

U03732 THE EMPEROR NERO

(Dr Dominic Berry)

This course handbook should be used in conjunction with the *Honours Handbook 2007-08* (see www.shca.ed.ac.uk/classics/undergraduate/documents/ClassicsHonoursHandbook2007_2008.pdf, or available from the Classics Office). There you will find information on course protocol, in particular on plagiarism, and a section on assessment, including penalties for late submission of coursework.

COURSE ORGANISER

The course organiser is Dr Dominic Berry (David Hume Tower 4.11; tel. 0131 650 3590; email d.h.berry@ed.ac.uk). Other helpful contacts are the Classics secretaries, Jill Shaw (Classics Office, David Hume Tower 5.02, mornings only; tel. 0131 650 3580; email Jill.Shaw@ed.ac.uk) and Elaine Hutchison (David Hume Tower 5.01, afternoons only; tel. 0131 650 3582; email E.Hutchison@ed.ac.uk).

As well as your needing to contact us, we may need to contact you. It is a university requirement that students respond to emails sent to their university email address. We will assume that every student on this course can be contacted at this address (smatriculationnumber@sms.ed.ac.uk) and checks their incoming mail regularly.

TIME AND PLACE

Semester 1, Weeks 1-9 and 11, Tuesdays 11.10 a.m.-1 p.m. in Adam Ferguson Building G 10. In addition, tutorials will be held in Weeks 7 and 10 at times to be arranged.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides an opportunity to study in detail the reign of the fifth (and perhaps the most notorious) Roman emperor, Nero (AD 54-68), and, through this, to understand the history of the Julio-Claudian period (31 BC-AD 68). It will address the nature and development of the Roman principate; Nero's early life; the history of his reign; his artistic preoccupations; and the reasons for his failure and fall. Particular emphasis will be placed on the sources for the period, which are exceptionally rich, extending from the philosophy and satire of Nero's tutor Seneca to the visually spectacular coinage and the extensive remains of Nero's Domus Aurea in Rome. Tacitus' *Annals* and Suetonius' *Life of Nero* will be studied in English translation, and will be considered from a literary as well as a historical perspective.

INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

On successful completion of the course, students should be able to demonstrate in tutorial discussion, in coursework and in the written degree examination that they have acquired the following *specific academic competences*:

- a sound understanding of the history and politics of the Neronian period;
- skills of historical and literary analysis of classical texts and other ancient sources;

- and an awareness and appreciation of a selection of works by Tacitus and Suetonius studied in English translation.

In addition, they should be able to demonstrate, again through tutorial discussion, coursework and the written degree examination, that they have acquired the following *specific transferable skills*:

- gathering material independently on a given topic and organising it into a coherent set of data;
- comparing differing sets of data and drawing conclusions from them;
- evaluating different approaches to and explanations of material, and making critical choices between them;
- expressing ideas and arguments clearly;
- and organising their own learning, managing their workload and working to a timetable.

They should also have developed their *general competences* as follows, and be able to demonstrate them by the means stated above:

- general historical understanding;
- general literary appreciation.

ACCESSIBILITY

We welcome students with disabilities (including those with specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia), and are working to make all our courses accessible. If you wish to talk to a member of academic staff about the course requirements and your particular needs, please contact Dr David Greasley (email David.Greasley@ed.ac.uk, tel. 0131 650 3838), Room 128, William Robertson Building.

PRESCRIBED TEXTS

Your prescribed texts for this course are as follows:

- Tacitus, *The Annals*, tr. A.J.Woodman (Indianapolis, 2004), Books 12 (1-9, 22, 25-6, 41-2, 53-4, 56-9, 64-9 only), 13-16 (complete); and
- **either** (recommended for Ancient History): Suetonius, *Nero*, tr. C.Edwards, in *Suetonius: Lives of the Caesars*, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford, 2000);
- **or** (recommended for Classical Literature in Translation): [Seneca], *Octavia*, tr. J.G.Fitch, in *Seneca: Oedipus, Agamemnon, Thyestes, Hercules on Oeta, Octavia*, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass. and London, 2004).

LECTURES AND TUTORIALS

1. [2 hour lecture]
Introduction to course. Nero, "firebrand of the human race": methods of approach.
2. [2 hour lecture]
The nature and development of the principate. What emperors actually did.
3. [2 hour lecture]
The sources I: Tacitus, Suetonius and Dio.
4. [2 hour lecture]

The sources II: Seneca and other authors; inscriptions, papyri and coins.

5. [2 hour lecture]
Nero's family, boyhood and accession.

6. [2 hour lecture]
Nero's principate: the good years.

For next week you should research and study the following passages: Tacitus, *Annals* 13.16.1-13.17.1 ("It was a custom...the indivisibility of kingship") and 15.43 ("As for the parts of the City...scorched under the more severe heat"). Make notes which (a) indicate the passage's context and (b) comment on historical, literary and any other points of interest. In other words, for each passage, you should write a gobbet answer as you would in the exam, but in note form.

7. [2 hour lecture]
Nero's principate: the years of tyranny.

[1 hour tutorial]
Tacitus: discussion of prepared passages.

8. [2 hour lecture]
Nero's principate: (1) art and architecture: the Domus Aurea; (2) foreign affairs.

9. [2 hour lecture]
Nero's principate: the fall of Nero.

For next week you should research and study the following passages: either Suetonius, *Nero* 13-14 ("I am, I believe...the first and fourth") and 52-3 ("In his youth...with his own hands") or [Seneca], *Octavia* 593-631 and 820-59. Make notes which (a) indicate the passage's context and (b) comment on historical, literary and any other points of interest. In other words, for each passage, you should write a gobbet answer as you would in the exam, but in note form.

10. [1 hour tutorial]
Either Suetonius or *Octavia*: discussion of prepared passages.

11. [2 hour lecture]
Conclusions. Exam guidance.

ASSESSMENT

The course is assessed by a coursework essay (30%) and a 2-hour examination (70%).

The essay must be of 3,000-3,500 words, and must be submitted to the Classics Office not later than 12 noon on Monday of Week 12 (3 December 2007). Choose one of the following titles:

1. How far was the senate to blame for the poor relations it had with Nero?
2. Why was there no conspiracy against Nero until AD 65?

3. Discuss the development of art, architecture and town planning under Nero.
4. Tacitus' view of Nero may be more profound than Suetonius', but is it more true?
5. Compare the picture of Nero and his court given in Tacitus' *Annals* with that given in the *Octavia*.

The exam will consist of passages for comment taken from the prescribed texts, and an essay question.

CLASSICS ESSAY GUIDELINES

Your coursework must follow the Classics essay guidelines set out at: www.shca.ed.ac.uk/classics/undergraduate/documents/Essayguidelines0708.pdf. Work which does not follow the guidelines will be penalised. Please read the guidelines carefully and follow them in all your work in Classics.

RECOMMENDED READING

On the prescribed texts

Tacitus, *Annals*

R.H.Martin, *Tacitus* (London, 1981)

E.O'Gorman, *Irony and Misreading in the Annals of Tacitus* (Cambridge, 2000)

R.Syme, *Tacitus*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1958)

A.J.Woodman, "Amateur dramatics at the court of Nero" in T.J.Luce and A.J.Woodman (eds), *Tacitus and the Tacitean Tradition* (Princeton, 1993), 104-28: on Tacitus' portrayal of the Pisonian conspiracy

A.J.Woodman, *Tacitus Reviewed* (Oxford, 1998)

Suetonius, *Nero*

K.R.Bradley, *Suetonius' Life of Nero: an Historical Commentary* (Brussels, 1978)

A.Wallace-Hadrill, *Suetonius: the Scholar and his Caesars* (London, 1983)

B.H.Warminster, *Suetonius: Nero* (Bristol, 1977)

[Seneca], *Octavia*

A.J.Boyle, *Roman Tragedy* (Abingdon, 2006)

A.J.Boyle, *Octavia: Attributed to Seneca* (Oxford, forthcoming May 2008): a major commentary

R.Ferri, "Octavia's heroines", *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 98 (1998), 339-56

R.Ferri, *Octavia: a Play Attributed to Seneca* (Cambridge, 2003): a major commentary

G.W.M.Harrison, *Pseudo-Seneca: Octavia* (London, 2007)

C.J.Herington, "Octavia Praetexta: a Survey", *Classical Quarterly* n.s. 11 (1961), 18-30

P.Kragelund, *Prophecy, Populism and Propaganda in the Octavia* (Copenhagen, 1982)

P.Kragelund, "Nero's *luxuria*, in Tacitus and in the *Octavia*", *Classical Quarterly* n.s. 50 (2000), 494-515

D.F.Sutton, *The Dramaturgy of the Octavia* (Königstein, 1983)

G.D.Williams, "Nero, Seneca and Stoicism in the *Octavia*", in J.Elsner and J.Masters (eds), *Reflections of Nero* (London, 1994), 178-95

M.Wilson (ed.), *The Tragedy of Nero's Wife: Studies on the Octavia Praetexta* (Auckland, 2003) (=Prudentia 35.1)

On the literature of the period more generally

- D.R.Dudley (ed.), *Neronians and Flavians: Silver Latin I* (London, 1972)
G.O.Hutchinson, *Latin Literature from Seneca to Juvenal* (Oxford, 1993)
E.J.Kenney and W.V.Clausen (eds), *The Cambridge History of Classical Literature* vol. 2 (Cambridge, 1982)
A.Momigliano, "Literary chronology of the Neronian age", *Classical Quarterly* 38 (1944), 96-100
J.P.Sullivan, *Literature and Politics in the Age of Nero* (London, 1985)

Sources: coins

- M.Grant, *Roman History from Coins* (Cambridge, 1958)
D.W.MacDowall, "The numismatic evidence for the Neronia", *Classical Quarterly* n.s. 8 (1958), 192-4
D.W.MacDowall, *The Western Coinages of Nero* (ANS Numismatic Notes and Monographs 161; 1979)
C.H.V.Sutherland, *Coinage in Roman Imperial Policy, 31 BC-AD 68* (London, 1951)
C.H.V.Sutherland, *The Emperor and the Coinage* (London, 1976)
C.H.V.Sutherland, *Roman History and Coinage, 44 B.C.-A.D. 69* (Oxford, 1987), nos. 35-42
C.H.V.Sutherland and R.A.G.Carson, *The Roman Imperial Coinage* vol. 1, ed. 2 (London, 1984), 133-87
E.A.Sydenham, *Historical References on Coins of the Roman Empire* (London, 1917)
E.A.Sydenham, *The Coinage of Nero* (London, 1920)
G.B.Townend, "Tacitus, Suetonius and the temple of Janus", *Hermes* 108 (1980), 233-42

Sources: inscriptions

- K.K.Carroll, *The Parthenon Inscription* (Durham, North Carolina, 1982): a fascinating account of the inscription put up on the east front of the Parthenon in AD 61-2 to honour Nero
R.K.Sherk, *Translated Documents of Greece and Rome 6: The Roman Empire: Augustus to Hadrian* (Cambridge, 1988), nos. 61-78
E.M.Smallwood, *Documents Illustrating the Principates of Gaius, Claudius and Nero* (Cambridge, 1967), nos. 47-74 and *passim*. The inscriptions mostly overlap with Sherk (but nos. 48 and 71 do not). Some of the coins are covered by Sutherland (but nos. 56-8, 60, 66 and 72 are not).

Nero: general

- A.A.Barrett, *Agrippina: Mother of Nero* (London, 1996)
S.Bartsch, *Actors in the Audience: Theatricality and Doublespeak from Nero to Hadrian* (Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1994)
R.A.Bauman, *Women and Politics in Ancient Rome* (London, 1992)
J.D.P.Bolton, "Was the Neronia a freak festival?", *Classical Quarterly* 42 (1948), 82-90
K.R.Bradley, "Two notes concerning Nero", *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 16 (1975), 305-8
K.R.Bradley, "The chronology of Nero's visit to Greece A.D. 66/67", *Latomus* 37 (1978), 61-72
K.R.Bradley, "Nero's retinue in Greece, A.D. 66/67", *Illinois Classical Studies* 4 (1979), 152-7

- D.C.Braund, "Treasure-trove and Nero", *Greece & Rome* 30 (1983), 65-9
- P.A.Brunt, "The revolt of Vindex and the fall of Nero", *Latomus* 18 (1959), 531-59
- P.A.Brunt, "Stoicism and the Principate", *Papers of the British School at Rome* 43 (1975), 7-35
- J.Burns, *Great Women of Imperial Rome: Mothers and Wives of the Caesars* (London, 2007)
- E.Champlin, *Nero* (Cambridge, Mass. and London, 2003)
- M.P.Charlesworth, "Nero: some aspects", *Journal of Roman Studies* 40 (1950), 69-76
- D.R.Dudley and G.Webster, *The Rebellion of Boudicca* (London, 1962)
- P.T.Eden, *Seneca: Apocolocyntosis* (Cambridge, 1984) (includes translation and commentary)
- J.Elsner and J.Masters (eds), *Reflections of Nero: Culture, History and Representation* (London, 1994)
- R.M.Frazer, "Nero the artist-criminal", *Classical Journal* 62 (1966) 17-20
- P.Gallivan, "Nero's liberation of Greece", *Hermes* 101 (1973), 230-4
- A.Garzetti, *From Tiberius to the Antonines* (London, 1974)
- J.Geiger, "Munatius Rufus and Thrasea on Cato the Younger", *Athenaeum* 57 (1979), 48-72
- J.Ginsburg, "Nero's consular policy", *American Journal of Ancient History* 6 (1981), 51-68
- M.Grant, *Nero* (London, 1970): good illustrations
- G.K.Gresseth, "The quarrel between Lucan and Nero", *Classical Philology* 52 (1957), 24-7
- M.T.Griffin, *Seneca: a Philosopher in Politics* (Oxford, 1976)
- M.T.Griffin, "Nero's recall of Suetonius Paullinus", *Scripta Classica Israelica* 3 (1976-7), 138-52
- M.T.Griffin, *Nero: the End of a Dynasty* (London, 1984): the best biography
- M.T.Griffin, "Claudius in the judgement of the next half-century" in *Die Regierungszeit des Kaisers Claudius (41-54 n. Chr.): Umbruch oder Episode?* (Mainz, 1994), 307-16
- M.T.Griffin, "Political thought in the age of Nero", *Latomus* 268 (2002), 325-37
- M.T.Griffin, "Clementia after Caesar: from politics to philosophy", *Papers of the Langford Latin Seminar* 11 (2003), 157-82
- M.Hammond, "Corbulo and Nero's eastern policy", *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 45 (1934), 81-104
- B.W.Henderson, *The Life and Principate of the Emperor Nero* (London, 1903)
- U.W.Hiesinger, "The portraits of Nero", *American Journal of Archaeology* 79 (1975), 113-24
- J.G.F.Hind, "The middle years of Nero's reign", *Historia* 20 (1970), 488-505
- R.Holland, *Nero: the Man behind the Myth* (Stroud, 2000): attempt to rehabilitate Nero, by a non-classicist
- C.Huelson, "The burning of Rome under Nero", *American Journal of Archaeology* 13 (1909), 45-8
- V.Hunink, "Lucan's praise of Nero", *Papers of the Leeds International Latin Seminar* 7 (1993), 135-40
- M.Kaplan, "Agrippina semper atrox: a study of Tacitus' characterization of women", in C.Deroux (ed.), *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History* 1 (1979), 410-17
- N.M.Kennell, "NERON PERIODONIKES", *American Journal of Philology* 109 (1988), 239-51: on Nero's tour of Greece
- J.Malitz, *Nero* (Oxford, 2005)
- C.E.Manning, "Acting and Nero's conception of the principate", *Greece & Rome* 22 (1975), 164-75
- R.Mayer, "What caused Poppaea's death?", *Historia* 31 (1982), 248-9
- F.Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World (31 BC-AD 337)*, ed. 2 (London, 1992)
- M.P.O.Morford, "The training of three Roman emperors", *Phoenix* 22 (1968), 57-72
- M.P.O.Morford, "Nero's patronage and participation in literature and the arts", *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* 2.32.3 (1985), 2003-31

- E.F.Parker, "The education of heirs in the Julio-Claudian family", *American Journal of Philology* 67 (1946), 29-50
- J.Paterson, "Nero is innocent, O.K.?", *Omnibus* 6 (1983), 23-5
- G.Rickman, *The Corn Supply of Ancient Rome* (Oxford, 1980)
- T.K.Roper, "Nero, Seneca and Tigellinus", *Historia* 28 (1979), 346-57
- V.Rudich, *Political Dissidence under Nero* (London, 1997)
- F.H.Sandbach, *The Stoics*, ed. 2 (Bristol, 1989)
- D.Shotter, *Nero* (London, 1997): a quick read
- E.M.Smallwood, "The alleged Jewish tendencies of Poppaea Sabina", *Journal of Theological Studies* 10 (1959), 329-35
- R.Syme, "Domitius Corbulo", *Journal of Roman Studies* 60 (1970), 27-39 (=Roman Papers 2.805-24)
- R.Syme, "Princesses and others in Tacitus", *Greece & Rome* 28 (1981), 40-52
- G.B.Townend, "Tacitus, Suetonius and the temple of Janus", *Hermes* 108 (1980), 233-42
- B.H.Warmington, *Nero: Reality and Legend* (London, 1969): a good biography to start with
- Z.Yavetz, *Plebs and Princeps* (Oxford, 1969)

Nero: art, architecture and town planning

- L.F.Ball, *A Reappraisal of Nero's Domus Aurea* (*Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplement* 11; 1994)
- L.F.Ball, *The Domus Aurea and the Roman Architectural Revolution* (Cambridge, 2003)
- M.E.Blake, *Roman Construction in Italy from Tiberius through the Flavians* (New York, 1968)
- J.Boardman (ed.), *The Oxford History of Classical Art* (Oxford, 1993)
- A.Boethius, *The Golden House of Nero* (Ann Arbor, 1960)
- A.Claridge, *Rome: an Oxford Archaeological Guide* (Oxford, 1998)
- J.Coulston and H.Dodge, *Ancient Rome: the Archaeology of the Eternal City* (Oxford University School of Archaeology, Monograph 54; 2000)
- G.Hermansen, *Ostia: Aspects of Roman City Life* (Edmonton, 1981)
- D.E.E.Kleiner, *Roman Sculpture* (New Haven and London, 1992)
- W.L.MacDonald, *The Architecture of the Roman Empire*, ed. 2 (London, 1982-86)
- R.Meiggs, *Roman Ostia*, ed. 2 (Oxford, 1960)
- M.P.O.Morford, "The distortion of the Domus Aurea tradition", *Eranos* 66 (1968), 158-79
- E.Nash, *Pictorial Dictionary of Ancient Rome*, ed. 2 (London, 1968)
- R.F.Newbold, "Some social and economic consequences of the AD 64 fire at Rome", *Latomus* 33 (1974), 858-69
- S.B.Platner and T.Ashby, *A Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome* (Oxford, 1929)
- N.H.Ramage and A.Ramage, *The Cambridge Illustrated History of Roman Art* (Cambridge, 1991)
- L.Richardson, *A New Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome* (Baltimore and London, 1992)
- O.F.Robinson, *Ancient Rome: City Planning and Administration* (London, 1992)
- F.Sear, *Roman Architecture* (London, 1989)
- E.Segala, *Domus Aurea* (Milan, 1999) (in English)
- J.E.Stambaugh, *The Ancient Roman City* (London, 1988)
- J.B.Ward-Perkins, "Nero's Golden House", *Antiquity* 30 (1956), 209-19
- J.B.Ward-Perkins, *Roman Imperial Architecture* (Harmondsworth, 1985)
- "Domus Aurea", www.romeguide.it/domus_aureaeng/domus_aurea.htm (useful for the pictures)