

HSTAM 202 AC: Architecture 133, Friday 9:30
HSTAM 202 AB: Parrington Hall 206, Friday 10:30
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The purpose of the discussion sections for this course are to provide the student with an opportunity to explore the historical implications of the assigned reading material for this class. The goal in each week's discussion section will be to examine various facets of Roman culture, society, government and politics, among other topics, paying special attention to the primary source material – what it can tell us, what problems it presents us, how we can use it to explore historical questions. In order to achieve these goals, I must insist that you abide by the following tenets:

I. *Come to class prepared.* It is not enough simply to scan your eyes over the assigned reading for the week. In order to carry on an intellectually fruitful discussion, you must come to class prepared to examine the material for the week, which means that you must have done three things. First, note questions that come to you while reading. What does an author mean? What is he trying to say? Why would he want his audience to know this or that fact? Second, be original in your analysis of a document, both in and out of discussion section. Just because a question seems irrelevant or "silly" is all the more reason to ask it. The people who wrote these documents were real people, and just as prone to mistake and/or bias as we are. Challenge their ideas. Third, think about how the reading for discussion relates to other materials in the class (lectures, readings, previous discussions). *Context*, the social, economic, political, intellectual environment of an author, is of paramount importance in analyzing a document meaningfully. Therefore, attempt to make connections in your mind between the various data you are given in this course, and **think** about what those connections might signify.

II. *Express yourself early and often.* The only stupid question is the one you do not ask. The only useless opinion is the one you do not throw open to the discussion of your peers. It is absolutely essential in a free society that people are not afraid to express themselves and be prepared to share their ideas and discuss them in a rational fashion. Here is your chance to practice, and it is even included in the price of admission. Though I discourage "tastes great, less filling" debates, I do encourage people to take issue with the ideas of others and I expect everyone to participate in discussions.

III. *Respect others' intellectual integrity.* All that having been said, I will immediately excuse from class anyone who engages in rude, disrespectful, or otherwise distasteful behavior toward the other members of the group. As hard as it may be to believe, people occasionally get emotional about history, even when it deals with people and events 2,000 years in the past. I ask only that you try to maintain your cool and remember that this is a **history** class, not a course in theology, comparative religion, or any other subject, and we are required *from a historical perspective* to question the texts presented for consideration.

Finally, a word on grading. I do not grade attendance. However, I do grade performance in section, and if you're not there, you can't perform. Enough said.