

# HIEU 161/261: THE LAST PAGAN GENERATION

## SYLLABUS

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Office: Humanities and Social Sciences 4073

Office Hours: Tuesday 8:30-10 AM

### COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course will examine the Roman Empire's last pagan generation (a group of individuals born between 310 and 320). It will cover the events of their lifetime and will try to recapture some of the assumptions, attitudes, and experiences that shaped their response to the social and religious changes of their lifetimes. It will also examine the family, political, and civic concerns that consumed much of their time and took up much of their attention. Among the topics to be covered are the role of public religious celebrations in fourth century, the relationship between public positions and religious activity among the later Roman elite, and the limits of imperial policy in encouraging religious change.

### ASSIGNMENTS:

In addition to the weekly readings and regular class participation, there will be three assignments: students will need to complete two of the three assigned short papers (3-5 pages) and a 10-page final research paper. The final paper can be on any topic of your choice that is related to the course themes—a topic exploring Christianity in the fifth century Roman world is as appropriate as one examining classical rhetoric. The short papers are due during the third, fifth, and seventh weeks of the quarter. The due date for the final paper will be June 3.

### MATERIALS:

The one required book for the class is:  
Edward Watts, *The Final Pagan Generation*, (Berkeley, 2015) ISBN: 978-0-520-28370-1.

The following materials will be useful to possess:

- 1) Ammianus Marcellinus, *The Later Roman Empire* (Penguin) ISBN: 978-0-14-044406-3. NB: The LCL volumes are recommended for those with the means but will need to be purchased through somewhere other than the bookstore.
- 2) *Selected Letters of Libanius from the Age of Constantius and Julian*, trans. Bradbury (Liverpool U Press) ISBN: 9-780853-235095.
- 3) Libanius, *Selected Letters and Autobiography*, trans. Norman, volumes 1-2, (Harvard U Press) ISBN: 9-780674-995277 (volume 1) and ISBN: 9-780674-995284 (volume 2)
- 4) Libanius, *Selected Works*, trans Norman, volumes 1-2, (Harvard U Press) ISBN: 9-780674-994966 (volume 1) and ISBN: 0-674-99497-3 (volume 2)

Other assigned readings will be placed on TED and will be available for general consultation under the resources tab. To make the scanning process easier, each book has been

scanned once. If it is utilized on more than on occasion, please look back to the first time it appeared for the readings

Journal articles not on TED are available either through JSTOR or Muse. These articles are noted in the syllabus.

## Weekly Reading Schedule

### April 1

#### **Introduction: The Roman World in the Fourth Century**

##### Background

Watts, *Final Pagan Generation*, Introduction

### April 8

#### **Cities of the Gods**

##### Background

Watts, *Final Pagan Generation*, Chapter 1

##### Temples

Ps. Libanius, *On the Tychaion* (read text of progymnasmata at the end of C. Gibson, "Alexander in the Tychaion: Ps. Libanius on the Statues," *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 47 [2007], 431-54), see link at:

<http://www.duke.edu/web/classics/grbs/online.html>

P. M. Fraser, "A Syriac *Notitia Urbis Alexandrinae*." *Journal of Egyptian Archeology* 37 (1951): 103-8. (find on JSTOR)

##### Festivals

Libanius, *Oration* 5

### April 15

#### **Childhood, Family Life, and Education** ***FIRST SHORT PAPER DUE***

##### Background

Watts, *Final Pagan Generation*, Chapter 2

##### Personal Experiences

Childhood and Student Life:

1. Himerius, *Orations* 16, 65, 66 (on rioting); *Oration* 44 (on student/professor relations) (TED)
2. Libanius, *Oration* 58 (TED)

3. Libanius, *Letters* 39, 77, 80, 126 (Bradbury)
4. Libanius, *Oration* 1.1-23

**April 22**  
**Establishing Oneself and Civic Role (337-c350)**

Background

Watts, *Final Pagan Generation*, Chapter 3

Personal Experiences

Getting a Job

1. Libanius, *Oration* 1.24-57, *Letters* 70, 92 (Bradbury)

The case of Miccalus

1. Libanius, *Letters* 9 (Bradbury); *Letters* 53, 61 (Norman)—compare *Letters* 61 his letter with *Letters* 8 (Bradbury), a much weaker letter of introduction

Family and Personal Life

Marriage

Libanius *Letters* 10, 17 (Bradbury); *Letters* 32 (Norman)

Political Career

The Syriarchy

Libanius, *Letters* 1-4, 44, 49 (Bradbury); *Letters* 71, 108, 119 (Norman)

Olympics

Libanius, *Letters* 26, 142 (Bradbury); *Letters* 125 (Norman)

**April 29**  
**Prime of Career (350-361)**  
***SHORT PAPER DUE***

Background

Watts, *Final Pagan Generation*, Chapter 4

Personal Experiences

Natural Disasters—The Destruction of Nicomedia

Ammianus, 17.7

Libanius, *Letters* 36-39, 77 (Norman)

Libanius, *Oration* 61

([http://www.ccel.org/ccel/pearse/morefathers/files/libanius\\_monody\\_on\\_nicomedia\\_02\\_text.htm](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/pearse/morefathers/files/libanius_monody_on_nicomedia_02_text.htm))

#### Family Life and Deaths

Libanius, *Letters* 5, 64, 72, 165, 178 (Bradbury); 42 (Norman: note especially the Berlin scholium attached to this letter, which is Themistius' response to the letter)

Himerius, *Orations* 7-8 (TED)

#### Political Career

##### Themistius and the Senate

Themistius, *Or.* 1 (TED)

*Demegoria Constantii* (TED--scanned along with Oration of Themistius)

Libanius, *Letters* 171 (Bradbury); *Letters* 12, 43, 48, 62 (Norman)

### **May 6**

### **The Reign of Julian (361-364)**

#### Background

Watts, *Final Pagan Generation*, Chapter 5

#### Personal Experiences

##### Property Disputes Caused by Julian's reforms

##### Generally

Libanius, *Letters* 182 (Bradbury); *Letters* 91, 103, 105 (Norman)

##### Family of Thalassius:

Ammianus, 14.1.10 (on his father); 22.9.16 (on the son)

Libanius, *Letters* 11-14 (Bradbury); *Letters* 1, 105 (Norman)

Libanius, *Letters* 15 (Bradbury)

##### Case of Orion and Belaeus

Julian, *Letters* 114 (TED)

Libanius, *Letters* 130 (Bradbury); 103 (Norman)

## Political Career

Libanius and Julian

Libanius, *Letters* 23, 24, 43, 96, 129 (Bradbury); 30, 58, 64, 88, 93-95, 97, 98 (Norman)

Julian, *Letters* 52, 53, 58 (TED)

### **May 13 A Changing of the Guard (364-378) *SHORT PAPER DUE***

## Background

Watts, *Final Pagan Generation*, Chapter 6

## Political Situation

Generally

Zosimus, Book 4.1-2 (TED)

Libanius, *Letters* 126-28, 136 (Norman)

Revolt of Procopius

Ammianus 26.5-10

Case of Ausonius

John Matthews, *Western Aristocracies and Imperial Court*, (Oxford, 1975), 56-87. (TED)

Decline of Influence of Friends of Julian

Libanius, *Letters* 119

Libanius, *Letters* 140, 142 (Norman); cf. *Letters* 92 (Norman) [case of Seleucus]

Ammianus, 29.1-2 [on the trials of 371-2 AD]

## Religious Life

Case of Praetextatus:

*Theodosian Code* 9.16.7 (TED)

Zosimus, 4.3 (TED)

**May 20**  
**Monks and Hippies**

Background

Watts, *Final Pagan Generation*, Chapter 7

**May 27**  
**Emeritus Status: The reign of Theodosius I (379-395)**

Background

Watts, *Final Pagan Generation*, Chapter 8-9

Anti-Pagan Activity

1. Legislation

*Theodosian Code* 16.10.8-12 (TED)

2. Events in Syria

Libanius, *Oration* 30 (in Syria)

3. Attack on the Serapeum

Rufinus, *Ecclesiastical History* 11.22-30 (TED)

Libanius, *Letters* 171 (Norman)

Old Age

Libanius, *Letters* 171, 181, 182.6-9, 183, 184, 188 (Norman)

**June 3**  
**Final Paper Due**