

Short Essay

A 1-2-page essay will be due in class on 10/6. For your essay you will write a short response to a Roman-themed film from the list below, which you will be responsible to view on your own. You may choose any aspect of the film that interests you and that is pertinent to the study of Roman art and culture. This is a somewhat open assignment that will force you to engage in course content through the film medium.

You may choose from the following films (the synopses come from the Internet Movie Database):

Spartacus (1960)

Directed by Stanley Kubrick; Starring Kirk Douglas

He slave Spartacus leads a violent revolt against the decadent Roman Empire.

Ben-Hur: A Tale of the Christ (1959)

Directed by William Wyler; Starring Charlton Heston and Jack Hawkins

When a Jewish prince is betrayed and sent into slavery by a Roman friend, he regains his freedom and comes back for revenge.

Julius Caesar (William Shakespeare's Julius Caesar) (1953)

Directed by Joseph Mankiewicz; Starring Marlon Brando and James Mason

Brutus, Cassius, and other high-ranking Romans murder Caesar because they believe his ambition will lead to tyranny.

The Robe (1953)

Directed by Henry Koster; Starring Richard Burton and Jean Simmons

Marcellus is a tribune in the time of Christ. He is in charge of the group that is assigned to crucify Jesus.

Quo Vadis (1951)

Directed by Mervyn LeRoy; Starring Robert Taylor and Deborah Kerr

Returning to Rome after three years in the field, General Marcus Vinicius meets Lygia and falls in love with her.

Cleopatra (1963)

Directed by Joseph Mankiewicz; Starring Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton

The historical and poetical drama of Queen Cleopatra of Egypt who wants to stabilize her power by using the tensions in the Roman Empire.