



INTERUNIVERSITARY MASTER'S COURSE

LATIN EPIGRAPHY ON LOCATION

Royal Netherlands Institute Rome

20-29 March 2026

Spring 2026, the Royal Netherlands Institute in Rome will organise again, in close cooperation with MasterLanguage, the Research School OIKOS, and the University of Amsterdam, a hands-on **course Latin epigraphy on location** intended for MA students, ReMa students and PhDs working in the areas of Classics and Ancient Studies, Ancient History, Classical or Roman Archaeology, and Roman Law. The course offers an intensive introduction into Latin epigraphy from the Republican period up until Late Antiquity and is aimed at the acquisition and application of practical research skills in epigraphic research. Taking the role of inscriptions in communicative strategies of those who commissioned them as a starting point, the course focuses on the materiality of their supports and the spatial contexts of their original settings as much as on the texts of the inscriptions themselves. Given the variety of epigraphic texts, the approach is necessarily interdisciplinary paying attention to philological, socio-linguistic, literary, and legal aspects of inscriptions. In addition, theoretical and methodological aspects of epigraphic research will be explicitly addressed. The course finally aims to provide insight in the research potential of epigraphic sources by exploring aspects of the Roman world which are uniquely accessible through inscriptions such as the administration of the Roman empire, social class and self-representation, or the sociolinguistics of Latin.

Course set up

The main part of the course is set up as an **intensive seminar** which will take place at the Royal Netherlands Institute in Rome from 20-29 March 2026 (travel days included). The seminar in Rome, which distinguishes itself by the prominent place of on-site education, is preceded by introductory classes in Amsterdam on February 13 and March 13, complemented by one online session on February 20, 2026. Teachers are **Prof. dr. D. Sloop** (University of Amsterdam, Ancient History) and **Prof. dr. C.H.M. Kroon** (University of Amsterdam, Classics). The language of the course will be English (unless all participants will have Dutch as their mother tongue).

Lectures and individual study and research are alternated with museum and site visits where we study inscriptions in direct confrontation with the ancient monuments on which they were inscribed. On the programme are visits to the epigraphic collections of the Museo Nazionale Romano, the Musei Capitolini and the Vatican, as well as a city walk along ancient monuments with preserved Latin inscriptions, and excursions to the Roman necropolis at Isola sacra and the ancient city of Ostia. The course aims to provide insight in the research potential of epigraphic sources concerning different aspects of ancient society including the administration of the Roman empire, burial customs and commemorative practices, family relationships and Roman laws of succession, language and social class, gender roles, migration and cultural identity, patronage and professional associations, and content and organization of private and public cults. These topics will be dealt with through examples we will see during the museum and site visits. During the lectures, epigraphic texts from outside Rome and Italy will be drawn in for comparison.

As an individual task you will be assigned one or more inscriptions kept in a museum or preserved in situ on an archaeological site in Rome or Ostia. By working on your assignment you will learn to read an epigraphic text, to produce a transcription and translation, as well as to write a short epigraphic commentary/interpretation (as part of your presentation and final report). In short, you learn everything necessary in order to be able to produce a text edition of an inscription that complies with the conventions in the discipline. For the commentary you will be allowed to give special weight to philological, literary, historical, archaeological or juridical aspects, according to your field of specialization and competences.

The two introductory sessions in Amsterdam, complemented by one online session, comprise lectures on the history and organisation of the field, a review of different classes of Latin inscriptions by selected examples, and discussion of methodological issues, alternated by small exercises which aim at a first acquaintance with the most important corpora of Latin inscriptions in print as well as in digital data bases. You will be asked to read a set of articles and chapters from edited volumes in anticipation of, or eventually after, these classes. Active participation in these preparatory sessions as well as a written reflection of the materials studied are expected to ensure a flying start to the on-site part of the course in Rome.

The course will be concluded in Rome by presentations and discussions. Comments from fellow students as well as from the teaching staff need to be taken into account in the final brief written report which you are expected to submit no later than on the final day of the course in Rome.

Target group, entry requirements and study load

The course is intended for MA students (MA and research MA) as well as PhD students who are at the beginning of their doctorate research. The target group are graduates in Classics, Ancient History, Archaeology, and Law, but others who take a special interest in Latin epigraphy and meet the entry requirements are invited to register as well. International students may be admitted to the course provided that they are registered as a student at a Dutch university. While no specific knowledge of epigraphy is necessary, you should at least have knowledge of Latin at the level of the Dutch VWO exam or have completed two courses in elementary Latin at university (10-12 EC). You will be assigned an epigraphic text the difficulty of which is in accordance with your abilities to read Latin; in this way the course

hopes to cater for different student groups who wish to use epigraphic sources for their own research.

The course can take up to fifteen students. In case more candidates register, a selection will be made whereby students from Classics, research master students of Ancient Studies affiliated with the OIKOS research school, and other students from the six Dutch universities participating in the Netherlands Institute at Rome have priority (in that order). Part of the registration is a motivation letter which may be used as a means for selection. Please motivate in your letter why you would like to take this course, and indicate what your own research is about, and what level of command of Latin you have.

The study load is the equivalent of **5 EC** (140 hours) and comprises two introductory sessions in Amsterdam and one online session, eight full days of study in Rome, and some additional time for reading course materials in advance of the course as well as for the written reflection (handed in before departure) and the report based on presentation and discussions in Rome. In consultation with the teaching staff the study load can be enlarged on an individual basis.

Costs

All participants will be accommodated at the Royal Netherlands Institute in Rome for free. Entrance to museums and sites which we will visit as part of the course will also be free of charge. Local transport, meals and refreshments are at your own expense. There is a good cooking facility in the Royal Netherlands Institute free to use for all. Participants book and pay their own tickets to and from Rome, but if you complete the course successfully you are eligible for a travel allowance of € 100.

Registration

- If you are interested in taking this course, you are kindly requested to sign up before **December 12, 2025** by using the standard form available from the website of the Royal Netherlands Institute: www.knir.it.
- Please mention the level of command of Latin (Dutch VWO exam, completed university courses elementary Latin, completed BA Classics, completed MA Classics).
- To complete your registration you will be asked to upload the grade list ('cijferlijst') of your BA programme, a CV, and a letter of motivation.
- All participants except PhD students are kindly requested to register for the course on the Masterlanguage website as well:
<https://masterlanguage.nl/en/language/classical-languages/>

Any remaining questions? Please get in touch with:

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