HIS 301 is designed to teach History majors and minors how to read, write, and conduct research in the discipline. In this course we will learn and practice the essential skills in each of those areas by examining questions of considerable current interest: what brought about the end of a nearly 500-year-old empire, and what was the effect of the imperial collapse on inhabitants across the empire? We shall analyze both primary sources dating from the last decades of the Roman Empire (including but not limited to chronicles, letters, poems, laws, religious texts, archaeological excavations, and works of art), as well as modern articles and book chapters that seek to explain the causes, nature, and effects of end of Rome. Requirements: 1) class attendance, discussion, group participation, group reports, all of which require completing the assigned readings in advance of every class (about 25%); 2) five short writing assignments (15% each), each of which will provide practice in a particular skill.