

# CET Syllabus of Record



**Program:** CET Siena  
**Course Title:** Roman Art and Archaeology  
**Course Code:** SN/ARTH 2054  
**Total Hours:** 45  
**Recommended Credits:** 3  
**Primary Discipline:** Art History  
**Language of Instruction:** English  
**Prerequisites/Requirements:** None

---

## Description

This course serves as an introduction to the art and architecture of the ancient Italic civilizations by exploring in depth the historical, political and cultural evolution of Italy between the 8th century BC and the 5th century AD.

The course begins with a close study of the highly refined culture of the Etruscans, who dominated Central Italy until the Roman Age. Then, emphasis is placed on gaining understanding of the Roman civilization within its broad cultural and historical contexts, focusing on sculpture, architecture, engineering, painting and urban design. The course is not confined to a study of works of art but includes the historical, social, cultural, political and patronage issues that affected the style, form and content of one of the Italy's most important civilizations of the Antiquity. To that end, throughout the course, an attempt is made to present art in relation to the history and culture from which it emerged, and of which it is an expression and reflection. The course ends with the investigation of new artistic modes emerging in Italy at the end of the Roman Empire.

Lectures in class are complemented by on-site visits to see many artworks and monuments in Siena and Florence. As the Antiquity works are often still in their original physical settings, students have the unique opportunity to experience the works as their original viewers did and as their creators intended.

## Objectives

The aim of this class is to investigate the rich artistic output of Italy from the beginning of the Etruscan Age to the end of the Roman Empire, attentively focusing on artistic patronage, which reached a peak often nostalgically referred to by later generations as a "golden age".

During the course, students:

- Develop practical perception of some of the most important masterpieces of the Etruscan and Roman civilizations
- Learn to understand the relationship between historical and artistic events, and the importance of patronage
- Develop the necessary tools for using historical and artistic academic sources (primary and secondary) appropriately and accurately
- Gain a thorough knowledge of Etruscan and Roman art and architecture

# CET Syllabus of Record

## Course Requirements

Students are required to complete all reading assignments before coming to class. Reading assignments average 50 pages per class session. Active participation in class discussions is not only encouraged but required. Discussion is an important part of the learning process and students are expected to express their thoughts and perceptions articulately, and develop a critical response to the material under consideration. Attendance at and participation in all class meetings and on-site visits are mandatory.

Students are asked to complete two looking assignments over the course of the term. These assignments are intended to give students the opportunity to look at and study works of art independently. These written assignments are to comprise a critical description of the artwork in question, notes, scholarly observations and sketches (following the structure of the Notebook template). Students present their looking assignments in class at the end of the term.

There are two comprehensive exams, a midterm and a final. Both exams comprise slide identifications and essays.

## Methods of Evaluation

Attendance and participation	10%
Midterm Exam	30%
Final Exam	30%
Looking assignment	15%
Looking assignment	15%

## Primary Texts

Bonfante, Larissa. *Etruscan Life and Afterlife: A Handbook of Etruscan Studies*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1986.

Ramage, Nancy H. and Andrew. *Roman Art* (Fourth Edition). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2009.

## Supplementary Texts

Haynes, S. *Etruscan Civilization*. British Museum Press.

Kleiner, Diana. *Roman Sculpture*. Yale University Press.

Pollitt, J.J. *Art in the Hellenistic Age*. Cambridge University Press.

Robertson, Martin. *A Shorter History of Greek Art*. Cambridge University Press.

## Outline of Course Content

Note: Fall/Spring students cover approximately 1 topic per week. During the summer, when class periods are longer, students cover approximately 2 topics per week.

TOPIC 1 - General Introduction: Etruria and the Etruscan Civilization

Presentation of the geography, chronology and political framework of the Etruscan and Roman Antiquity. A description of the civilization of the Etruscan Forerunners.

TOPIC 2 - The Etruscan Civilization: from the Iron Age (Villanovan Phase) to the Archaic Age

The Iron Age of the Etruscan civilization—tombs, cult statues and the symbolism and style of artifacts. The historic phase of the Etruscan Empire--the interconnections with Greek

## CET Syllabus of Record

culture of the 6th century BC (Archaic Age).

TOPIC 3 - Etruria and the Etruscan Civilization: from the Archaic Age to the Classic Age  
The slow process of transformation of the Etruscan civilization during the 6<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> century BC due to the exposure to Greek Classic art.

TOPIC 4 - The Evolution of Mediterranean Art from the Hellenistic Age to the Roman Republican Age  
Later Greek Art--from the supremacy of Alexander the Great to the time when the military and political power of Rome overcame the independence of the Etruscans and the Greeks.

TOPIC 5 - Rome: Origins to the End of the Republican Age (509 to 27 BC) and Julius Caesar  
The origins of the Roman Republic (traditionally marked by the expulsion of the last Etruscan King of the city, Tarquinius Superbus in 509 BC) and the creation of a nominal Republic which lasts for five centuries and ends with Julius Caesar. The evolution of Roman Portraiture and the Veristic style.

TOPIC 6 - The Birth of the Roman Empire: the Age of Augustus and the Pax Romana (27 BC to 14 AD)  
The dramatic end of the Roman Republic and the beginning of the empire under the control of Emperor Augustus. The transformation of the symbolism of Roman Art, now intimately bound up with imperial propaganda.

TOPIC 7 - The Julio-Claudian Dynasty (14 to 68 AD)  
The Julio-Claudian Dynasty art and architecture--the evolution of Imperial building during Nero's Age (the Domus Aurea).

TOPIC 8 - Vespasian and the Flavian Dynasty (the Era of "Bread and Circus Games": 69 to 98 AD)  
The transformation of Roman art and architecture after the Julio-Claudians, during Vespasian's Age. The imperial commission of the Colosseum; the change of fashion in portraiture; the dramatic end of Pompeii and Herculaneum due to the eruption of the Vesuvio volcano.

TOPIC 9 - The Height of the Empire: Trajan, "Optimus Princeps" (98 to 117 AD)  
The peak of the Roman civilization--the largest territorial expansion of the Roman empire. The imperial commissions of the Spanish Emperor Trajan--public facilities (the Trajan's Baths and the Trajan's Forum); the embellishment of the most important cities of the provinces.

TOPIC 10 - The Age of Hadrian (117 to 138 AD)  
The Hadrian Empire Age and the classical interest and revival by the cultured emperor. Hadrian's love for Greek Classic Age masterpieces are seen in the remains of the Hadrian Villa, and in the shaping of the Pantheon.

TOPIC 11 - The Age of the Antonines (138 to 193 AD) and Marcus Aurelius  
The rule of the Antonines; the imperial portraiture during the reign of Marcus Aurelius.

TOPIC 12 - The Age of Septimius Severus and the Severans (193 to 235 AD), the Age of the

## **CET Syllabus of Record**

Soldiers Emperors (235 to 284 AD) and the Tetrarchs (284 to 312 AD)

The Severans' preference for the embellishment of the most important cities in North Africa and Siria (Leptis Magna and Baalbek, related to the imperial origins). The political crisis during the Soldiers emperors. The Diocletian's reign. The evolution of imperial portraiture and its increasing abstraction and symbolism.

TOPIC 13 - The Age of Constantine the Great (307 to 337 AD)

The Constantine Age and the emperor's adoption of Christianity among the imperial cults. The imperial foundation of a "second Rome"--Constantinople (Istanbul).

TOPIC 14 - The End of the Roman Empire

The Barbaric invasions and the rapid collapse of the Roman Empire at the beginning of the 5th century. Byzantine art and architecture of Ravenna, the last imperial city in Italy.