



Instructor: Tommaso Gazzarri

Email: gazzarrt@union.edu 

Class meets: M.W.F. 1:50 - 2:55 PM

Location: Karp 105+

Office: Lamont House #305

Office hours: M.W. 03:00-04:00 PM; F. 10:30-11:30 AM

and by appointment - [online registration](#)

Mailbox: Dept. of Classics

PERSPECTIVES:

- ◆CHF (CULTURE AND HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS)
- ◆LIT (LITERATURES)
- ◆SPE (SOCIAL ANALYSIS, POLITICS, AND ETHICS)

AREA OF INQUIRY:

- ◆JED (JUSTICE, EQUITY, IDENTITY, DIFFERENCE)

Webpage: www.tommasogazzarri.net

*** To book office time go to the above

WEBPAGE > OFFICE HOURS

and select one or more slot(s) ***

Description of the course

This course provides a detailed overview of capital punishments in ancient Greece and Rome. Each type of punishment will be analyzed from the perspectives of social, historical, literary, and philosophical analysis. The analysis of the various issues will be supported by a gradual reading of the texts required for the course and by an analysis of significant evidence concerning the topic. Particular emphasis will be placed on the thorough study of primary sources, both literary and archaeological. Regular discussions of the assigned readings will take place in every session, and the content of the readings will be included in both Quizzes and exams. Two exams, a Midterm, and a Final exam will assess the student's progress.

► Disclaimer

This course examines capital punishment in the ancient world through close engagement with literary, legal, epigraphic, and material sources. As a result, students will encounter primary evidence that is explicit, violent, or otherwise disturbing in nature, including detailed descriptions of execution, torture, bodily harm, and state-sanctioned killing.

In addition, certain subtopics—such as sexual violence, sexual humiliation as punishment, and the intersection of penal practices with ancient conceptions of gender and sexuality—require the reading and discussion of sources that contain sexualized language or representations.

► Learning Outcomes

- A. Communicate Critical and Analytical Thinking: This class requires the analytical processing of both ancient and modern sources concerning systems of justice and penal procedures that are diverse for their chronological and societal belonging. Students are periodically tested and required to write a collection of short essays that entail critical discussion of ideas and detailed mastery of both literary and material sources.
- B. Make Connections and Original Contribution: The kernel of the class in the relation between vengeance and justice, not only in the Graeco-Roman world but also in modern societies. This topic invites connections that cut across different geographical and historical eras. The course pack is purposely designed to engage the students with materials (primary sources and representative scholarship) interdisciplinary and belonging to a variety of scholarly and philosophical traditions. In the essays, students are required to demonstrate familiarity with these materials and attentively connect them to create complex and rich analyses.
- C. Reflect on Learning: Essays and in-class discussions provide the students with multiple venues to reason on crucial ideas relevant to various disciplines and life paths. An informed, sustained, and philosophically based analysis of the classical history of penal systems and the death penalty is a topic of particular relevance for US students and international students alike. Depending on their provenance country, students demonstrate their cultural proximity to specific stances on the topic. Students debate and confront their positions with their peers and apply to these discussions the philosophical and scholarly concepts learned in class.

► Common Curriculum Credits

- CHF
- LIT
- SPE

This course will guide students through a variety of literary and scholarly texts. Each lecture will entail careful analysis and discussion of primary sources. The course-pack is designed to engage students with representative samples of classical literature and modern scholarship. Students will analyze, write about, and discuss crucial philosophical and ethical questions pertaining to the archetypal notions of vengeance and justice. The variety of readings belonging to different eras and representing diverse cultural and scholarly approaches will naturally invite contrastive analyses. Students will learn to discuss and respect often divergent stances and to back their ideas with academic arguments.

Course schedule

GREECE		
1	Class #1 01/05/26	* Introduction to the class * Main coordinates of Greek History <u>Assignments for next class:</u> • R1 (= Course Pack Reading #1 - available on Nexus)
	Class #2 01/07/26	* Domestic execution of women (ritual hanging) <u>Assignments for next class:</u> • Study PP slides analyzed in class • R2A
1	Class #3 01/09/26	* Domestic execution of women (ritual hanging) - (continued) * Punishment in the house of Odysseus - (begin) <u>Assignments for next class:</u> • Study PP slides analyzed in class • R2B
	Class #4 01/12/26	* Punishment in the house of Odysseus (continued) * Punishment in the houses of the dead - <i>apotympanismos</i> (begin) <u>Assignments for next class:</u> • Study PP slides analyzed in class and • R3
2	Class #5 01/14/26	* Punishment in the city: <i>apotympanismos</i> (continued) * Public execution of women (begin) <u>Assignments for next class:</u> • Study PP slides analyzed in class • R4

2	Class #6 01/16/26	* Public execution of women (continued) * Moral code of the Homeric society (begin)
		<u>Assignments for next class:</u> • Study PP slides analyzed in class and • R5
3	Class #7 01/19/26	EXAM #1 
3	Class #8 01/21/26	* Moral code of the Homeric society (begin) * Achilles' shield: from vengeance to <i>poine</i>
		<u>Assignments for next class:</u> • Study PP slides analyzed in class and • R6 and R7
3	Class #9 01/23/26	* Draco's laws on homicide * The origins of the Areopagus
		<u>Assignments for next class:</u> • Study PP slides analyzed in class • R8
4	Class #10 01/26/26	* The Athenian trial for homicide
		<u>Assignments for next class:</u> • Study PP slides analyzed in class • R9
4	Class #11 01/28/26	* Stoning
		<u>Assignments for next class:</u> • Study PP slides analyzed in class • R10
4	Class #12 01/30/26	* Stoning (continued) * Expiation: <i>Praecipitatio</i> (begin)
		<u>Assignments for next class:</u> • Study PP slides analyzed in class • R11

5	Class #13 02/02/26	* Expiation: <i>Praecipitatio</i> (begin)
	<u>Assignments for next class:</u> • Study PP slides analyzed in class • No reading - prepare for midterm	
5	Class #14 02/04/26	* Expiation: <i>Praecipitatio</i> (continue)
	<u>Assignments for next class:</u> • Study PP slides analyzed in class • No reading - prepare for midterm	
5	Class #15 02/06/26	<u>MIDTERM EXAM</u> 
6	Class #16 02/09/26	* Political executions: Hemlock (begin)
	<u>Assignments for next class:</u> • Study PP slides analyzed in class • Read Socrates' Apology > you own this book: see under "re-quired texts" <i>The Last Days of Socrates</i>	
6	Class #17 02/11/26	* Political executions: Hemlock (continue) + Socrates' Apology
	<u>Assignments for next class:</u> • Study PP slides analyzed in class	
ROME		
6	Class #18 02/13/26	* Introduction to the phases of Roman history * Main sources of Roman Law (begin)
	<u>Assignments for next class:</u> • Study PP slides analyzed in class	
7	Class #19 02/16/26	* Main sources of Roman Law (continue) * Domestic punishment (begin)
	<u>Assignments for next class:</u> • Study PP slides analyzed in class • R12	

7	Class #20 02/18/26 * Domestic punishment (continued) <u>Assignments for next class:</u> • Study PP slides analyzed in class • R13
7	Class #21 02/20/26 * <i>Laqueum</i> and Roman Stoicism (begin) <u>Assignments for next class:</u> • Study PP slides analyzed in class • Prepare for Exam 2
8	Class #22 02/23/26 EXAM #2 
8	Class #23 02/25/26 * <i>Laqueum</i> and Roman Stoicism (continue) * Civic punishment (begin) <u>Assignments for next class:</u> • Study PP slides analyzed in class
8	Class #24 02/27/26 * Civic punishment (continue) <u>Assignments for next class:</u> • Study PP slides analyzed in class • R14
9	Class #25 03/02/26 * Martial punishment: <i>Equus October</i> <u>Assignments for next class:</u> • Study PP slides analyzed in class
9	Class #26 03/04/26 * <i>Arbor infelix</i> (begin) <u>Assignments for next class:</u> • Study PP slides analyzed in class • R15

9	Class #27 * <i>Arbor infelix</i> (continue) 03/06/26 <u>Assignments for next class:</u> Study PP slides analyzed in class
10	Class #28 * Crucifixion (begin) 03/09/26 <u>Assignments for next class:</u> Study PP slides analyzed in class
10	Class #29 * Crucifixion (continue) 03/11/26 <u>Assignments for next class:</u> - Study PP slides analyzed in class - R16
10	Class #30 MOCK FINAL IS ADMINISTERED 03/13/26

Required texts (available from the bookstore)



- 👤 Plato, *The Last Days of Socrates*, by H. Tarrant (ed.) and H. Tredennick (trans.), Penguin Classic 1993, ISBN 978-0140445824. - MANDATORY
- 👤 Beccaria, *On Crimes and Punishments and Other Writings*, by R. Bellamy (ed.) and R. Davies (trans.), Cambridge University Press 1995, ISBN 978-0521479820. - OPTIONAL
- 👤 D. Johnston, *Roman Law in Context*, Cambridge University Press 1999, ISBN 978-0521639613. - OPTIONAL - (Useful if you are planning on attending Law school)
- 👤 COURSE-PACK (containing your readings = R): available on Nexus

- R1 The Odyssey, Book XXII
- R2A Hesiod, *Theogony*
- R2B Hesiod, *Works and Days*
- R3 E. Cantarella, *Moicheia. Reconsidering a Problem*. In M. Gagarin (ed.), *Symposion 1990. Vorträge zur griechischen und hellenistischen Rechtsgeschichte*. Köln Weimar-Wienn 1991. 289-304.
- R4 S.B. Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity*. New York 1975. 79-92.
- R5 The Iliad, Book XVIII

- R6** M. Gagarin, Morality in Homer. CPh 82, 1987, 285-306.
- R7** A.W.H. Adkins, Honor and Punishment in the Homeric Poems. BICS 7, 1960, 23-32.
- R8** A.W.H. Adkins, Merit and Responsibility. A Study in Greek Values. Oxford 1960. 10-60.
- R9** D.M. MacDowell, Athenian Homicide Law. Publ. Univ. Manchester 15, 1973.
- R10** W. Burkert, Homo Necans..The Anthropology of Ancient Greek Sacrificial Ritual and Myth. Berlin-New York 1972. 1-48.
- R11** H. Hager, How Were the Bodies of Criminals at Athens Disposed after Death?. AJP 8, 1879, 1-13.
- R12** R. MacMullen, Judicial Savagery in the Roman Empire. Chiron 16, 1986, 147-166.
- R13** W.H. Harris, The Roman Father's Power of Life and Death. In W.V. Harris and R. Bagnall (eds.), Studies in Roman Law in Memory of A.A. Schiller. Leiden 1986, 81-95.
- R14** G. Devereux, The "Equus October" Ritual Reconsidered. Mnemosyne 23, 1970, 279-301.
- R15** A. Watson, The Death of Horatia. CQ 29.2, 1979, 436-447.
- R16** M. Hengel, Crucifixion in the Ancient World and the folly of the Message of the Cross. London 1977.

Recommended items

- A stock of flashcards
- A box to collect your flashcards
- A set of colored pencils/markers
- A hole punch (notebook size)
- A tomato timer (tomato method)



Honor Code

Union College aims to establish an environment of mutual trust as part of its educational mission. Membership in an academic community requires respect for, and proper acknowledgement of, the thoughts and work of others. Enrollment in this course signifies implicit agreement with the Academic Honor Code of Union College. The full text of Union's Honor Code may be found online at <<http://honorcode.union.edu>>. In short, it is the responsibility of all students to ensure that the work they submit is their own and that their work does not engage in any form of academic misconduct. Students should ask the instructor of the course to clarify any questions that they might have regarding collaboration, citation, plagiarism, or related matters. Ignorance is no excuse for violating accepted standards of academic integrity.

Students must also affix the full Honor Code Affirmation or an appropriately abbreviated version to any assignment submitted for a grade or in-class exam:

I affirm that I have done my academic work honestly.
Signed: _____



Course requirements

Attendance

- Regular participation and prompt attendance are required. Your attendance grade on the first day of class is 105. You will be granted one free absence. Each subsequent absence will result in a 5-point deduction from that total. After three-absences (this includes the point-free absence), each subsequent absence will result in a 10-point deduction from your attendance average. Three tardies count as one absence. Can absences beyond the one free absence be excused or forgiven? No. It is possible to make up missed work, but not a missed class. The only exceptions to this rule are emergencies documented through the Dean of Studies and absences from classes moved by your instructor from their regular meeting time. Attendance is crucial.

Homework

- Each class, I will collect the HW assigned in our previous meeting. A missed homework = minus 10% on your HW component of the final grade.
- Missed HW can be made up only within a week of the due date. A HW made up within one class = minus 4% on your HW component of the final grade. A HW made up within two classes = minus 8% on HW component of the final grade.

Example → You do not complete the HW due on Monday. These are the possible scenarios:

You complete the HW by Wed.	→ = -4%
You complete the HW by Fr.	→ = -8%
You decide not to complete the HW	→ = -10%
You complete the HW by the following Monday.	→ = that's cute! But you are still gonna get -10%

- If you forget your HW in your dorm, even if you bring it to me in the afternoon, you are still going to get -4%. Bottom line: do not forget it in your room!
- Certified athletic events (i.e., an official letter signed by your coach) count as exceptions, and you will be excused.
- Certified (that means an official letter signed by the Dean) health/family emergencies count as exceptions, and you will be excused.

- 👤 To be successful in this class, I ask you to spend 7 to 9 hours per week on ancient Greek, including memorization and HW. (This is between 14 and 18 tomatoes per week - that is a bit more than two tomatoes = 2 hours per day → not much!)
- 👤 HW is stress-free: it's ungraded! You contribute the maximum percentage to your HW component of the final grade just by doing the work. You can make the most terrible mistakes, but if you complete your HW on time, no penalty will be assessed, and you will still maintain your 100 percentage.

Missed Quizzes

- 👤 If you wish to have the opportunity to make up a Quiz without penalty, you must contact your instructor ahead of time (that is, before the actual date of the Quiz that you know you will not be able to take). I can be reached most easily by email. If contacting me proves impossible (or if I find the reason inexcusable), you may still make up the missed quiz, but a ten-point penalty will be assessed. Please keep in mind that a ten-point penalty is much better than a zero (a one-hundred-point penalty)!
- 👤 If you have not contacted me before the set date of a given Quiz, you can still make it up, but only within one week of the Exam date, and a ten-point penalty will automatically apply.
- 👤 Certified athletic events (i.e., an official letter signed by your coach) count as exceptions, and you will be excused.
- 👤 Certified (that means an official letter signed by the Dean of Students or of Studies) health/family emergencies count as exceptions, and you will be excused.

Midterm and Final Exams

- 👤 Midterm and final **CANNOT** be made up. Missing the midterm or the final exam will heavily affect your final grade. You can be excused from these crucial appointments **ONLY** by presenting an official letter signed by the Dean of Studies documenting an excruciating circumstance.
- 👤 Certified (that means an official letter signed by the Dean) health/family emergencies count as exceptions, and you will be excused.
- 👤 **Having bought in advance a Spring break air-ticket whose date coincides with the final, or wanting to anticipate the beginning of the break by taking the final exam earlier, are NOT valid excuses.**

Work overload and Conflicting Exams

The syllabus is extremely detailed. In particular, it shows:

- 1) all dates for Quizzes, Midterm, Final
- 2) all topics to be covered + relative homework with relative dates

It is your responsibility to organize your schedule and anticipate when, during the term, exams, presentations, and heavy HW loads are likely to accumulate. Acquiring organizational skills and learning to handle demanding situations are fundamental components of your college education.

Thus, Exam dates will NOT be moved, and HW will NOT be excused even if it conflicts with other classes' major tasks.

Start organizing your term from the very beginning!!!

Grades

Final grades will be weighted as follows:

Attendance and participation:	15%	-----
Exam 1:	15%	Class #7: 01/19/26
Exam 2	15%	Class #22: 02/23/26
Midterm Exam:	25%	Class #15: 02/06/26
Final Exam:	30%	Tue., March 17 - 2:30-4:30 pm

- Do you want to calculate your grade? Go to: <http://apps.mercer.edu/registrarcalc/weightedaverage.html>

Grading Scale

	A 99-100 (commendation letter)	A 95-98	A- 90-94
	B+ 87-89	B 84-86	B- 80-83
	C+ 77-79	C 74-76	C- 70-73
	D+ 67-69	D 63-66	D- 60-63

ADA Requirements

It is Union College policy to make accommodations for individuals with disabilities. If you have any disability or special concerns, please let me know what your needs are so that they may be accommodated. All discussions will remain confidential to the extent permissible by law.

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodations must also:

- 1." Register with and provide documentation to the Dean of Students Office.
- 2." Present documentation from the Dean of Students Office indicating what academic accommodations you require. This should be done within the first two weeks of the term.

For more information about services available to Union College students with disabilities, please, contact the Dean of Students Office.

Cell Phones and Computer Policies

- The use of cell phones, smartphones, or other mobile communication devices is disruptive and is therefore prohibited during class. All the mobile devices, including laptops, are expected to be TURNED OFF and placed on a common table in the classroom. If you are expecting an emergency call, please inform the instructor in advance and keep the phone in "silent mode". You should leave the classroom before you answer the call.
- The use of all electronic devices, including computers, is prohibited during tests and exams.