GRS 326 Topics in Greek and Roman Civilization: Bad Emperors
Professor Mark Nugent

Course Description:
Caligula, Nero, Domitian, Commodus, Elagabalus—these emperors’ names have become by-words for depravity, cruelty, and insanity. This course will explore the reigns and legacies of Rome’s worst emperors. The course will feature readings in Greek and Roman historical sources alongside receptions of bad emperors in post-classical contexts. This course can be paired with GRS 326 “Damnatio Memoriae” (Fall 2018) or taken on its own.

Course Outcomes/objectives:
• gain familiarity with historical and biographical texts from the Roman Empire, including Tacitus' Annals, Suetonius' Lives of the Caesars, Dio Cassius' Roman History, Herodian's History of the Empire, and the Historia Augusta;
• learn how to read Greek and Roman historical texts critically;
• study patterns of discourse that surrounded Roman emperors in antiquity;
• explore depictions of bad Roman emperors in a range of post-classical media, including fiction, film, and art.

Course Pre-/Co-requisites:
• None

(This online outline is not the official course syllabus and is intended to give an overall sense of the course only. Detailed course outlines will be made available to registered students on the first day of class)