Caligula, Nero, Domitian, Commodus, Elagabalus—these emperors’ names have become by-words for depravity, cruelty, and insanity. GRS 326 explores the reigns and legacies of Rome’s worst emperors. The course features readings in Greek and Roman historical sources—from Suetonius’ Lives of the Caesars to the lurid fantasies of the Historia Augusta—alongside receptions of bad emperors in post-classical contexts.

- learn critical approaches to studying ancient gossip about emperors
- examine the social and cultural factors that shaped historical accounts of emperors
- learn about power politics in the Roman Empire
- explore the afterlives of bad Roman emperors in modern popular culture

No prerequisites. One of GRS 100 or GRS 102 recommended.