Spring 2020 Course Description

**Instructor:** Heidi Craig  
**Course:** ENGL 412  
**Title:** Shakespeare's Rome

**Description:** How did Rome capture Shakespeare's imagination? This course considers Shakespeare’s engagements with the literary, political, philosophical, and historical legacies of ancient Rome as filtered through historical intermediaries and early modern English culture. Our close readings of Shakespeare’s Roman plays and poems will be supplemented with readings of secondary criticism and extracts from Shakespeare’s sources. Our wide range of topics will include Shakespeare’s engagements with Roman literature and philosophy; his negotiations of history and legend; his texts’ representations of statehood and war; their constructions of gender and race; and the place of Shakespeare’s Roman works in contemporary pedagogy. Throughout the semester we will consider the place of the “classics” in Shakespeare’s writing, and how Shakespeare’s own status as a classic informs our approaches to him.

**Proposed Readings:** Titus Andronicus, Julius Caesar, Antony & Cleopatra, Coriolanus, The Rape of Lucrece, Venus & Adonis; extracts from Ovid and Plutarch; selected secondary criticism