

Course Rationale

The Roman town of Pompeii was destroyed by a volcanic eruption nearly 2,000 years ago. The volcanic debris which covered it preserved many of the town's buildings, including the homes of the inhabitants, and thus Pompeii offers an incredible insight into daily life in the Roman period. This course is aimed at students with a passion for history, archaeology, religion, or art. Students will develop their analytical and investigative skills through source analyses and the study and practical application of different theories. Students will use and analyse a range of sources during this course, including archaeological evidence, ancient textual sources, the accounts of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century visitors to the site, and more recent scholarship.

Tutorials will cover three main areas: the use of space in Roman houses, the function of art in Pompeian houses, and religious life in Pompeii. In the first tutorial, students will discover how space was used in Roman houses and explore the problems with identifying the functions of rooms. In the second tutorial, students will investigate three Pompeian houses in more detail and learn how to use the PEE technique to structure arguments. In the third tutorial, students will investigate the function of art in the domestic sphere, for instance if it formed part of a programme of decoration or influenced behaviour. In the fourth tutorial, students will receive an introduction to religious life in Pompeii, both outside and inside the house. Students will be asked to complete an essay-based assignment on the importance of art to the Pompeian experience of domestic space, which will develop their critical thinking, reasoning, and source analysis skills.