

University of North Texas
Department of History

HIST 4216: Rome's Jewish Wars and the Roman Near East

Dr. Chet

Office hours: by appointment (guy.chet@unt.edu).

The expansion of Rome's sphere of influence to the east brought it into open competition with the Parthian Empire, which spanned from Arabia and the Caspian Sea to India. Judaea – an independent Jewish kingdom from 160 to 63 BC – soon came under Roman control, as a client kingdom, eventually becoming a Roman province (6 AD). During the semester, the class will examine the sources of Roman power in the East, as well as the military clashes that shaped Rome's administrative expansion into the Near East, focusing primarily on Judaea and the two Jewish Revolts (66 AD and 132 AD). Similarly, the class will examine the consequences of Rome's Jewish Wars for the Roman eastern front with the Parthians, and for Jews and Christians in Judaea/Palestina and throughout Empire.



There are no prerequisites for this course.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. Developing analytical skills – understanding that historical narratives are arguments, which can and should be evaluated based on evidence.
2. Gaining familiarity with the general history of Rome and Judea, and with Roman military history.
3. Understanding competing analyses of Rome's military ascendancy over its varied rivals.
4. Developing an independent understanding of Rome's success facing different types of military challenges – naval, infantry, cavalry, and guerrilla.
5. Developing writing skills – learning how to compose an argumentative essay, in which one formulates an analytical argument, lists relevant evidence, and then explains how the evidence supports the argument.

COMMUNICATION: Learning content will be delivered in class, and through the textbooks and reading materials posted on Blackboard. Students must use their UNT accounts to log into the course from the UNT Blackboard Learn page. To correspond with me, please use email

(guy.chet@unt.edu), rather than Blackboard. It is too easy for me to miss Blackboard messages; please use email.

GRADING: During the course of the semester, students are expected to contribute to class discussion, submit reading responses, and complete 3 exams (if a student cannot attend an exam, s/he should contact me *in advance* in order to arrange a make up exam). Assignments are graded on a scale of 0 to 100, with the final course grade assigned according to the following scale: A (90-100), B (80-89), C (70-79), D (60-69), F (0-59). In grading the exams, I pay close attention to both substance and form (grammar, spelling, and clarity). In evaluating substance, I examine whether the author has demonstrated a critical, historical understanding of the material by presenting and substantiating a thesis (a historical argument). In order to compute the final course grade, I will add the relative values of each student's number grades for the 2 midterms (30% each) and the final exam (40%).

LATE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK: Assignments must be completed by the due date for full credit. Late submissions will incur a 5-point late-penalty for the first hour, and 5 additional points for every hour thereafter.

TIME COMMITMENT: Students should anticipate at least 10 hours per week for studying materials and completing class assignments. Falling behind schedule in this course will be detrimental to a student's final grade, since the concepts covered are cumulative – not becoming proficient with information in a particular week will lead prevent a student from comprehending material delivered in subsequent weeks.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND PLAGIARISM: As a student-centered public research university, the University of North Texas promotes the integrity of the learning process by establishing and enforcing academic standards. Academic dishonesty breaches the mutual trust necessary in an academic environment and undermines all scholarship. Students are held accountable for understanding UNT's policy on academic integrity. Any violations of this policy may result in a 0 or F on the particular assignment or an F in the course.

STUDENT SUCCESS AT UNT: Students who have trouble keeping up with assignments should inform the professor as early as possible. "Succeed at UNT" provides students support services and resources for success. Moreover, the History Department's Help Center (WH #220, 940-565-4772) and the History Department Library (WH #267, 940-369-7681) are staffed by graduate students who can assist students with tutoring and essay writing advice.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: Students with special circumstances covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act should register with the Office of Disability Accommodation, and also inform the instructor of the class. Reasonable adjustments will be made to accommodate the special needs of students with disabilities where such adjustments are necessary to provide equality of educational access.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Scullard, *From the Gracchi to Nero*.

Josephus Flavius, *The Jewish War* (handout)

Plutarch, *Lives* (handout)

Recommended readings (not required):

Blockley, R.C., *East Roman Foreign Policy: Formation and Conduct From Diocletian to Anastasius* (Leeds: F. Cairns, 1992).

Campbell, J. B., *The Emperor and the Roman Army, 31 BC - AD 235* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984).

Chahin, M., *The Kingdom of Armenia* (London: Croom Helm, 1987).

Colledge, Malcolm, *The Parthians* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1967).

Isaac, Benjamin, *The Limits of Empire: The Roman Army in the East* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).

Luttwak, Edward N., *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire From the First Century A.D. to the Third* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976).

SCHEDULE:

Week 1: Judaea and the Jews, from antiquity to the classical era

Week 2: Roman Expansion in Italy

The republican era

Roman armies

The Pyrrhic War

Week 3: Roman Warfare

The First Punic War

The War at Sea

Attrition

Week 4: The Republican Empire

The Gallic Scare

The Second Punic War

The quest for decisive battles

Week 5: The Eastern Problem

Philhellenism and the Second Macedonian War

The Seleucid Empire

Pergamum and Asia Minor

Post-war arrangements in Greece and Asia Minor

Week 6: Pompey and Judaea

The Provincial System

Roman Imperialism, Senatorial decline and the rise of Pompey the Great

The Third Punic War

The Mithridatic Wars

Armenia and Parthia

Week 7: The Augustan Principate: Consolidating Roman Power in the East

Pompey's eastern settlement

Crassus, Antony and the Parthian wars

The Augustan Settlement

First mid-term exam (on Scullard, imperial map and classroom material)

Week 8: Rome's Parthian Front Under Nero

Nero's eastern policy

The Armenian Wars

The Roman Near East under Vespasian

Week 9: The Great Revolt of AD 66: Challenging Roman Rule

Herod the Great

Long and short term causes of rebellion

Josephus and the collapse of the revolt in the Galilee (Gamla, Yodephat)

The Siege of Jerusalem

Massada

Week 10: The Collapse of the Great Revolt: The Empire Strikes Back

The Year of the Four Emperors

The Siege of Jerusalem

Massada

Week 11: The Bar Kokhba Revolt (AD 132): Hope and Success

The Jewish Tax

The Diaspora Revolts

Second mid-term: take-home, due _____ at guy.chet@unt.edu .

Week 12: The Bar Kokhba Revolt: Defeat and Despair

Aelia Capitolina

Julius Severus and the counter-insurgency campaign

From Bar-Kokhba to Bar-Koziva

Week 13-14: Palaestina and the Roman East

Romanization

Final exam: take-home due _____ at guychet@unt.edu .