HEROES AND VILLAINS: Rome from the Monarchy to the Fall of the Republic

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Rudolph Paul Hock (rphock@comcast.net)

REQUIRED TEXTS: all are in paperback
Primary: (in order of reading)

Secondary:

AIMS/OBJECTIVES:
This course is designed, above all, to introduce the student via PRIMARY SOURCES to an intriguing variety of heroes and villains throughout the course of Roman history, from the time of her founding through the chaos and anarchy of the late Republic to the initial stages of the establishment of the Pax Romana in the early Principate. Of course all will be read within a given and particular historical context for which our SECONDARY SOURCE, Social Conflicts in the Roman Republic, will serve as our guide. The period that will occupy a good portion of our attention will be the very vibrant and flourishing period of the decline of the Republic and the imminent formation of the Empire. It is a tremendously exciting age for many reasons: for example, there is the paradox of Rome collapsing internally even as she was undisputed mistress of the Mediterranean. We shall trace the political, economic, social, legal---AND MORAL!---issues associated with this collapse. Furthermore, it was an age of literary brilliance, both in prose and poetry. In addition, the particular age in question has given us some of the most notable heroes and villains of antiquity: e.g., the Gracchus brothers, Sulla, Catiline, Julius Caesar, Cicero.

As stated earlier, we will explore Rome’s history primarily through the use of primary source materials, that is, through the eyes of contemporaries (or almost) as manifested in their own writing (see above under required texts: primary). These sources permit us to read what the ancients themselves thought and recorded about their existence and about some of the issues we shall be exploring, such as wealth and society, citizenship and government, law (and rhetoric) and the courts, Romans and aliens, freedom and slavery.
Above all, naturally, we shall ask what characterized a hero or villain in the estimation of our ancient sources and whether certain qualities, or the absence of them, in leading historical figures would merit the same assessment today. Thus, for example, we will explore whether a prominent figure like Julius Caesar was viewed unanimously as either a hero or villain or whether there was ambiguity among his contemporaries. And what of later assessments of him? Were they colored by contemporary political movements and ideologies, by different moral standards? And so, the course can be viewed as one which to a great extent seeks to examine values and morality among the Romans.

Not to be forgotten, finally, is that the course becomes an examination of the historiographical methods of our ancient sources. What did they choose to write about? What approach/es did they take? What was the scope of their subject matter? What was their purpose in writing? Who was their target audience? What themes did they stress? How reliable were they? What methods of presentation did they adopt? How rhetorical were they? How dramatic? What difference/es can we detect from among annalists, biographers, forensic speakers, writers of monographs?

**EVALUATION:**

- Informed class participation based on class assignments: 20%
- Oral presentation: 10%
- Term paper of 15-20 pages: 30%
- Final exam: 40%

**Honor Code.** MALS and DLS students are responsible for upholding the Georgetown University Honor System and adhering to the academic standards included in the Honor Code Pledge stated below:

_In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown University Honor System: To be honest in any academic endeavor; and to conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together._

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