

LATN 200-01—Directed Readings: Lives of the Caesars

.25 Course

Fall Semester

Monday 4:00-4:50 PM

Instructor: Simmons

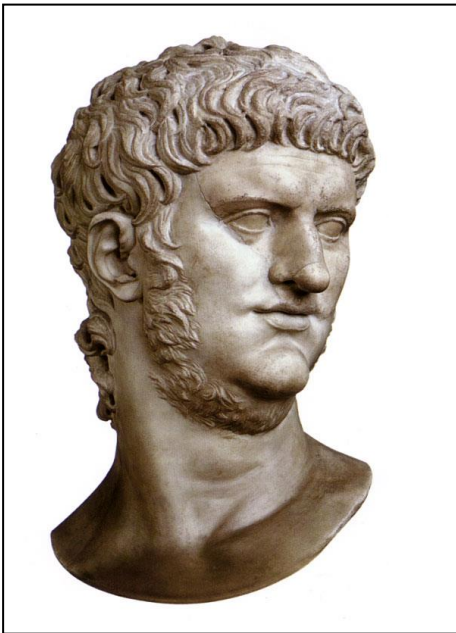
Why would Augustus have cursed his enemies with a wish that they have a wife and children just like his?

Why did Caligula intend to appoint his horse as a Roman consul?

Why did Claudius' wife feed him poisoned mushrooms?

Why did Nero try on six separate occasions to have his mother killed, and how indestructible must she have been to have survived the first five of those attempts?

These are the sorts of questions to which we might find answers in Directed Readings: Lives of the Caesars. In sampling from Suetonius' most famous book, *De Vita*



Caesarum, in the original Latin, supplemented by additional readings from the same source in English translation, we will encounter racy tales from the imperial archives, and from people in various emperors' inner circles, to which/whom Suetonius, as secretary to the emperor Hadrian, had access. How much of *Lives of the Caesars* is true history and how much is just rumor and innuendo are still open questions, but for our purposes, what matters most is our opportunity to read stories of soap opera-style depravity, cruelty, and simple peculiarity attributed to the most powerful people in the most powerful nation in the Western world at that time. Students who are eligible for this once-a-week course are those who have completed Elementary Latin II (LATN 102), or who have tested out of it.

