

Time, Day, Location: Tuesdays, 11:00-2:00, Sheikh Khalifa Building, 1

Professor: Dr. Brenda Llewellyn Ihssen

Email: b.llewellyn.ihssen@uwtsd.ac.uk

Office Hours: M/T/W, 3:00-4:00 PM, and by appointment.



Course Description

Religion in the Roman Empire in the age of Late Antiquity manifested itself in regional, indigenous, mono-, di- and poly- theistic systems. This course will investigate the nature of religion in the Roman Empire, focusing on layers of life infused with distinctly religious significance: (1) family, (2) city and (3) empire. Course content places consideration of individual topics—including origin stories; operations of nature; locale and legitimacy of authority; ritual; forms and places of worship; definition and basis of moral behaviour; public order, the body and sexuality; the nature of divinity; health; fertility; death and the afterlife—on an historical framework of Late Antiquity, broadly dated from the 4th century CE through the 7th century CE.

Course Goals

- To read critically and analyse select source materials that comprise the study of religious history of the Late Antique era, including theology, philosophy, art, hagiography, funerary inscriptions and legal texts.
- To consider with empathy unique cultural and theological contributions of this historical era, and to analyse shared assumptions and the underlying role of religion in public and private life.

Learning Outcomes

Upon the successful completion of this module, the student should be able to demonstrate the ability to:

- Articulate the multiple dimensions of religious behaviour in Late Antique society.
- Discuss responsibly source materials in large and small group format.
- Engage in appropriate scholarly research in the advanced study of religion.
- Produce a written essay that conforms to standards established and upheld by the scholarly community, including the construction of a thoughtful claim that can be supported by evidence from the texts.

Method

Format of the course: This course meets once per week, for three hours total. Methodology is based upon a non-sectarian approach that locates religion within historical and social context. There will be lecture of the historical context and discussion of the primary sources. Course work will reinforce methods, tools and theories used in the study of religious history. My courses are content and methods focused, student-responsible learning is emphasized.

Format of the readings: Most of the readings will be primary source materials, the “evidence” of historical study. These sources are often very biased, incomplete, confusing and drastically out of context, and they require time and patience. So why read them? Because studying history through primary sources allows us to train our critical thinking skills, a different type of learning than memorizing facts. History is composed of facts, but facts are not history.

Required Texts

Always bring the texts we will be discussing on the appropriate day.

1. James B. Rives, *Religion in the Roman Empire*. Blackwell Ancient Religions (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007). Available at www.amazon.co.uk.
2. Valerie M. Warrior, *Roman Religion: A Sourcebook*. Focus Classical Sources (Newburyport, Massachusetts, 2002). Available at www.amazon.co.uk.
3. Additional readings will be posted on Moodle or sent to you via email.

Attendance

Attendance is imperative in any class. In this day and age we have to work extra hard to build community, so it is important that you be present mentally and physically in class. According to the UWTSD Faculty Policy Handbook, “Attendance at all classes (e.g. lectures, seminars, tutorials, workshops, field trips, site visits etc.) associated with a module is considered compulsory” (6).

Methods of Assessment

Research Paper. The primary method of assessment for this class is a research paper. Altogether, up to 75 points total include the paper itself (50), a prospectus and thesis (2 total) and an oral presentation (15). Further, to build writing skills for a successful essay and receive timely feedback, eight percent of your paper is determined by on-going close reading, writing and discussion of primary and secondary source materials.

Final Exam, worth up to 25 points. This will be a take-home exam. Details to follow.

Method of Assessment	Worth	Due Date
Research Paper:	75 total	
Homework	8 (1 pt each)	As noted on reading list
Prospectus	1	17 October
Thesis	1	14 November
The paper itself	50	12 December
Oral Presentation	15	12 December
Final Exam	25	January exam period

~ A few details about assignments ~

1. If your first language is Welsh and you would like to submit coursework in Welsh, please see the Faculty Office as soon as possible to make arrangements for this.
2. All assignments and homework must be typed and brought to class in hard copy. To support sustainability, I encourage you to print front-to-back, single-spaced or on recycled paper. Please staple assignments.
3. All written work should be done using the “Times New Roman” font at 12 point. Margins should be 1 inch only, and do *not* put extra spaces in between paragraphs. The style manual for Classics is the Harvard style.
4. If you have questions about expectations for this class, please ask. I appreciate and value effort, but quality does matter. You are welcome discuss *any element* of this course or assignments with me during office hours or through email. I care about your progress in this course and want you to do well.

Classroom Administration – University Policies

1. **Deadlines:** Due dates for all readings, classwork, papers and the exam are on the syllabus.
2. **Crises:** I invite you to inform me about an emergency of a medical nature *only* if it affects general work in this course. An example of an emergency “of a medical nature” that might affect general work includes—but is not limited to—an injury requiring hospitalization or death in the family.

3. **Office hours:** Per requirements of the University I hold three official office hours per week. You are welcome to come and discuss the material, as well as ideas or concerns about assignments.
4. **Email and contacting me.** The best way to contact me is through email. *Between Monday and Friday* I respond to emails in a timely fashion, (a few hours, a day at most). I expect politely written emails, and I will return the favour with politely written emails to you as well. All students have UWTSD accounts, I will respond only to UWTSD email addresses as they are retained in an archival system as historical documents.
5. **Identification:** It is important to call people by the name of their choice. If you prefer a knick-name, please put the name by which I should know you on all work (i.e. “Kris” rather than “Kristen,” etc.).
6. **My identification:** When you email, call or speak to me the proper titles are “Dr” or “Professor.”
7. **Cell phones.** In this age of random acts of violence we must take advantage of technology. Please set your cell phone on “vibrate” and put them away before class. Text-messaging during class is appallingly rude.
8. I use technology responsibly to help me teach; you may use technology to help you learn, but, there are limits for each of us. I work hard to teach in an engaging and meaningful way, to make classroom time count and to use technology to enhance learning, not to entertain. Here are my technology guidelines:
 - A. **Note-taking:** You may use laptops for note-taking. Students who use computers for note-taking will email me their notes at the completion of each class. I would point out that note-taking by hand increases comprehension, engagement and commitment to learning. My promise to those who take notes by hand will be that I will make all attempts to be clear, to speak slowly and always stop for questions.
 - B. **Reading:** I have assigned the majority of your reading using textbooks, but there are a few texts that I will post online. Please your books and copies of these texts to class because educational studies teach:
 - People reading online materials do not engage with hard-copy content in the same way.
 - People are more easily distracted when reading documents on the computer (me too).
 - People are less able to locate details in electronic texts.
 - People do not retain as much content from online documents.
9. **Medically recognized and documented disabilities.** If you have any special needs (e.g. dyslexia, visual impairment) that need to be taken into account for the teaching of this module, please make sure that your Welfare Officer is made aware so that we can make sure that we fully support you in your studies. According to the Faculty Policy, “The University is committed to providing an inclusive learning environment and is proactive in encouraging disclosure of disabilities by students at any stage prior to or during the course of their studies. It is the applicant’s responsibility to inform Student Services of any disability or extenuating circumstances which might require further consideration.” To this end, I am committed to your learning success, but I will not make accommodations without official notification from UWTSD, and all accommodations will be in compliance with University Policy on Equality and Diversity.
10. **Important deadlines:** please make note of add/drop requirements as they pertain to your situation.
11. **The Study of Religion.** Religion is a global and historical reality, and a powerful motivator of individuals, groups and governments. Part of a responsible education is intellectual and critical engagement with religious forces that deeply shape the experiences and lives of more than eight-five percent of the world’s population. You might be part of that eighty-five percent, or you might not. Regardless, we all constantly interact with people whose religious views shape their lives in deep and meaning ways, and a thoughtful person will find these forces worth studying. Please keep in mind that while this is a class on religious history, one is not required to be a religious person to take this course. Further, being religious does *not* privilege you in any way. Non-religious and religious views will be respected in this course because *you* will be respected, but personal faith claims do not make you an expert in anything other than your own experience, and they are not a substitute for an academic study of religion, our task in this class.
12. **Civil Conversation.** Civil conversation is central to the University’s academic enterprise. I am committed to protecting the rights of students to engage in respectful, civil dialogue that allows us to consider important issues. Freedom of expression does not extend to the use of language that is ominous or abusive. According to the Faculty Policy and the University Charter: “*in relation to appropriate behaviour in classes, lectures, seminars, performances, workshops, on-line fora, field trips etc., this means that: 1. Every individual has a responsibility to behave in a way that is not offensive to others and does not disrupt others.*”

2. Every individual has a responsibility to acknowledge that views and opinions held by others may not always coincide with their own; such differences are unlikely to constitute harassment” (8).

13. Spicy Language. We might read texts that challenge and surprise you. People have different attitudes about the body cross-culturally, and attitudes about the body shape the development of religion and religious views shape how we think about the body. Many charged issues in our contemporary world are connected with the body, such as abortion, gay rights, religious fundamentalism, environmental protection, poverty and violence. In my courses we always consider a historical intersection between body and belief, and we will do so with full recognition that we will read about, think about, and talk about bodies.

14. Questions: All questions are welcome, and please feel free to raise your hand at any time during a lecture or discussion in order to ask your question.

Assessment

A word about grading: Grades are neither a punishment nor a reward, and grading is never perfectly precise nor purely objective. Objectivity and precision are fine methods of judgement for the manager of an assembly line. The grades you earn are a reflection of my professional judgment on your work. I am not responsible if you earn a low grade for unacceptable work. No one “gets” grades; grades are *earned* by you they are not given by me. For each assignment there will be clearly stated expectations and the grade you earn will depend on the fulfilment of those expectations as well as the quality of your work. With respect to grading, please note: (a) effort is important, but hard work is *not* a guarantee you will earn a high grade; (b) grades are assigned based on a combination of fulfilment of assignment criteria and quality of your work vis-à-vis other students in the class; (c) all grading is done in compliance with “Marking Criteria Guidelines” provided to faculty by UWTSD.

To this end, please do not misunderstand our relationship as one in which negotiation is *required* on my part regarding grades. If you do not agree with my professional assessment you are welcome to make an appointment to meet with me to discuss your concern in my office. It is there that I will explain why I make decisions that I make in the classroom as one who is charged with evaluating your work.

Academic Integrity

The University’s policy on academic honesty will be strictly enforced. You must follow regulations regarding unfair practice and academic integrity in the University’s Academic Quality Handbook and Programme of Study Handbook. If you have questions about unfair practice, and how to avoid it, do not hesitate to ask. Plagiarism includes—but is not limited to—quoting others without quotations; using altered wording, materials or ideas without properly identifying their source; representing an idea or strategy significant in one’s own work as one’s own when it comes from someone else.

Cheating includes—but is not limited to—submitting material that is not yours as if it is yours (i.e. copying work or exam, allowing another to copy from your work or exam); using information or devices not allowed (i.e. Wikipedia); fabricating information; violating procedures prescribed to protect the integrity of an assignment or test; collaborating with others without instructor’s consent or helping another to cheat.

Other forms of intolerable dishonest behaviour include lying about illness or doing work (saying you read it when you did not); having another person take an exam for you; speaking with anyone other than a proctor or instructor during an exam, and looking at notes or books during an exam if that is not permitted.

Inclusive Language

Part of an inclusive learning environment is being mindful of one’s language. Classical, late antique, patristic, Byzantine and centuries of religion texts are replete with exclusive language. When speaking and writing, we will endeavour to use inclusive language, even if the text is steeped in the patriarchy. For example, “God” will be “God,” not “Him;” “man” will be “human,” and so forth. Thank you for your attention to this important task.

Personal Integrity and Propriety in the Classroom

I try to treat all students with respect and dignity that should be afforded to all persons; I appreciate the same treatment from you towards each other and me. To that end, keep in mind that our classroom is a learning space designed to facilitate your education in a fascinating subject, it is not:

- a bedroom; it is a flagrant impropriety to sleep in class.
- a craft circle; knitting is not an appropriate class activity.
- a layover on the way to something better; Sudoku will not help you learn.
- a study hall; if you do work for another class in my class I will politely ask you to leave.
- a canteen; you are welcome to bring coffee, etc., but eat before or after class or during the break, but not while we are learning together.

Your physical comfort: classes are lengthy, but breaks will be provided. If you are uncomfortable and need to stand and stretch—or even walk around a little bit—feel free to do so. If you need to excuse yourself for other reasons there is no need to ask my permission to take care of basic human needs, simply exit the room.

Finally, I am hearing impaired (HOH), which carries with it the following implications:

- a. I will be challenged not only by hearing loss but in my introduction to nuances of Welsh language, culture, customs, behaviour and accents, and you will share those challenges in your introduction to me! If I ask you to repeat something, please extend me that courtesy. I will always return the favour.
- b. If I point to my ear that will mean that I cannot hear you and would like you to repeat yourself.
- c. It is imperative that when you speak to me you speak directly and with a strong, confident voice.
- d. My voice may be louder than you prefer. I cannot always gauge volume accurately, I will do my best.
- e. You might need to say my name more than one time in order to get my attention. Feel free to wave your hand if you need to do so, I do not mind.
- f. People who are HOH speak with more than the voice; I will use gestures. This is different from sign language, and is known as “high context” language. For the HOH, gestures work *alongside* verbal language. I am known to motion with my hands while speaking. In process, or maybe in an attempt to hear more clearly, I may step towards you. If your defensive peri-personal space ratio requires a distance further than two feet, you are welcome to adjust or let me know if this interferes with your learning.
- g. Please extend the courtesy of refraining from whispered conversations of an extended nature; aside from the issue of manners, it creates “white noise” that prevents everyone in the room from hearing clearly.

I thank you in advance for your attention to these matters and for your commitment to learning in a respectful environment with me and with each other.

Dr. Llewellyn Ihssen

Communication Strategies for Sneaking with HOH Persons

- Get the person's attention before you speak.
- Do not put obstacles in front of your face.
- Do not have objects in your mouth when speaking (eating while talking is very problematic for HOH persons).
- Speak clearly and at a moderate pace.
- Be sure light sources are not behind you; glare blocks a HOH person's ability to lip-read.
- Facial expressions and gestures are encouraged.
- Rephrase instead of repeating, but do not shout.

Manual for Mental Health Professionals, Part II, Psycho-Social Challenges Faced by Hard of Hearing People,
Samuel Trychin, Ph.D., 1991. National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, US Dept. of Education.