HIEU 161/261: THE LAST PAGAN GENERATION

SYLLABUS

Professor Edward J. Watts (ewatts@ucsd.edu)

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:

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.

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

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)
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
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, *Orationes* 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)


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