

The End of the Roman Republic

NWC 6093

TUESDAYS, 1230 – 1430
Roosevelt 211

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Introduction:

For nearly four hundred years, the Roman Republic developed and evolved, growing from a small collection of villages to the dominant power in the Western Mediterranean. However, beginning in the last decades of the 2nd Century BCE, the Republic was wracked by a series of crises and conflicts that ultimately destroyed the Republic and resulted in Imperial rule. This course examines the causes and consequences of Rome's domestic crises, juxtaposing those internal conflicts with the continued growth of Roman power internationally. Topics covered will include the Tribunes of the Gracchus Brothers, the rise of Gaius Marius and his military reforms, the causes and conduct of the Social War, Sulla and his constitutional reforms, the slave revolt led by Spartacus, the career of Pompey the Great, and finally, the life and achievements of Julius Caesar. The course will also examine many of the other great personalities of the time – Crassus, the richest man in Rome; Cicero, the famous statesman and author; Cicero's enemies Catalina and Clodius; Cato the Younger; Cleopatra; and many, many others.

Books:

1. Appian, *The Civil Wars* (translated by John Carter). (New York: Penguin, 1995)
2. Adrian Goldsworthy, *Caesar: Life of a Colossus*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006).
3. Plutarch, *Roman Lives* (translated by Robin Waterfield). (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999)
4. Kurt A. Raaflaub, *The Landmark Julius Caesar*. (New York: Pantheon, 2017)
5. H.H. Scullard, *From the Gracchi to Nero: A History of Rome 133 BC to AD 68*. (London: Routledge, 2010)

Assessment Policy:

Students must demonstrate mastery of the stated course objectives to pass this course. The course director will use performance on the following assessments to determine each student's final grade:

- 50% Seminar Participation
- 50% Final Paper (8-10 pages, 2000-2500) on topic related to course themes. Due March 29, 2020.

Seminar Participation

Students are expected to complete as many of the readings and additional assignments as possible, but the course is less about consuming pages of material and more about pulling out insights to consider in class. As you read, please think about the following issues and be prepared to discuss them in class:

1. Personalities:

Who were the key leaders? What differentiated their approach to politics? How did they behave as strategic leaders?

2. Institutions:

What were the key Roman institutions? How did they shape, structure, or distort the incentives faced by individual leaders? Were they sufficiently responsive to changing circumstances?

3. Ideology:

What were the key beliefs held by Roman leaders? How did these define the nature of political interaction?

For each class, please bring in 3-5 insights, comments, or questions from the readings. We'll also post them online starting with session #3.

Final Paper

You are required to write a 10 pages (2500 word) paper on topics related to the course. These can involve exploring issues covered in the course, although it is preferred if topics are additive to course content. Papers can also focus on lessons learned and applications to other cases or contemporary situations.

The following grading scale will be used:

Letter Grade	Descriptor	Grade Points
A	Exceptional Quality	4.00
A-	Superior Quality	3.70
B+	High Quality	3.30
B	Expected/Acceptable Quality	3.00
B-	Below Expected Quality	2.70
C	Unsatisfactory Quality	2.00
P	Pass	0.00
F	Fail/Unacceptable Quality	0.00
I	Incomplete	0.00

Students must meet all stated course objectives to pass this course.

Students who fail to complete all course requirements in the time allotted will receive an overall grade of Incomplete (I), and students who cannot meet all course objectives will receive an overall grade of Fail (F). In both cases, the student will enter a remediation program in an effort to bring the student's performance up to passing standards.

Any student may appeal any course grade. First, within a week of the release of the grade, request a review by the course director. Should this review not lead to a satisfactory resolution, submit a written petition to the NWC Dean of Faculty and Academic Programs within two weeks of the release of the grade. The Dean of Faculty and Academic Programs will convene a faculty panel to conduct a formal review; the decision of that panel will be final.

ABSENCE POLICY. The elective course syllabus must clearly articulate the college's absence policy. The following serves as guideline:

(1). Students must notify their assigned college's leadership and the course professor/instructor of absences in accordance with the College Absence/Leave Policy.

(a). Foreseen absences (e.g. student travel) require prior notification.

(b). Unforeseen absences (e.g. sudden personal injury or illness; sudden injury, illness, or death in the family, etc.) require notification as soon as possible, but no later than the first day the student returns to class.

(2) It is the student's responsibility to complete any reading and coursework missed during the absence.

(3) It is the student's responsibility to complete additional assignments as required by the professor/instructor.

(4) Students who accumulate 4 or more foreseen or unforeseen absences will be required to participate in a performance review by the course's host college.

Topic 1:
Introduction to Rome

September 15, 2020

Who were the ancient Romans? How were they organized socially and culturally? How did the Roman Republic function? How did they see their relationship to the Gods? And what's with the recycling of the same names generation after generation? Was that just to confuse us?

In this session, we'll address these questions and more as we explore the context out of which the Romans emerged and that in which they lived.

Lesson Objectives

1. Comprehend the main factors defining the context of the Roman Republic.
2. Understand the Roman political systems, including its main formal and informal institutions.
3. Consider the meaning of the term "*mos maiorum*" (way of the ancestors) and how it shaped Roman thinking about politics and society.

Readings

Scullard, pp. 1-18.

Appian, pp. ix-xiii; xviii-xxii; xxvii-xxxiii.

Plutarch, pp. ix-xxviii.

Podcast

History of Rome, ep. 1, 2, 3a, 3b. (<http://thehistoryofrome.com/episodes/>)

People

Romulus

Servius Tullius

Topic 2:

Rome's Conquest of Italy and Carthage

September 22, 2020

Introduction

Though Rome ultimately grew to dominate the entire Mediterranean Sea (and beyond), its rise to greatness was far from a simple and steady progression. Rome ultimately triumphed not because it never lost, but rather because it never gave up.

In this topic we'll trace the turbulent history of Rome's rise to power and explore the lives and deeds of the leaders whose actions and character shaped elite competition in the late Republic era. In particular, we'll focus on those key turning points and conflicts that both shaped Rome and also served as a model for the Romans of the late Republic. These include the transition from the transition from monarchy to a republican form of government, the sack of Rome by the Gauls in 390 (or 387) BCE, the Samnite Wars, the Punic Wars, and the conflict against Macedon that dragged Rome into the politics of Greece.

Lesson Objectives:

1. Understand the major conflicts that shaped Rome's rise to greatness.
2. Examine some of the key personalities in Roman history, particularly as they defined key archetypes that Romans in the late Republic would seek to emulate.
3. Assess the reasons for the growth of Roman power.

Readings

Scullard, pp. 1-18. (review or read)

Plutarch, pp. 3-35.

Podcast

History of Rome, ep. 007, 023a-e, 028.
(<http://thehistoryofrome.com/episodes/>)

People

Spurius Cassius

Spurius Maelius

Lucius Quinctus Cincinnatus

Marcus Furius Camillus

Marcus Manlius Capitolinus

Quinctus Fabius Maximus Verrucosus Cunctator

Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus

Marcus Porcius Cato (the Censor)

Lucius Aemilius Paullus Macedonicus

Topic 3:
Intervention in the East and the Gracchi

October 29, 2020

Introduction

In 146 BCE, Rome destroyed the great ancient cities of Carthage and Corinth asserting unambiguously its role of hegemon of the Mediterranean. But paradoxically this moment of triumph ushered in an era of increasing instability in the Roman Republic that over the course of a century would lead to its collapse. Was this a coincidence of history? Or did Rome's foreign policy successes lead directly to the challenges that ultimately brought down the Republic?

Today's class will focus primarily on the Tribunes of Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus, both of which ended in violence. We'll examine the roots of their political programs and consider the response of the Senate. Was violence inevitable?

Lesson Objectives

1. Understand the key issues and political disputes that explained developments during the era of the Gracchi.
2. Assess the Gracchan movement – was it a legitimate response to pressing political and social issues, or does it reflect the introduction of a demagogic element into Roman politics?

Readings

Scullard, pp. 19-35.

Plutarch, pp. 77-115.

Appian, pp. pp. 1-16.

Podcast

History of Rome, ep. 29-30. (<http://thehistoryofrome.com/episodes/>)

People

Publius Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus Africanus Numantinus

Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus

Marcus Octavius

Publius Cornelius Scipio Nasica

Marcus Fulvius Flaccus

Gaius Sempronius Gracchus

Lucius Opimius

Marcus Livius Drusus (the Elder)

Cornelia Africana

Topic 4

Gaius Marius: Jugurtha, the Cimbri, and Saturninus

October 6, 2020

Introduction

The suppression of the Gracchi and their supporters produced an uneasy calm in Rome. Politics returned to normal, though the political scene was dominated by a single family, the Caecilia Metelli, who were a conservative, noble, plebian clan.

The dominance of the Caecilia Metelli was broken by one of the most extraordinary of Rome's many extraordinary individuals, Gaius Marius. A "new man" (*novum homo*), he would ultimately become Consul seven times, would be hailed as Rome's savior, but his reforms of the Roman army would ultimately be blamed for the collapse of norms of civil-military relations in the last decades of the Republic.

But while the story ends in Rome, it begins in North Africa, in the kingdom of Numidia.

Lesson Objectives

1. Assess the importance of the career of Gaius Marius. What does his rise to prominence imply about the changing nature of politics in Rome?
2. Consider the transformative implications of the decision to enroll *capite censi* (men without property) in the Roman army. How did this affect civil-military relations?
3. Did Gaius Marius have a coherent political program? If so, was it essentially a continuation of the Gracchan agenda?

Readings

Scullard, pp. 36-51.

Plutarch, pp. 116-168.

Podcast

History of Rome, ep. 31a, 31b (<http://thehistoryofrome.com/episodes/>)

People

Jugurtha

Quintus Caecilius Metellus Numidicus

Gaius Marius

Lucius Cornelius Sulla

Quintus Servilius Caepio

Lucius Appuleius Saturninus

Lucius Licinius Crassus

Topic 5:
The Social War
October 13, 2020

Introduction

After the murder of Saturninus and his supporters, there was again a brief period of calm in Rome. But the dynamics that roiling politics inside the city also affected relations between Rome and her Italian allies. In 91 BCE, Rome allies rose up in revolt beginning one of the most peculiar conflicts in history. The allies were not fighting to replace Rome, nor were they fighting to gain independence from Rome. What the Roman allies wanted, instead, was equal access to Roman citizenship.

The Social War was concluded relative quickly (compare it to the Samnite Wars or the Punic Wars), but its consequences on Roman politics were dramatic. In this topic we'll examine the conflict and try to comprehend why this war was so significant in shaping the remaining history of the Roman Republic.

Lesson Objectives

1. Assess the causes and consequences of the Social War. Why was the conflict so destructive in terms of lives and property? What implications did the conflict have on economics and politics in Italy and Rome?
2. Consider the implications of Pompey's participation in the conflict. Assess whether Pompey's career was revolutionary or rather fit the pattern of earlier Romans like Scipio Africanus.

Readings

Scullard, pp. 52-58.

Plutarch, pp. 169-182.

Appian, pp. 20-30.

Podcast

History of Rome, ep. 32-33 (<http://thehistoryofrome.com/episodes/>)

People

Marcus Livius Drusus (the Younger)

Quintus Poppaedi Silo

Lucius Julius Caesar

Gnaeus Pompeius Strabo

Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus (Pompey)

Marcus Licinius Crassus

Topic 6:

Mithridates and Civil War

October 20, 2020

Introduction

The Social War itself was relatively short, though in the nature of all civil conflicts, still devastating, but its consequences were long lasting. As Italy was embroiled in internal conflict, King Mithridates VI of Pontus sought to expel Roman influence from Asia Minor. And in the process of putting down that revolt, Rome was again plunged into a civil war whose results continued to reverberate until the end of the Republic.

In this topic we'll explore the interaction between domestic and foreign policy in the Republic, and in particular we'll consider whether the emerging conflict between Marius and Sulla should be seen as driven primarily by personal ambition or political disputes. We'll also consider whether Sulla's constitutional reforms reflect an effort to restore the Republic or to fundamentally transform it.

Lesson Objectives

1. Comprehend the origins of the First Mithridatic War and how the dynamics of foreign imperialism affected domestic political competition in Rome.
2. Examine the growing factional divide in Roman politics and assess whether the primary motivations were personal ambition or policy disagreements.
3. Analyze the nature of the Sullan system, both in terms of its conception and implementation.

Readings

Scullard, pp. 59-72.

Plutarch, pp. 182-215.

Appian, pp. 30-65.

Podcast

History of Rome, ep. 34 (<http://thehistoryofrome.com/episodes/>)

People

Mithridates VI of Pontus

Publius Sulpicius Rufus

Lucius Cornelius Cinna

Gnaeus Papirius Carbo

Topic 7:
The Age of Crassus and Pompey

October 27, 2020

Introduction

The Sullan restoration merely papered over the deep cleavages in Roman society. His new constitutional order came immediately under siege. The legacy of the prescriptions continued to divide Roman society and would continue to do so for a generation.

Perhaps most significant, however, is that despite the imposition of a “traditional” political order, with the Senate at its center, the most important actor on the Roman scene during these years was Gnaeus Pompeius, already known at this time as Pompey the Great. Pompey was a rich and a talented general, and despite have never served as Questor, Tribune, Aedile, or Praetor, was given repeated special commands -- first in Spain fighting against the remnants of Marian/Cinnan forces, and then against Spartacus. Crassus was also a major challenge -- massively wealthy, his money both greased and corroded the Roman political systems in the 70s BCE.

So, for a time, a conservative constitutional order sought to co-exist and accommodate two men whose power and prestige rested in extra-legal grounds. It was an impossible balancing act, and it did not last the decade.

Lesson Objectives

1. Consider the rise of Pompey and Crassus. What did their careers say about the changing nature of politics in the Roman Republic?
2. Examine the various efforts to achieve a balance between populist and aristocratic interests. Analyze the main sources of tension and consider whether any political solution was actually possible?

Readings

Scullard, pp. 73-81.

Goldsworthy, pp. 65-78; 82-108.

Plutarch, pp. 216-242.

Appian, pp. 65-68.

Podcast

History of Rome, ep. 35-37 (<http://thehistoryofrome.com/episodes/>)

People

Marcus Aemilius Lepidus

Quintus Sertorius

Quintus Caecilius Metellus Pius

Lucius Licinius Lucullus

Spartacus

Gaius Julius Caesar

Topic 8

Pompey and Cicero: Special commands, the Catalina Conspiracy, and Clodius

November 3, 2020

Introduction

The 60s BCE were the last decade of anything approaching normalcy in Rome. But even that was largely an illusion. Pompey continued to dominate Roman politics, and was granted a new series of special commands -- against Mithridates (yes, him again!), and then two functional commands that further stretched the concept of *imperium*, one to combat piracy and another to manage the grain supply. Both those functional commands were designed to address a major source of stress in Rome, namely grain prices, and their effect on the underemployed urban proletariat.

The urban poor was gradually being co-opted into armed gangs in service of political elites. Unlike during the time of the Gracchi, when the next *populares* vs. *optimates* conflict occurred, both sides would be armed and ready for combat. In addition, a new breed of political actors began to appear in Rome, true demagogues, for whom power was an end itself.

The 60s BCE were also the decade of Cicero. A “new man,” he charted a distinct career path, and also found himself at the center of several of the most curious episodes of the Late Republic. His actions helped shape the future course of elite competition in Rome.

Lesson Objectives

1. Consider Pompey’s new special commands. What do they say about the changing needs of Rome and about the ability of its political system to meet those challenges?
2. Explore the increasing role of organized violence within Rome as a political tool. This clearly represents a breakdown in the political system. Why were Roman elites unable (or unwilling) to stem the tide?
3. Examine the career of Cicero and his interactions with such “villains” as Catalina and Clodius.

Readings

Scullard, pp. 82-96.

Goldsworthy, pp. 109-151.

Plutarch, 241-264.

Appian, pp. 69-79.

Podcast

History of Rome, ep. 38 (<http://thehistoryofrome.com/episodes/>)

People

Gaius Verres

Titus Labienus

Aulus Gabinius

Gaius Manilius

Marcus Tullius Cicero

Marcus Porcius Cato Uticensis (Cato the Younger)

Lucius Sergius Catilina

Publius Cornelius Lentulus Sura

Publius Clodius Pulcher

Topic 9

The Rise of Caesar: The First Triumvirate and the Conquest of Gaul

November 10, 2020

Introduction

The relationship between Crassus and Pompey was always fraught. Both personal clashes and competing ambition served to drive them apart. However, by the end of the 60s, they both found themselves at odds with the Senate, which, increasingly under the sway of Cato the Younger sought to deny both men further prestige and opportunities.

Caesar, ambitious and strategic, brought them together in an informal alliance with him to secure their goals. The so-call First Triumvirate of Crassus, Pompey, and Caesar dramatically reshaped the Roman Republic, and in addition, it hardened Senatorial intransigence. As long as these three powerful men stayed allied, there was little the Senate could do to reign them in. But once Crassus died and the alliance between Pompey and Caesar shattered, it became increasingly difficult to avoid Civil War.

In today's class we'll examine developments from Julius Caesar's consulship in 59 BCE to his decide to cross the Rubicon in 49 BCE triggering yet another civil war.

Lesson Objectives

1. Consider the implications of dominance of the Republic by the "triumvirate." Even it provided stability in the short-run, could this have led to a restoration of traditional norms?
2. Examine the conduct of Cato the Younger. Was his behavior principled opposition or pique? Did his obstructionism exacerbate the crisis of the late Republic, or was it the last, best hope to restore balance to the political system?
3. Analyze Caesar's conquest of Gaul. How would you describe his approach to "counter-insurgency"?

Readings

Scullard, pp. 96-114.

Goldsworthy, pp. 184-185, 197-232, 253-264; 293-306, 315-342.

Caesar, pp. 3-28; 68-74; 150-166; 203-209; 246-266.

Appian, pp. 80-87.

Plutarch, pp. 297-324.

Podcast

History of Rome, ep. 40-42 (<http://thehistoryofrome.com/episodes/>)

People

Marcus Calpurnius Bibulus

Titus Annius Milo Papianus

Ariovistus

Quintus Tullius Cicero

Vercingetorix

Topic 10

Civil War and the Ides of March

November 17, 2020

Introduction

When Caesar crossed the Rubicon, Pompey was appointed to command Senatorial forces. However, he realized that his army was no match for Caesar's battle-tested legionaries. Instead of forcing an early battle, he convinced his allies to abandon Italy and go to the east to tap into the greater resources available to Pompey in Greece and Asia.

In 48 BCE, in a decisive battle at Pharsalus, Pompey's forces were shattered, but the Civil War continued for some years as Senatorial forces under Cato and Gnaeus Pompeius (the son of Pompey the Great). During this time, Caesar consorted with Cleopatra and planned for an eastern expedition to avenge Crassus's defeat in 53 BCE. Before these plans could come to fruition, however, Caesar was assassinated, triggering yet another civil war.

Lesson Objectives

1. Examine the circumstances that led to the civil war. What was the relative role of change, personality, and structure that led to this outcome?
2. Consider Pompey's generalship during the Civil War. Why was he so ineffective? Was the "senatorial" faction doomed to lose regardless?
3. Did Caesar become a tyrant? What are the arguments for and against?

Readings

Scullard, pp. 114-130

Goldsworthy, pp. 361-397, 405-446.

Caesar, pp. 309-332; 365-367; 403-404; 421-424; 433-452; 463-477.

Plutarch, 325-359.

Appian, pp. 87-133.

Podcast

History of Rome, ep. 43-46 (<http://thehistoryofrome.com/episodes/>)

People

Marcus Antonius

Marcus Aemilius Lepidus

Gnaeus Pompeius

Cleopatra

Gaius Cassius Longinus

Decimus Junius Brutus

Marcus Junius Brutus

Topic 11

Antony, Octavian, and the end of the Republic

December 1, 2020

Introduction

Following Caesar's murder, his partisans, notable Octavian, Antony, and Lepidus combined to form the Second Triumvirate in opposition to the self-described "Liberators." The heirs of Caesar managed a decisive victory in 42 BCE at Philippi, though the war at sea dragged on for some time thereafter.

But almost inevitably, the triumvirs drifted to war. More out of exhaustion than design, the Roman Republic came end after over 450 years. For most Romans, this must have been a relief, and for the next two centuries Rome, now as an empire, flourished.

Lesson Objectives

1. Assess the state of the Republic during the period of the Second Triumvirate. Which institutions remained in place? And which had been wholly wiped away?
2. Consider the reasons for the ultimate victory of Octavian. What factors best explain his triumph?
3. On the whole, was the end of the Republic a negative or positive development for the average Roman citizen?

Readings:

Scullard, pp. 131-145.

Cicero, pp. 101-152.

Plutarch, pp. 360-379; 381-386; 404-417.

Appian, pp. 154-177; 207-227; 279-293.

Podcast

History of Rome, ep.47-51 (<http://thehistoryofrome.com/episodes/>)

People:

Gaius Octavius

Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa

Sextus Pompeius Magnus Pius

Gnaeus Domitius Ahenobarbus

Topic 12:
Augustus and the Principate

December 8, 2020

Though the Republic came to an end, Rome as a civilization and an empire flourished for centuries thereafter. From the reign of Augustus until reign of Diocletian in the late 3rd Century AD, the empire was ruled as a “Principate”—the rule of a “first citizen” or “first among equals.” Though largely a fiction from the start, this transitional form of rule, nonetheless, was durable, and its norms were important to the stability of the empire.

In this week we’ll examine the logic of the principate and how is resolved the tensions in the late republic. We’ll also consider the weakness of the principate system and how those ultimately led to the crises that brought down the western empire.

Lesson Objectives

1. Assess the system of government implemented by Augustus over the course of his reign.
2. Examine the reasons for the success of the Principate, particularly in terms of addressing the weakness of the late Republic.
3. Consider how Roman elites and masses adapted to the end of the republican form of government. What does the transition say about people’s willingness to live under autocracy?

Readings:

Scullard, pp. 176-204.

Podcast

History of Rome, ep.52-53 (<http://thehistoryofrome.com/episodes/>)

People:

Gaius Maecenas

Livia

Publius Quinctilius Varus

Nero Claudius Drusus Germanicus

Tiberius