3.2  
[https://www.sciencenews.org/article/ancient-romans-may-have-cozier-huns-they-let](https://www.sciencenews.org/article/ancient-romans-may-have-cozier-huns-they-let)  
(also take a look at the original article, though don’t worry if the science lingo is hard to understand: ) Susanne E. Hakenbeck, et al., “Practising pastoralism in an agricultural environment: An isotopic analysis of the impact of the Hunnic incursions on Pannonian populations,” *PLoS ONE* 12.3 (2017), e0173079.  
[http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0173079](http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0173079)  
**Review suggestions:** 1) Choose either the Heather or the Goffart article.  2) Compare Heather and Goffart.

Week 5 (Tue. 9/26):  The Fall of Rome 2: Catastrophe or Transformation?  
**Read:** Ward-Perkins, *Fall of Rome*, all.

Week 6 (Tue. 10/3):  What is “Late Antiquity?” 2: Other Voices  
**Read:** Edward James, "The Rise and Fall of the Concept 'Late Antiquity,'" *Journal of Late Antiquity* 1:1 (2008), pp. 20-30.  
Clifford Ando, "Decline, Fall, and Transformation," *Journal of Late Antiquity* 1:1 (2008), pp. 31-60.  
Chris Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages* (Oxford, 2005), introduction.  
or available as ebook through UTRGV library  
**Review suggestions:** 1) Select two of the four to compare.  2) Discuss common themes across all four, then point out key differences.

Week 7 (Tue. 10/10):  Heirs of Rome 1: The Byzantine Empire  
**Read:** Sarris, *Empires of Faith*, chs. 4 & 7, ch. 5 sections 5.1-5.4  
Cameron, *The Mediterranean World*, chs. 5 & 9
Review suggestion: Compare the approach of the two authors.

Week 8 (Tue. 10/17): Heirs of Rome 2: The Rise of Islam
Read: Hoyland, In God’s Path, all except ch. 6

Week 9 (Tue. 10/24): Heirs of Rome 3: Western European “Barbarian” Kingdoms
Read: Sarris, Empires of Faith, ch. 3 sections 3.3-3.5 and 3.11-3.12, ch. 5 sections 5.5-5.6, ch. 9 sections 9.2-9.8 and 9.11-9.12
Hen, Roman Barbarians, introduction & conclusion, plus your choice of 3 other chapters.
Review suggestion: Review Hen since he’s a new author to you.

Week 10 (Tue. 10/31): Christianity and the Holy
Read: Brown, The Cult of the Saints, all.
Sarris, Empires of Faith, ch. 6
Cameron, The Mediterranean World, ch. 3
Review suggestion: Review Brown, perhaps drawing comparisons to his World of Late Antiquity.

Week 11 (Tue. 11/7): Late Antique Women and Private Life
Read: Clark, Women in Late Antiquity, all
Cameron, The Mediterranean World, ch. 6
Review suggestions: 1) Review just Clark. 2) Compare Clark and Smith.

Week 12 (Tue. 11/14): NO CLASS – get started on your paper

Week 13 (Tue. 11/21): Economy, Law, and Society
Read: Cameron, The Mediterranean World, ch. 4
Choose 3 of the following articles:


**Review suggestions:** 1) Select two articles to summarize and compare their approaches. 2) Choose one article to explore in extra depth.

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**Week 14** (Tue. 11/28): Landscape: Urbanism, Agriculture, and Environment

**Read:** Cameron, *The Mediterranean World*, ch. 7


Jill Harries, "Christianity and the City in Late Roman Gaul," in John Rich (ed.), *The City in Late Antiquity* (London, 1992), pp. 77–98. on Blackboard or available as ebook through UTRGV library

**Review suggestions:** 1) Select two items to summarize and compare their approaches. 2) Choose one item to explore in extra depth.

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**Week 15** (Tue. 12/5): Summing Up

**Read:** Cameron, *The Mediterranean World*, conclusion

Mark Humphries, "Late Antiquity and World History: Challenging Conventional Narratives and Analyses", *Studies in Late Antiquity* 1, no. 1 (2017), pp. 8–37. [http://sla.ucpress.edu/content/1/1/8](http://sla.ucpress.edu/content/1/1/8)

**FINAL PAPER DUE!!!**

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**UTRGV Standard Policies**

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:** Students with a documented disability (physical, psychological, learning, or other disability which affects academic performance) who would like to receive academic accommodations should contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) as soon as possible.
to schedule an appointment to initiate services. Accommodations can be arranged through SAS at any time, but are not retroactive. Students who suffer a broken bone, severe injury or undergo surgery during the semester are eligible for temporary services. **Brownsville Campus:** Student Accessibility Services is located in Cortez Hall Room 129 and can be contacted by phone at (956) 882-7374 (Voice) or via email at ability@utrgv.edu. **Edinburg Campus:** Student Accessibility Services is located in 108 University Center and can be contacted by phone at (956) 665-7005 (Voice), (956) 665-3840 (Fax), or via email at ability@utrgv.edu.

**MANDATORY COURSE EVALUATION PERIOD:**
Students are required to complete an ONLINE evaluation of this course, accessed through your UTRGV account ([http://my.utrgv.edu](http://my.utrgv.edu)); you will be contacted through email with further instructions. Students who complete their evaluations will have priority access to their grades. Online evaluations will be available:

- **Fall 2017 Module 1** Oct. 5 – Oct. 11
- **Fall 2017 Module 2** Nov. 29 – Dec. 5
- **Fall 2017 (full semester)** Nov. 15 – Dec. 6

**ATTENDANCE:**
Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes and may be dropped from the course for excessive absences. UTRGV’s attendance policy excuses students from attending class if they are participating in officially sponsored university activities, such as athletics; for observance of religious holy days; or for military service. Students should contact the instructor in advance of the excused absence and arrange to make up missed work or examinations.

**SCHOLASTIC INTEGRITY:**
As members of a community dedicated to Honesty, Integrity and Respect, students are reminded that those who engage in scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and expulsion from the University. Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: cheating, plagiarism (including self-plagiarism), and collusion; submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person; taking an examination for another person; any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student; or the attempt to commit such acts. Since scholastic dishonesty harms the individual, all students and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced (Board of Regents Rules and Regulations and UTRGV Academic Integrity Guidelines). All scholastic dishonesty incidents will be reported to the Dean of Students.

**SEXUAL HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION, and VIOLENCE:**
In accordance with UT System regulations, your instructor is a “Responsible Employee” for reporting purposes under Title IX regulations and so must report any instance, occurring during a student’s time in college, of sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, domestic violence, or sexual harassment about which she/he becomes aware during this course through writing, discussion, or personal disclosure. More information can be found at [www.utrgv.edu/equity](http://www.utrgv.edu/equity), including confidential resources available on campus. The faculty and staff of UTRGV actively strive to provide a learning, working, and living environment that promotes personal integrity, civility, and mutual respect that is free from sexual misconduct and discrimination.