

UNIVERSITY OF WALES TRINITY SAINT DAVID



HPAH5078/6078
**Pompeii: The life, death and rediscovery of a
Roman town (Module Syllabus)**

Module Code	HPAH5078 / 6078
Title	Pompeii: The life, death and rediscovery of a Roman town
Credits	20
Pre-Requisites	None

AIM(S)

- To provide students with a critical understanding of how archaeologists and historians have sought to reconstruct life in this ancient Roman town.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

- Demonstrate a secure and competent understanding of how people lived in this town in the generations prior to its destruction. Also, to understand how the town became to be destroyed and preserved.
- Show a critical awareness of how life in the town can inform us about wider Roman socio-economic and cultural life.
- Critically apply analytical approaches to the study of the archaeological (including material culture), literary and epigraphic material coming from the site. In particular, to be aware of how archaeometric approaches (including osteology) can enhance our understanding of the town and its inhabitants.
- Appreciate the reception, (mis)appropriation, heritage and conservation of the site from the seventeenth century to the present.

INDICATIVE CONTENT

- Learning about how people lived (and died) in Pompeii – including subjects from sexuality, religion, art, housing, street life, bathing and slavery.
- The death of the town with Vesuvius' eruption and its preservation.
- The towns rediscovery and early attempts at "excavation".
- The popularity and reception of the town in the "modern" (post-1600) period. And more recent attempts at heritage preservation and conservation.
- How modern archaeometric methods can help us study the town.

Study Time Allocation

The study time for the module is divided as follows:

Activity type	Hours	Percentage
Scheduled learning	36	18%
Independent learning	164	82%
Placement learning		
TOTAL	200	100%

STRUCTURE AND ORGANISATION

This 20-credit module has four main teaching weeks (36 hours). As is standard, attendance is compulsory for all lectures, workshops and seminars. If you cannot make a class because of illness or other good reason, you should notify the lecturer (m.cobb@uwtsd.ac.uk).

Organising your work schedule is your own responsibility. You should complete at least 200 hours of work for this module, including time spent in class, preparation time for in class work, as well as assessments.

Course Outline:

This course structure is provisional and is potentially subject to change should circumstances require it.

WEEK 1 [December 2025]

	Session one	Session two	Session three
THEME	Introduction	The people of Pompeii	Households and street life
Hour one	Outline of the module	Early history and the Roman town	Domus and gardens Bars and inns
Hour two	The day Pompeii died	The poor and enslaved in Pompeii	Round table discussion 1 (history/activity at the building or site)
Hour three			

WEEK 2 [December 2025]

	Session four	Session five	Session six
THEME	Sexuality in Pompeii	Art	Politics in Pompeii and public spectacles
Hour one	Roman sexuality	Roman art and the so-called Four Styles	Democracy and electioneering in Pompeii
Hour two	Frescos, graffiti and material culture	Material objects and mosaics	
Hour three	Gaming and gambling	Round table discussion 2 (artistic and architectural features)	Entertainment and blood-sports

WEEK 3 [January 2026]

	Session seven	Session eight	Session nine
THEME	Economic life and bathing	Religious life in Pompeii	Take home exam

Hour one	Business, crafts and agriculture	“Civic” cults	A choice of four essay questions that will be revealed (unhidden) on the Moodle page on the morning of 9th January 2026
Hour two	Bathing	“Mystery” cults and magic	
Hour three	Round table discussion 3 (material culture)		

WEEK 4 [January 2026]

	Session ten	Session eleven	Session twelve
THEME	Final days	Virtual (Immersive room) presentation	The reception of Pompeii and modern heritage
Hour one	Burial practices at Pompeii	Presentation for 10 minutes duration, followed by questions	Pompeii and (early) modern mania
Hour two	The earthquake at Pompeii (AD 62) and its impact		Conservation or exploration: debating the heritage of Pompeii
Hour three	Round table discussion 4 (state of preservation and efforts at conservation)		Optional time for discussing assignment 4 (analytical report)

ASSESSMENT

Key assessment information is laid out on the Moodle page, along with the dates they are occurring / deadlines for submission.

Coursework submission

For written coursework, unless otherwise specified, the submission links can be found on the Moodle page (under the assignments tab).

Word count

Please be aware that if you go significantly over or under the word limit (i.e. more than 10%), you may be penalised.

REMEMBER that the word count includes everything apart from the bibliography, titles or captions. You must provide the word count clearly on the cover sheet.

Welsh First language

If your first language is Welsh and you would like to submit any assessed coursework in Welsh, please speak the Institute Office as soon as possible to make arrangements for this.

Special needs / requirements

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 our Welfare Officers and Student Services are made aware, so that any relevant support can be put in place.

Easy formatting

Information about formatting citations and reference lists/bibliographies for written coursework is available in the Library Reference Guides. You can follow whichever of the four referencing systems you like that are detailed in the library referencing guides, so long as you are consistent within a piece of work.

***** You need to watch plagiarism whenever you use secondary literature (ALL suspect coursework will be submitted to a Turnitin analysis).** Please consult the library referencing guides for advice on how to reference secondary literature.

Bibliography

Please note that the books and articles mentioned are only recommendations. You should read more widely beyond this list, especially when preparing for major assignments.

Classification	Reading List entry
Essential	Berry, J. 2013. <i>The Complete Pompeii</i> . London: Thames and Hudson.
Essential	Cooley, A. 2013. <i>Pompeii and Herculaneum: A Sourcebook</i> , Second Edition. London: Routledge.
Essential	Lazer, E. 2009. <i>Resurrecting Pompeii</i> . London: Routledge.
Further	Beard, M. 2008. <i>Pompeii: The Life of a Roman Town</i> . London: Profile.
Further	Cooley, A. 2003. <i>Pompeii</i> . London: Duckworth.
Further	Dobbins, J. J. and P. W. Foss (eds.), 2007. <i>The World of Pompeii</i> . New York: Routledge.
Further	Flohr, M. and A. Wilson (eds.), 2016. <i>The Economy of Pompeii</i> . Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Further	Laurence, R. 2007. <i>Roman Pompeii: Space and Society</i> , Second edition. London: Routledge.
Further	Lazer, E., et al. 2021. 'Inside the Casts of the Pompeian Victims: Results from the First Season of the Pompeii Cast Project in 2015', <i>Papers of the British School at Rome</i> 89: 101-136.
Further	Roberts, C. 2015. 'Living with the Ancient Romans: Past and Present in Eighteenth-Century Encounters with Herculaneum and Pompeii', <i>Huntington Library Quarterly</i> 78 (1): 61-85.
Further	Wallace-Hadrill, A. 1994. <i>Houses and Society in Pompeii and Herculaneum</i> . Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
Further	Zanker, P. 1998. <i>Pompeii: Public and Private Life</i> . Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.