



## Rome and China: comparing empires

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**Start date** 1 December 2017

**End date** 3 December 2017

**Venue** Madingley Hall  
Madingley  
Cambridge

**Tutor** Dr Nicholas James

**Course code** 1718NRX034

**Director of Programmes**

Emma Jennings

**For further information on this  
course, please contact**

Public Programme Coordinator, Clare Kerr  
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**To book** See: [www.ice.cam.ac.uk](http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk) or telephone 01223 746262

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### Tutor biography

Dr Nicholas James is a consultant in management & interpretation of historical resources. He is undertaking research on imperialism in the ancient world and he has projects on indigenous history in Central Mexico, landscape history of eastern England and contemporary urbanism in India. He is Lecturer in Social Anthropology at Magdalene College.

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## Course programme

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### Friday

Please plan to arrive between 16:30 and 18:30. You can meet other course members in the bar which opens at 18:15. Tea and coffee making facilities are available in the study bedrooms.

19:00	Dinner
20:30 – 22:00	<b>Imperialism in the ancient world</b>
22:00	Terrace bar open for informal discussion

### Saturday

07:30	Breakfast
09:00 – 10:30	<b>The rise &amp; fall of the Roman Empire</b>
10:30	Coffee
11:00 – 12:30	<b>The Qin &amp; Han Empires</b>
13:00	Lunch
14:00 – 16:00	Free
16:00	Tea
16:30 – 18:00	<b>Comparative sociology</b>
18:00 – 18:30	Free
18:30	Dinner
20:00 – 21:30	<b>Government</b>
21:30	Terrace bar open for informal discussion

### Sunday

07:30	Breakfast
09:00 – 10:30	<b>The economies</b>
10:30	Coffee
11:00 – 12:30	<b>Ideology and power</b>
12:45	Lunch

**The course will disperse after lunch**

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## Course syllabus

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### Aims:

- to provide a historical framework for comparing the Roman Empire with the Qin and Han empires
- to enable participants to compare the respective constitutions and economies of the Roman and early Chinese empires
- to encourage development of skills in deploying historical evidence in the service of interpretive argument

### Content:

2000 years ago, as many as one in three of the world's people were subject to either Rome or China. Both encouraged technological intensification and, between them, they counted the world's biggest cities. Yet, although both developed legal systems, their modes of government were quite unlike: while China pursued an ambitious vision of regulation, the Romans depended on 'government without bureaucracy'. The Roman paradox can be explained, in part, by propagation of ideas and, in part, on the other hand, by continuing prominence of the army. The Chinese, by contrast, gradually reduced the military's role in public affairs. Yet, although it looks as though that policy was fatal, the Romans eventually lost half of their Empire to invaders too. Were the two histories determined by the same fundamental causes? We begin with a general assessment of imperialism in the ancient world. Then, turning to the histories of Rome and China, we consider similarities and contrasts in the respective patterns of development. For both, it has long been widely assumed that events were driven by exceptional leaders but we must cross-examine this interpretation. We shall then be able to compare the modes of government and the balances of public persuasion and force for sustaining the respective empires.

### Presentation of the course:

Meetings will comprise illustrated lectures followed by open discussion of the issues arising.

### As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to:

- distinguish the principal phases in the rise and fall of the Roman, Qin and Han empires
- recognize the principal factors in the development and maintenance of these empires and, by extension, others of the kind

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## Reading and resources list

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Listed below are a number of texts that might be of interest for future reference, but do not need to be bought (or consulted) for the course.

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<b>Author</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Publisher and date</b>
Alcock, Susan, <i>et al.</i> (ed.)	<i>Empires: perspectives from archaeology and history</i>	CUP 2001
Garnsey, Peter, & Richard P Saller	<i>The Roman Empire: economy, society and culture</i>	Duckworth 1987
Goodman, Martin	<i>The Roman world, 44BC-AD180</i> (2 <sup>nd</sup> ed.)	Routledge 2011
Lewis, Mark	<i>The early Chinese empires: Qin and Han</i>	Harvard University Press 2007
Loewe, Michael	<i>The government of the Qin and Han empires, 221BCE-220CE</i>	Hackett 2006
Schiedel, Walter (ed.)	<i>Rome and China: comparative perspectives on ancient world empires</i>	OUP 2009

**Note** Students of the Institute of Continuing Education are entitled to 20% discount on books published by Cambridge University Press (CUP) which are purchased at the Press bookshop, 1 Trinity Street, Cambridge (Mon-Sat 9am – 5:30pm, Sun 11am – 5pm). A letter or email confirming acceptance on to a current Institute course should be taken as evidence of enrolment.

*Information correct as of:* 30 November 2017