# Numismatics

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***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The course is divided into two modules of 30 hours.

The aim of the first module is to introduce students to the specialist vocabulary of Numismatics and provide an overview of the history of currency in the ancient world, from its origins in Asia Minor to the fall of the Western Roman Empire. The module is intended for undergraduate students and master’s students who did not study numismatics on their undergraduate programme. Upon completion of the module, students will have learned the basic concepts of the discipline and its specific terminology; they will have an overview of the history of ancient coins and will be able to contextualise them in relation to the historical events of the period.

Analysing some particularly important case studies, Module 2 will introduce students to numismatics research methodology, which makes it possible to integrate coins into their historical, economic, cultural and archaeological contexts. The module is designed for master’s students who have already studied numismatics. Upon completion of the module, students will have learned discipline-specific research methods and will be able to study coins as a historical source, piece of economic data and archaeological document.

During both modules, several hours will be devoted to the lecturer-supervised viewing and study of Roman coins in the Numismatic Collection of the Università Cattolica. Students will therefore learn how to read and interpret coins with increasing independence, decoding the epigraphic, iconographic and strictly numismatic elements, as well as numismatic cataloguing technique.

***COURSE CONTENT***

Module 1

*Features of Greek and Roman numismatics*

The module will mainly address the following general topics: definition of “numismatics” and “coin”; the birth of coin collection and development of numismatic studies; criteria for dating ancient coins; ancient coin-manufacturing techniques (casting and minting). The module will next outline the main issues in the development of coining in the West: early currencies in the ancient Greek world; introduction of coinage in Asia Minor; general characteristics of Greek coinage; Athenian coinage; early currencies in the ancient Roman world; Roman coinage in the Republican era; coinage under the Roman Empire; aspects of coin iconography.

Module 2

A number of case studies will be used to illustrate the numismatic research methodology and the multiple ways in which coins can serve as sources for studying economics, history power ideologies, artistic phenomena and the society in which coins were issued. Coins found in archaeological surveys of the *Carnuntum* site will be analysed to outline aspects of the economic life of the city in the Roman age. Coinage issued for and by Cleopatra Thea of Syria (circa 164 B.C. - 121 BC) will be used to introduce students to the Seleucid queen by comparing numismatic sources with written testimonies. Imperial Roman coins depicting *Spes* from the 1st-3rd centuries A.D. will serve to clarify the potential and communicative limits of coin epigraphy and iconography. Non-monetary uses of coins will be examined in light of their use as jewellery.

***READING LIST***

Lecture notes are an integral component of the exam preparation for both modules. During the course, the lecturer makes the PowerPoint slides used in lectures available to students via the *Blackboard* platform.

Reading list for Module 1

M. Asolati, *Servius rex primus signavit aes. Breve storia della moneta a Roma,* in *Alle radici dell’Euro. Quando la moneta fa la storia*, Treviso, 2001, pp. 39-75.

R. Cantilena, *La moneta in Grecia e a Roma. Appunti di numismatica antica,* Monduzzi Editore, Bologna, 2008.

C. Perassi, *La moneta in età antica,* in *Monet@. Un Numismatico, una Collezione, un Museo, Catalogo della Mostra*, Como (16 December 2006-29 April 2007), edited by I. Nobile De Agostini, Como, 2006, pp. 49-64.

A. Savio, *Monete romane,* Rome, 2001.

Reference reading list for Module 2

*The Oxford Handbook of Greek and Roman Coinage,* ed. by W.E. Metcalf, Oxford, 2012.

Details of further, more specific reading material be will provided during lectures as the course progresses.

***TEACHING METHOD***

Frontal lectures with projected images. Lecturer-led practical activities in the form of seminars (second module).

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Module 1

Students will be assessed by means of an oral exam of appropriate duration. Students must demonstrate the ability to interpret a coin and comment on its numismatic and historical aspects: the coin will be chosen by the lecturer from those covered in class. Students who do not pass this first part will not be able to continue the exam. After successful completion of this test, an interview will follow to establish the acquisition and correct understanding of the contents of the course (general aspects, Greek coinage, Roman coinage). The final mark will reflect the accuracy and quality of the answers, as well as the candidate’s communicative skill and ability to adequately justify statements, analyses and judgements.

Module 2

Students will be assessed by means of an oral exam of appropriate duration. The candidate will first have to catalogue a coin presented in a photograph by the lecturer and demonstrate their ability to interpret and comment on its numismatic and historical aspects. Students who do not pass this first part will not be able to continue the exam. After successful completion of this test, an interview will follow to establish the acquisition and correct understanding of the contents of the course. The final mark will reflect the accuracy and quality of the answers, as well as the candidate’s communicative skill, correct use of specialist language and ability to adequately justify statements, analyses and judgements.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

*Prerequisites*

Module 1

Given that this is an introductory course covering materials entirely new to undergraduate and postgraduate students who have not previously studied numismatics, the only prerequisites are textbook-level Greek and Roman history supplemented with other courses to be studied simultaneously. Any gaps in students’ knowledge will be verified in lectures and remedied by means of specific interventions.

Module 2

The course is designed for master’s-degree students who have already studied numismatics in their previous courses of study. Prerequisites include knowledge of the main technical terms and historical developments of coinage in the ancient world. The lecturer will verify gaps in students’ knowledge and recommend specific texts.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG or on the Faculty notice board.