

**India and Rome (CLAS 135/Reli 135)**  
Olin Rice 350, TR 1:20-2:50

Spring 2011  
Protosyllabus

Professor J. Andrew Overman /  
Old Main 314, x6375

Professor James W. Laine  
Old Main 103, x6789

**Description:**

India and Rome is a course taught jointly between the Religious Studies and Classics Department by a specialist in the Roman East and a specialist in classical India. We will start on either side of this world, with Alexander the Great and Ashoka, exploring the relationship between empire and religion from Rome to India in the world's crossroads for the thousand years between Alexander and the rise of Islam. Students will be expected to keep up with a wide range of texts and be prepared to discuss them in class.

**Texts:**

R. Thapar, *Early India*

R Macmullen, *Christianity and Paganism*

S. Cohen, *Maccabees to Mishnah*

R. Foltz, *Religions of the Silk Road*

*The Edicts of Asoka*, eds Nikam and McKeon

W. Ball, *Rome in the East*

G. Fowden, *Empire to Commonwealth* (on reserve in library)

**Grades and Evaluation:**

Mid-term Exam (30%)

Class Participation (10%)

Research paper (30%)

Final Exam (30%)

## **Course Outline**

### **Introductions (Jan 25)**

#### **Alexander the Great and the Hellenistic *Oikumene* (1/27-2/1)**

Read: Arrian, *Life of Alexander*, selections

Cohen, cc. 1-2

Maccabees, selections

Fowden, *Empire to Commonwealth*, ch. 1

#### **Ashoka and the Buddhist Imperial Challenge (2/3-2/8)**

Read: *Edicts of Asoka*, entire

Thapar, *Early India*, cc.1-4

#### **Greco-Roman Images of the Buddha (2/10-2/15)**

Read: Foucher, "The Greek Origin of the Image of the Buddha"

Abe, "Inside the Wonder House"

#### **Greek and Roman Encounters with Persia and Asia (2/17-22)**

Read: Fowden, ch. 2

Ball, selections

The *Mahabharata* and the Brahmin challenge to Ashokan Dharma (2/24-3/1)

Laine, *Visions of God*, selections

Thapar, cc. 5-6)

**Review (3/1)**

**Mid-term Quiz (March 3)**

Defining Judaisms and Early Christianities (3/8-3/10)

Read: S. Cohen, selections

The Gospel of John

Other readings from Mishnah, Talmud, Second Temple Judaism.

**Spring Break (3/14-3/20)**

Rome to Byzantium ()

Visiting Speaker: S. Drake on Bardaisan

Read: Fowden, cc. 4-5

Macmullen, entire

Persia: Parthia-Sassanid Religion and Empire ()

Read: G. Widengren, *Mani and Manichaeism*, cc. 1-4

Other readings on Persian history

**Between Empires: The Silk Road ()**

Visiting Speaker: C.F. Wong on Uighur Music and Culture

Read: Foltz, cc. 1-4

**The Twilight of Byzantium and Persia (4/19-4/21) [Passover 4/19, Good Friday 4/22]**

Read: Fred Donner, "The Background to Islam"

**Papers Due April 21**

**The Rise of Islam and the Founding of Baghdad (4/26-4/28)**

Read: Fowden, ch. 6

Foltz, ch. 5

*When Baghdad Ruled the World*, selections

**Final Exam (5/3)**