"If you have a garden and a library, you have everything you need.” —Cicero
"Rhetoric has three aims: to instruct an audience, to move an audience, and to delight an audience.” —Cicero
“Our life is what our thoughts make it.”—Marcus Aurelius
“It is better to create than to learn. Creating is the essence of life.”—Julius Caesar

Explore the historical basis of HBO’s *Rome* and the Hollywood Blockbuster *Gladiator*: the power, politics, poetry, and persuasion of the Hellenistic Age, the Republic of Rome and the Roman Empire. We will read texts by Cicero, Hortensia, Quintilian, Marcus Aurelius, Tacitus, Horace, Longinus, and Augustine, among others, creating a theory and practice for rhetorics and poetics in this classical period, as well as studying its global impact, and its legacy on us and popular culture. In addition to studying how rhetoric was practiced, we will also study how it was taught, and how rhetorical theories have shaped politics, gender, literature, history-writing, and education. Students wanting more background for teaching world literature, background on classical origins of literary and nonfiction genres (autobiography, dialogue, literary criticism), and poets and fiction writers interested in classical theories of composing, will find this course of high interest, in addition to students in Rhetoric and Composition. Our semester-long inquiry will be involve the idea of the “Ideal Orator,” and to what extent historic figures have embodied Cicero’s ideal for statesmen, speakers, politicians, writers, poets, and world leaders. We will also be concerned with legacies of teaching writing. Assignments will include: a scholarly book review, rhetorical précis writing and response papers, and a conference-length paper and oral presentation. Classes will include: film clips, presentations, discussion, and some lecture; this course will use elements of hybrid pedagogy with some online writing, and independent scholarly research.