This seminar explores life along the geographical peripheries of the Roman Empire. During the semester each of us will explore an institution, physical reality, cultural expression, or the like of a particular community, area, or ‘frontier,’ using archaeological, literary, epigraphic, numismatic, papyrological and whatever other evidence we can find. Weekly topics provide a common ground for presentations and comparison of specific phenomena, so that we can deepen knowledge of “our” communities while illuminating the challenges and commonalities of living on the edges of the Roman world. But our goal is not simply to investigate diverse specific communities, cultures, or archaeological phenomena, for we will also read and evaluate secondary scholarship, some using more theoretical approaches. This comparative, analytical work should enable us to see the Roman data with fresh eyes.

The work of this course consists of:
1) Daily: Class attendance and active engagement in dialogue and exploration; you are expected to go beyond the assigned readings. For your brief weekly updates (see following paragraph) you are encouraged to prepare material to share with others; although I don’t want you to waste time “perfecting” a handout or a PPT, visual and written work should be concise, accurate, clear, and illuminating. Students must meet with me individually in Wks V & VI to discuss progress. [30% of final grade]
2) Sept. 2: A 20-minute quiz on Roman provinces, provincial commands, and provincial societies (id’s and map quiz). Information on Blackboard site. [5%]
3) Sept. 9: Submission and discussion of preliminary idea of your semester project: %p. write up of question(s) to be addressed and by what means, and %p. preliminary bibliography (with some ancient evidence). [5%]
4) Oct. 21: First go-round of your paper due, as a 7-page paper. Follow guidelines posted on Blackboard site. [20%]
5) Nov. 18: New abstract due, same format as for Sept. 18 but incorporating new research and indicating progress on your paper. [5%]
6) Dec. 9. Due date of final paper, whose 18-20 pp. length underscores the expectation that you will have substantially revised your earlier version of Oct. 21. Use same guidelines as for Oct. 21. [30%]

I envision our weekly classes as follows. I’ll usually speak for the first part of Tuesdays (particularly at the beginning of the semester), after which we’ll discuss the assigned reading(s); Thursdays will be geared towards updates on your projects. Your brief (5-10 min. max.) updates should note not only new info you have found, but also problems you are encountering with evidence, how the week’s readings affected your understanding of the ancient evidence, and vice versa (e.g., does your evidence validate or discredit the readings?). We should wrap up each session by comparing and contrasting the analyses of your projects, discussing commonalities and trying to explain differences. Thus over the semester we address, with ever more information and knowledge, a fundamental issue of the Roman empire: how particular, and/or how characteristically “Roman”, were Rome’s different regions.

Syllabus and Readings (to be done before the Tuesday class that week; most readings are on e-reserve, sometimes with “hard copy” available in our departmental office):
Wk I: Introduction to the course; the significance of the topic
Aug 26: Introduction. Discussion of goals, approaches, resources
Aug 28: The significance of frontier studies
Wk II: The Grand Strategy - or not
Sept 2: Quiz. Read Luttwak for this class period.
Sept 4: Grand Strategy, Grand Miracle?
Wk III: Knowledge of frontiers, conceptions of center and periphery
Sept 9: Center, periphery, and drawing the line.
Sept 11: Turn in project thoughts; initial discussion. Dr. Johnson will discuss his JECS article with us 3:30-4:05.
Wk IV: Types of frontiers
Sept 16: Rivers, walls, ditches
Sept 18: Cutting off or regulating passage?
Sept 23: Legionary camps (Rewritten abstract due)
Sept 25: Legionaries
Wk VI: Patrolling the frontiers, II
Sept 30: Auxiliary camps and auxiliaries
Oct 2: "How 'Romanized' were auxiliary cohorts?

Wk VII: Feeding and supplying the frontier: economic considerations
Oct 7: Types of food and supplies
Oct 9: The effects of supplies on local communities

Wk VIII: Neighboring civilian communities: canabae, vici and the like
Oct 14: FALL BREAK
Oct 16: The concerns of neighbors; concern for neighbors

Wk IX: Sex and gender on the frontier
Oct 21: First draft of your paper due.
Oct 23: Women, marriage, families

Wk X: Religion and cults among the troops and on frontiers
Oct 28: Roman imperial cult in the army
Oct 30: Diffusion of imperial cult, and other external cults

Wk XI: Religions on the edge: Christianity and Judaism
Nov 4: Marginalization of pre-existing groups
Nov 6: Liminal areas and the encouragement of difference

Wk XII: The construction of identity/identities along the frontier
Nov 11: Can those outside the frontier have a history, or identity?
Nov 13: Changes in the later Roman period

Wk XIII: The permeability of frontiers: people, goods, money, ideas
Nov 18: Which perspective should one take?
Nov 20: How to gauge movement

Wk XIV: Nov 25 - last class. Wrap up: what needs more investigation?

Papers due Tuesday Dec. 9, by 5 pm.

Rev. 8/26/08