This course is devoted to the art, architecture, and archaeology of the ancient Roman world. Its chronological scope is vast, covering a span from the third century BC to the fourth century AD. Equally extensive is its geographical sweep: although materials from the Italian peninsula will receive the most attention, our objects will take us all over the Mediterranean and occasionally beyond, from Greco-Roman kingdoms in what is now Afghanistan to the frigid borders of Roman Britain.

Traditional art historical concerns of style, technique, and aesthetics will play some role in our analysis. But above all we want to approach these physical remains of the Romans as a means of gaining insight into their own view of the world: their political and communal identities, their gender roles and social values, their conceptions of the gods, their views of life, their attitudes towards death, and their beliefs about what most mattered.

This will require that we turn our eye to a wide variety of objects — from statues and public buildings to wall paintings and mosaics, pottery and sarcophagi — and that we consider everything from the most imposing and bombastic forms of art to the most whimsical and quirky: from cult images in majestic temples to raunchy paintings in notorious brothels, from monumental theaters and amphitheaters to secluded private interiors and family tombs, from epic historical scenes glorifying human conquerors to fantastic mythological scenes celebrating gods and heroes, satyrs and nymphs, the divine and the dead.

→ Honors credit available ←

→ If the course appears full, email Dr. Allen (montallen@siu.edu) — as an Honors student, he will always make room for you! ←