

UTMUN 2024



Silk Road: Moon Over Mountain Pass

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Equity Disclaimers

Throughout this committee, delegates will be engaging in complex debates and discussions covering a wide array of topics. As UTMUN seeks to provide an enriching educational experience that facilitates understanding of the real-world implications of issues, our committees' contents may involve sensitive or controversial subject matter strictly for academic purposes. We ask for delegates to be respectful, professional, tactful, and diplomatic when engaging with all committee content, representing their assigned country's or character's position, communicating with staff and other delegates, and responding to opposing viewpoints.

This Background Guide presents topics that may be distressing to some Delegates, including but not limited to: War, Violence, Imperialism, Corruption, Xenophobia, Racism, Religious Persecution, Classism, Assassination.

As this is a war committee, please refrain from including depictions of gore, exploitation of prisoners of war or Indigenous communities, excessive violence, inhumane treatment of anyone, etc. in committee speeches, private directives, public directives, notes, conversations, etc. UTMUN recognizes the sensitivity associated with many of our topics, and we encourage you to be aware of and set healthy boundaries that work for you. This may include: refraining from reading certain parts of the background guide, preparing yourself before reading this background guide, doing some self-care or seeking support after reading the background guide, or anything that can help make you feel more comfortable. We ask that all Delegates remain considerate of the boundaries that other Delegates set.

UTMUN expects that all discussions amongst delegates will remain productive and respectful of one another. If you have any equity concerns or need assistance in setting boundaries or navigating sensitive subject matter or have any questions at all, please do not hesitate to reach out to me or our Chief Equity Officer, Harvi Karatha, at equity@utmun.org. We want you to feel safe and comfortable at UTMUN!

If you wish to switch committees after having read the content warnings for this committee, please do the following:

a) Fill out the [UTMUN 2024 Committee Switch Request Form](#).

If you have any equity concerns, equity-based questions, or delegate conflicts, please do any of the following:

1. Email equity@utmun.org to reach Harvi Karatha, email deputy.equity@utmun.org to reach Iva Zivaljevic, or reach out to the committee dias as silkroad@utmun.org.
2. Fill out the Anonymous (if preferred) UTMUN Equity Contact Form: <https://forms.gle/XEH3DCTwX3JzzSnr6>.
3. Notify/Ask any staff member to connect you to Harvi Karatha or Iva Zivaljevic.

Model United Nations at U of T Code of Conduct

The below code of conduct applies to all attendees of UTMUN 2024 for the entire duration of the conference, and any conference-related activities (including but not limited to committee sessions, conference socials, committee breaks, and the opening and closing ceremonies).

1. Harassment and bullying in any form will not be tolerated, the nature of which includes, but is not limited to, discrimination on the basis of race, national origin, ethnicity, colour, religion, sex, age, mental and physical disabilities, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression,

a. Harassment and bullying include, but are not limited to, insulting and/or degrading language or remarks; threats and intimidation; and intentional (direct or indirect).

discrimination and/or marginalization of a group and/or individual;

i. The above prohibition on harassment, bullying, and inappropriate behaviour extends to any and all behaviour as well as written and verbal communication during the conference, including notes, conversation both during and outside committees, and general demeanour at all conference events;

ii. UTMUN reserves the right to determine what constitutes bullying and/or inappropriate behaviour toward any individual and/or group;

b. Attendees must not engage in any behaviour that constitutes physical violence or the threat of violence against any groups and/or individuals, including sexual violence and harassment, such as, but not limited to,

i. Unwelcome suggestive or indecent comments about one's appearance;

ii. Nonconsensual sexual contact and/or behaviour between any individuals and/or groups of individuals;

iii. Sexual contact or behaviour between delegates and staff members is strictly forbidden;

2. UTMUN expects all attendees to conduct themselves in a professional and respectful manner at all times during the conference. Specific expectations, include, but are not limited to,

a. Attendees must, if able, contribute to the general provision of an inclusive conference and refrain from acting in a manner that restricts other attendees' capacity to learn and thrive in an intellectually stimulating environment;

b. Attendees must adhere to the dress code, which is Western business attire;

i. Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis depending on the attendees' ability to adhere to the previous sub-clause;

ii. Attendees are encouraged to contact Chief Equity Officer, Harvi Karatha, at equity@utmun.org with questions or concerns about the dress code or conference accessibility;

- c. Attendees must refrain from the use of cultural appropriation to represent their character and/or country, including the use of cultural dress, false accent, and any behaviour that perpetuates a national or personal stereotype;
- d. Delegates must not use music, audio recordings, graphics, or any other media at any time unless approved and requested to be shared by the Dais and/or the Chief Equity Officer, Harvi Karatha at equity@utmun.org;
- e. Attendees must abide by instructions and/or orders given by conference staff, members;
 - i. Attendees are exempt from this above sub-clause only if the instructions and/or orders given are unreasonable or inappropriate;

3. Delegates, staff, and all other conference participants are expected to abide by Ontario and Canadian laws and Toronto by-laws, as well as rules and regulations specific to the University of Toronto. This includes, but is not limited to,

- a. Attendees, regardless of their age, are strictly prohibited from being under the influence and/or engaging in the consumption of illicit substances, such as alcohol or illicit substances for the duration of the conference;
- b. Attendees are prohibited from smoking (cigarettes or e-cigarettes, including vapes) on University of Toronto property;
- c. Attendees must refrain from engaging in vandalism and the intentional and/or reckless destruction of any public or private property, including conference spaces, venues, furniture, resources, equipment, and university buildings;
 - i. Neither UTMUN nor any representatives of UTMUN is responsible for damage inflicted by attendees to property on or off University of Toronto campus;
 - ii. Individuals will be held responsible for any damages.

4. The Secretariat reserves the right to impose restrictions on delegates and/or attendees for not adhering to/violating any of the above stipulations. Disciplinary measures include, but are not limited to,

- a. Suspension from committee, in its entirety or for a specific period of time;
- b. Removal from the conference and/or conference venue(s);
- c. Disqualification from awards;
- d. Disqualification from participation in future conference-related events.

5. UTMUN reserves the right to the final interpretation of this document.

For further clarification on UTMUN's policies regarding equity or conduct, please see this [form](#). For any questions/concerns, or any equity violations that any attendee(s) would like to raise, please contact UTMUN's Chief Equity Officer, Harvi Karatha, at equity@utmun.org or fill out this anonymous Equity Contact Form: <https://forms.gle/Psc5Luxp22T3c9Zz8>.

Letter from the Director:

Greetings Delegates,

Welcome to the year 129 BCE! I am very happy to welcome you all to this time of diplomacy, desperation, and conspiracy. My name is Ngila Stone and I am a second year student at UofT studying international relations and East Asian studies with a minor in general history.

This year UTMUN's Joint Crisis Committee (JCC) is embarking on a journey to the past to the origins of the hugely important Silk Road. We are coming at it from either end with the Senate of Rome and the Imperial Court of Han China. Delegates will engage in debate on establishing trade and diplomacy connections, facing external threats and neighbouring empires, establishing centralized government, and addressing issues of class and land reforms. The balance between focusing on international and domestic issues can be a hard needle to thread but I encourage delegates to consider all these topics and their implications carefully. What will be most important to maintaining a strong and healthy nation?

This being said, delegates should also be aware of the complex and sensitive issues that this committee will touch on. These committees represent the seats of power for two sprawling empires who practiced war and violence to maintain control. Delegates should research independently and learn about each of the aspects of both of the committees (or just their own if that seems like a lot) it is important when we discuss and immerse ourselves in history to understand the different angles and the very real impacts of these two empires on the peoples both within and around them. However, as described in the Equity Warnings we will not be touching on the matters of Xenophobia, Religious Persecution, Classism, or Graphic Violence in committee. It is important to handle these topics with care and sensitivity and when we embody a historical character to still consider the impact of our words in the present.

As mentioned above all delegates in this JCC are highly encouraged to research these empires, topics, and characters on their own. I understand that this is a hard period to research because we are so removed. I have included in this Background Guide some good places to start. Our goal is to approach this JCC on a basis of historical context and information and then letting our imaginations take it from there. I cannot wait to see how you make these topics, characters, and crises your own. If you have any questions, comments, or want to say hi I have left my email below. I am here for you so let me know if you need any support as you prepare for this committee.

I can't wait to meet you all in February,

Ngila Stone
Director JCC: Silk Road
silkroad@utmun.org

Position Papers:

At UTMUN 2024, position papers are required to qualify for awards. Each committee will also give out one Best Position Paper award. To learn more about position paper writing, formatting, and submission, please check out the [position paper guidelines](#). Please read through the guidelines carefully as this page will describe content recommendations, formatting requirements, and details on citations. If you have any questions about position paper writing, feel free to contact your Dais via your committee email (silkroad@utmun.org) or reach out to academics@utmun.org.

Overall Themes:

Intersection between politics and economics. How social issues inform (or don't inform) how governments act. How the struggle for power can lead to ineffective government.

Introduction:

In 129 BCE, the Han and Roman Empires were at turning points in their respective histories.

In China, the diplomat Zhang Qian had returned to his Emperor with the prospect of transcontinental trade and political alliances with the Yuezhi people in central Asia. Emperor Wu had spent much of his early reign fighting against the rampant corruption within the government and nobility and was now beginning to move his focus outward. His ambition and ability to manage court politics have led the Han into a period of prosperity.¹ However, they are ready to expand their borders and share that prosperity to their neighbours. The Xiongnu tribal confederation poses an ever present threat along the Han's northern border and both sides are ready to strike.

Before his assassination, the ambitious Tiberius Gracchus agitated the Roman senate in past years, he used his influence to rally the common people against the upper class senators and their plans for Rome. The violence incited at Gracchi rallies left the streets of Rome wary and the Senators paranoid. Tiberius had pushed against all convention to pass a series of land reform laws² that, while popular with Italian farmers, were anathema to the powerful Roman elite, who quickly organized his assassination in 133 BCE.³ With others poised to fill Tiberius' shoes, the senate was divided on how to proceed with the reforms.

With one empire looking outward and the other trapped in the capitol they will both have to find the best way to match their national interests with the reality of their difficult situations. The prospect of riches through trade is a tempting one to two governments who have many plans, armies, and projects to fund and people ready for economic growth. The question is, can they maintain peace for long enough to make it happen?

¹ Hung Hing Ming, *The Magnificent Emperor Wu : China's Han Dynasty*, New York: Algora Publishing, 2020, ProQuest Ebook Central.

² "Tiberius Gracchus and the Agrarian Law", *The English Chartist Circular: And Temperance Record for England and Wales* (2, issue 71), British Library.

³ "Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus" in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Tiberius-Sempronius-Gracchus>

Definitions:

CONFUCIANISM

A philosophical belief system that revolves around the idea of morality. A person is made moral through their diligence in all aspects of their life. Known for the concept of filial piety in which a person is responsible for the relationships within their life (ex. A child should look after and care for their parents as they grow just like a parent would look after a child when they are young). *

TAOISM

A philosophical belief system that focuses on balance both in the world and in the person focusing on the natural world. This can be on the universal or personal level and is both a religion and philosophy. While both have the same basis of belief the religion branched off to encompass rituals and a set of religious leadership.

TRIBUNE

An elected member of the Roman senate (a senator).

CONSUL

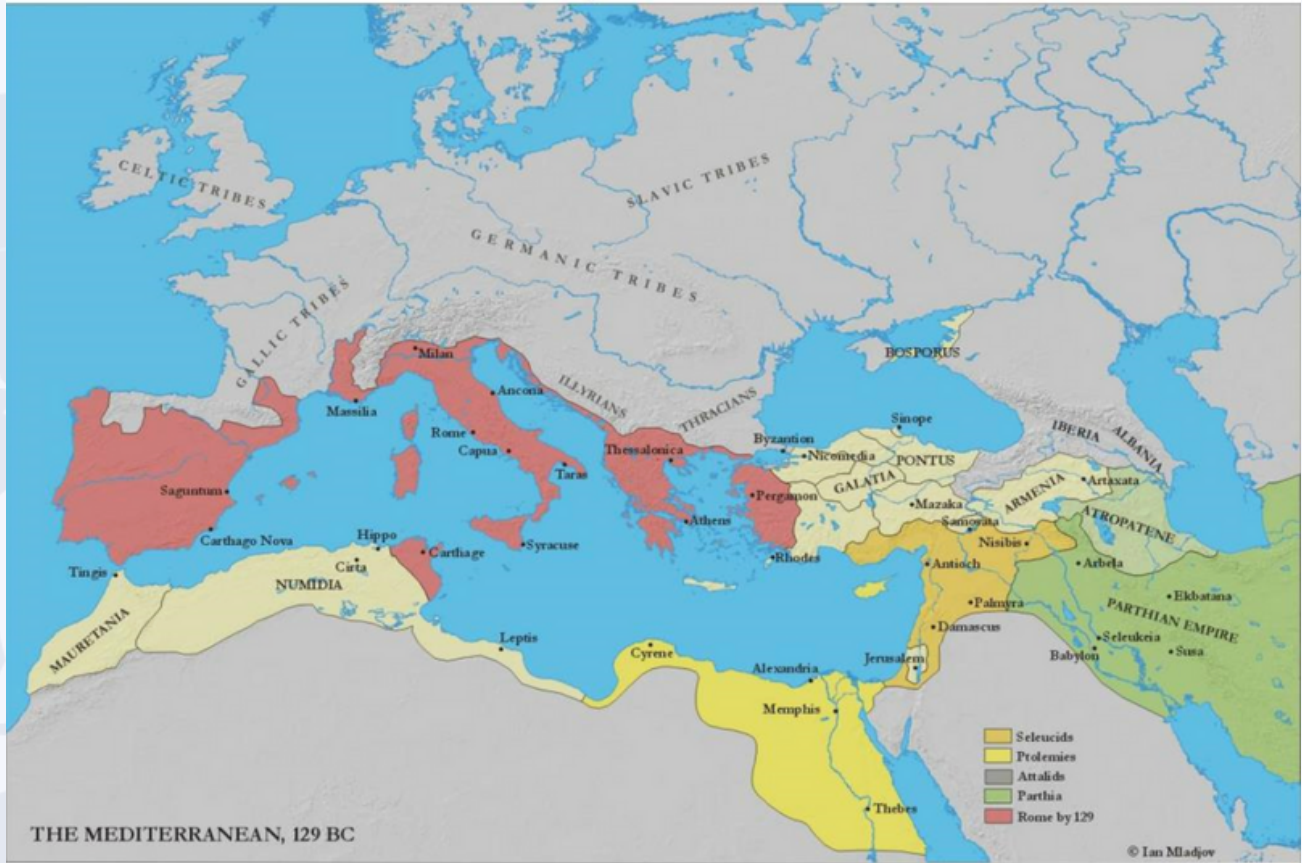
The highest elected office in Rome, in charge of the military and presided over the senate. Was tasked with enforcing the senate's laws in Rome.

Maps:

China (Han Court)



Roman Empire, 129 BCE



Historical Background: Han Court

Court Politics

Emperor Wu of Han came into power in 141 BCE at the age of 15. As a young emperor he set out on an ambitious journey towards sweeping political and cultural reform.⁴ He saw the corruption within the government system and decided that the problem lay with the nobility who were in charge of large sections of territory and constantly vied for increasing amounts of power. The Grand Empress Dowager Dou, Wu's grandmother, limited the young empire's powers in the royal court. She sided with the nobility and pushed back against Wu's plans for reform bringing them to a standstill.⁵ Wu's early allies in reform were either dismissed or imprisoned by the Empress Dowager and the nobility.⁶ The noble families not only held territorial power but used their positions to place family members and friends. Wu was forced to build himself a secret court to make plans for future reforms.

Outside of the split between pro and anti reformist Emperor Wu was at odds with his grandmother over his commitment to Confucianism. At the time the empire was Taoist and the nobility was committed to that philosophy.⁷ Confucianism went hand in hand with Wu's plan to change government structure and societal expectations. As a philosophy it instills a sense of order, relationship, and filial piety. Whereas Taoism had become the philosophy of the conservative aristocrats prioritized with maintaining the status quo.

In 135 BCE, the Empress Dowager died, opening the court up for Wu to take control. At this point he began a campaign of stamping out corruption and centralizing the government. This included enstating Confucianism as well as forcing nobles to leave the capitol and live permanently in their own territory without getting capitol residences at government expense.⁸ Wu also resolved to eliminate nepotism through his reforms; he continued to consult with Confucianist scholars, making them even less popular with the court. The secret court members were given new public positions and Wu settled comfortably into power, despite his unpopularity with the nobility.

⁴ Hung Hing Ming, *The Magnificent Emperor Wu*, 124.

⁵ Hung Hing Ming, *The Magnificent Emperor Wu*, 123.

⁶ Hung Hing Ming, *The Magnificent Emperor Wu*, 123.

⁷ Hung Hing Ming, *The Magnificent Emperor Wu*, 123.

⁸ Hung Hing Ming, *The Magnificent Emperor Wu*, 124-125.

War and Conquest

Outside of changes in court politics, Wu began expanding Han control outward. The empire had been functioning as a policing force for the smaller kingdoms in its periphery, stepping in if needed to prevent wars or to aid their allies. One such situation was the conquest of Minyue. In 138 BCE Minyue was invaded by a neighbour state Dong'ou. They appealed to the Han for help, and Wu mobilized the military and reinstated the Minyue. In 135 BCE, Minyue invaded Nanyue and asked the Han for help again. Wu sent forces, and before the end of the invasion there was a coup in the Minyue leadership that split the kingdom in half. The half that remained Minyue was then ruled by a Han proxy. In the future, the Han would turn their attention to Nanyue in the search for more territory.⁹

⁹ Patricia Buckley Ebrey, *The Cambridge Illustrated History of China*, University of Washington, 2022, 86.

The Xiongnu

The Xiongnu were a confederation of nomadic tribes formed approximately in 209 BCE. They occupied the Eurasian Steppe and concentrated in what would be Mongolia. This put them on the Han's northern border which immediately put them at odds. Despite the apparent difference in power and resources, the Xiongnu quickly annexed a huge territory from which they could call forces. They additionally began to surround the Han across their entire northern and north-western border. There were periods of conflict and peace between the two peoples with the wars becoming extremely bloody for both sides. After the fall of the Qin, they first became at odds with the Han, fighting for territory that had been occupied by the Qin.¹⁰

The Han attempted to maintain peace through tribute gifts, marriage of Han princesses to Xiongnu leaders, and negotiated peace treaties.¹¹ These tactics would work for a period, but the conflict would almost inevitably start up again. In 135 BCE, Emperor Wu sought a definitive peace and the Xiongnu agreed; only a year later, in 134 BCE, an advisor convinced Wu to resume conflict.

In 134 BCE a plan was proposed in the Han court to trap the Xiongnu in a battle by them as they passed through Han territory. This was due to the Xiongnu's tendency to send fast raiding parties across the border that would be gone before the Han army even arrived. However, the plan failed because of the interrogation of Chinese prisoners.¹² The Xiongnu and Han had committed to capturing and interrogating prisoners in order to thwart these planned ambushes.

¹⁰ Jonathan Markley, "China Versus the Barbarians: The First Century of Han-Xiongnu Relations" *Asia in World History: Comparisons, Connections, and Conflicts* 26, no.3 (Winter 2021), 26.

¹¹ Jonathan Markley, "China Versus the Barbarians", 26-27.

¹² Jonathan Markley, "China Versus the Barbarians", 30.

State of Affairs:

Emperor Wu had been able to enact many of the reforms he had imagined since the start of his reign. This has changed the court dynamics and left the nobility restless and bitter towards the emperor.

The diplomat and traveler Zhang Qian has returned from West Asia with news that the many kingdoms there are interested in a relationship with the Han. He has however been unable to unite them against the Xiongnu, who have even held him captive on his return journey. He was only able to escape after he gained the trust of the leadership. Zhang's betrayal leaves the Xiongnu more bitter than before.¹³ That said, Zhang did bring news that allies would be willing to form concrete diplomatic relationships and trade lines. The prospect of trade across Asia is one that could bring prosperity to the Han and their potential allies. However, with the Xiongnu looming, it is hard for the Han to take their eyes off their northern border.

Goals

The Han is looking across the continent and hearing from empires farther away than ever before. They must prepare their government to embrace all of these new opportunities. Likewise, they must face the Xiongnu so that their goals of trade are not immediately interrupted and overtaken by their largest rival.

¹³ "Zhang Qian" in Encyclopedia Britannica.

Historical Background: Rome

Senate Politics

The Roman senate was an elected body of representatives called Tribunes. These Tribunes were elected by the Plebeian Council, or the common people, by popular vote. Tribunes had high social rank and usually came from the upper class of Roman society, despite representing the general Roman people. The Consul presided over the senate and was in charge of enforcing the laws passed through the military.

Rome was divided into a strict upper and lower class in a binary on the basis of birth status and wealth. The upper class aristocratic nobility was made up of political leaders, generals, and nobles. They were well educated, wealthy, and owned much of the land on the Italian peninsula. The lower class was anyone not in the above categories; they were by far the larger group. These classes existed between Roman citizens. Below even the lower class were the noncitizens, who lived in Roman territory, had no representation in government, and few social or political rights.

The politics of the Roman senate was often dictated by the types of senators that made it up. More recently, the election of Tiberius Gracchus in 133 BCE was the beginning of division. Before his assassination, Gracchus was focused on the need for strong land and agrarian reform within the Roman empire. As a self-proclaimed defender of the lower classes, Gracchus took up the cause with a fervor that had moved almost the whole of the senate against him.¹⁵ His reform package not only radically redistributed land to lower class farmers, but also removed lands from the upper class families to which many senators belonged.

This in and of itself would not have been an issue. The senate was prepared to veto or fail Gracchus' proposal. This was a fact that Gracchus knew, so he defied Roman political custom by sealing the chamber and declaring that nothing else would happen unless his reforms passed.¹⁶ In the process, he arranged for his followers to physically remove a rival Tribune, something that while not illegal, was entirely unheard of.¹⁷ This left the Senate angry and looking for a way to undermine the reforms they had just passed into law.

¹⁵ "Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus".

¹⁶ "Tiberius Gracchus and the Agrarian Law"

¹⁷ "Tiberius Gracchus and the Agrarian Law"

War and Expansion

In 129 BCE, Rome won the Third Punic War, securing Carthage for the empire. While this was a great victory, the general state of the Roman military at this time was lacklustre. There had been high casualties, the coffers were drained, and morale had been getting steadily worse. The lower classes that made up its ranks were growing resentful towards the lack of social reforms.¹⁸ These proposed reforms would include land reform and changes to citizenship law that would help the Italians living under Roman rule. Similarly, draft dodging became an issue as would-be soldiers disappeared into the Italian countryside, unwilling to fight in more wars for an empire they did not feel particularly loyal towards.¹⁹

Despite this, Rome is still looking to expand. Having moved into Asia, the empire is waiting for the next opportunity for territory. Additionally they are in need of new diplomatic connections along their new eastern borders.

¹⁸ Wikipedia, "Gracchi Brothers", https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gracchi_brothers

¹⁹ Wikipedia. "Gracchi Brothers".

Violence and Paranoia

In 133 BCE (the same year he was elected), Tiberius Gracchus was assassinated by order of rival tribunes.²⁰ This, however, did not have the full impact they had hoped. Gracchus had begun rallying his supporters in the streets and a few of the riots had already turned violent with a few casualties. Gracchus' death fueled the fire.

In 129 BCE, the consul and general Scipio Aemilianus was assassinated. He had been the leader during the Third Punic War and considered a national hero. He had also been no friend to Tiberius Gracchus, leading the Senate to believe that it had been followers of Gracchus who had carried out the assassination though that fact has never been proven.²¹ Tribunes began to fear violence against themselves, especially as Tiberius Gracchus' younger brother Gaius moved to take his brother's place in the people's favor.

²⁰ "Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus".

²¹ J. Lea Beness, "Scipio Aemilianus and the Crisis of 129 B.C." *Historia: Zeitschrift Für Alte Geschichte* 54, no. 1 (2005): 37–48, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4436754>.

State of Affairs:

Rome is in a delicate position. The reforms forced through by Tiberius Gracchus have placated the lower classes, but the tension has not truly dissipated. The call for further change may have reached the Tribunes, but they want nothing to do with the Gracchi mob. Outside of the capitol, the expanding empire is becoming increasingly difficult to manage as resources and manpower must be properly distributed.

The Senate has rid itself of Tiberius Gracchus, but other reformers stand to take his place. Despite being in the minority, Gracchus has proven that harsh tactics can be successful to carry out an agenda unpopular with much of the wealthy upper class tribunes. With the reform laws already in place, the senate must decide if they will push for more or attempt to undo what has already been done. In this chaos, a new faction emerges that sees territorial expansion as a way to solve the issue of land shortages by simply adding more land to their empire. If more riches can be found outside of their current borders than it could be enough to placate lower classes and nobility alike.

Goals

Rome must settle its civil disruption and establish firm domestic policy. This being said, the inevitable costs of greater social reforms means that they must look for economic opportunities; if they cannot reach it through conquest, perhaps it is time to trade with distant empires they have begun to hear about through diplomatic contact on their eastern most borders.

Committee Specific Topics

Topic A (Han): Establishing a Truly Centralized Government

Emperor Wu has focused since his early reign on removing power from the nobility and centralizing the Han government. This has included consolidating fiefdoms and territories in the name of order. The new government philosophy of Confucianism has changed the types of roles and titles available within the government. This, paired with Wu's desire to end nepotism in the bureaucracy, has changed the political landscape.

However there has not been a clean shift; the nobility is angered by the reduction of their powers, and the incessant campaign against the corruption from which they had been benefitting for so long only makes them more bitter towards the young emperor. This is problematic, not only because it divides the court, but also because the nobility is an ingrained part of the Han military since they serve as generals and are responsible for the troops residing within their territories.

The fractures within the government must be addressed if the empire is to survive. If the nobility chooses to move against the emperor, then the resulting stagnation could lead to huge political and economic ramifications, as well as open the empire to the military threats along the borders.

Questions to Consider:

- *Are you in favour of centralization?*
- *If corruption is so rampant in the system, how can anyone be sure it has been stamped out?*
- *How can the nobility be brought onside with the Emperor to face the numerous threats that the empire must address?*

Topic B (Rome): Facing the Growing Restlessness in Rome

Rome was built on a strong class hierarchy. This not only impacted the people within Rome, but also those within Roman territory who were not granted the title or citizenship of “Roman”. This strained the relationship between the Roman citizens and the Roman Italian peoples. For example, the lower class Roman citizens often ally with the Italian peoples against the Roman government to dodge drafting.

In the face of this system, several politicians, most notably the Gracchi, have been uniting the lower classes around the idea of social reform and wealth/land redistribution. While this is not always effective, with mobs continually asking for more than the Gracchi can provide, it had a strong impact on the senate elected by the lower classes, and thus relied on public opinion to maintain their own power but the empire. Some began looking for ways to make the new system work in their favor, not wanting to face the backlash from repealing outright. Others still view the land reforms as an incentive to capture more territory for the empire, so that newfound riches can replace those redistributed in the new package of laws.

The last piece of this complex puzzle is the increase in violence as a tool of politics. After Tiberius Gracchi’s assassination, the precedent had been set, and Senators are concerned about retribution from Gracchi’s supporters. High stress and paranoia grip the city and may cause the distrust between higher and lower class to spin completely out of control.

Questions to Consider:

- *Will the Gracchi Land reform be a good or bad thing for Rome? How do you think they should be addressed?*
- *How can you reunite lower and upper class? Can it be achieved or must the upper class concede more wealth and land to make it happen?*
- *Is the Roman system a true democracy? Who is benefiting and whose voices are truly being heard?*

Topics for Debate (Both Rooms)

Topic C: Establishing Trade Connections

The Silk Road is a great prospect to both Rome and Han China, but in order to get to it there are many things to consider.

First, there are threats to the project on both sides from individuals who oppose foreign contact and trade to the nomadic groups and empires who will want a piece perhaps by force. If both sides are to benefit, then the burden of protecting the trade route and quelling threats will also need to be divided.

Secondly, since trade has a complex impact on the economy, where the money and goods are going must be addressed. Individuals and the government stand to benefit, so taxation policy as well as which goods can be bought and sold must become concrete law. Governments must also prepare for the impact of foreign language, culture, and ideas on their empires.

Lastly, a reliable communication system of diplomats and envoys will be invaluable to maintain throughout this project. Governments must carefully consider how they will approach foreign empires, who they wish to send as their envoys when brokering trade deals, and the possible risks of sending envoys into Xiongnu-controlled territory.

Questions to Consider:

- *Who stands to gain the most from trade if it is established? If the benefit is concentrated in only the upper classes, how should the wealth be redistributed (if at all)?*
- *How much military force are you willing to commit to maintain safety? Is one side more prepared than the other to take on the brunt, or should it be equally divided? How much might it cost?*
- *What changes in taxation, tariff, and trade policy may have to occur to accommodate this prospect?*

Topic D: Facing the Threat of Neighboring Groups

These two empires must assess whether or not they are a threat to each other. With trade deals and diplomacy on the table, they both must weigh if the benefits from trade are worth the possible threat to their sovereignty and territorial control. Both of these empires are focused on expansion and if they continue on their paths, they may end up in a position where they are competing for territory.

While both have established armies, the perennial need for more men, weapons, and resources is a strain on both governments. Soldiers in Rome have become disillusioned after years at war, and the need for a strong chain of command and incentive to fight for Rome is desperate.

Outside of keeping an uneasy eye on each other, both sides must be aware of the numerous empires and groups that lay in between them. They must go through Persian lands to establish trade, and so deals must be negotiated or they will have to go to war. The Xiongnu pose a distinct threat to the Han but certainly to the Silk Road as well if it is established. Campaigns against them can be successful but costly. The Han must decide if they will face the Xiongnu alone or with the help of Rome.

Questions to Consider:

- *Who is the most distinct threat to your empire? Is this a problem that can be dealt with using diplomacy and negotiation rather than war?*
- *How much can your government commit to the support of an army? Especially if it needs to be bolstered for foreign campaigns?*
- *How will you unite multiple empires while protecting your own sovereignty and territory?*

Tips for Research:

Researching this time period is a daunting task but the key is to dig deep wherever possible. There will be some good places to start on the next page but here are a few things to keep in mind:

- Start with a broad google search, it is ok to read a few Wikipedia articles to get a sense of the period.
- Focus on one thing at a time, if you want to research a character do not let yourself get side tracked on changes in government policy
- Keep going until you feel comfortable. It is perfectly ok that you do not become an expert on this period but keep researching until you feel comfortable walking into the committee room and debating in it.

As mentioned on page 4, you must submit a position paper in order to be eligible for any committee awards. This being said, it is a helpful tool even if you do not want an award. A good position paper will demonstrate that you have researched the period as well as your character. It would include how your character would address the topics the committee and cover and who they might consider an ally. Do not feel stressed if there is little to nothing about your character specifically (some will be fictional) you can still base your research on the character guide provided for you. We would love for you to be creative and imaginative both in your position paper and notes. If you have any questions you can always contact the committee email linked in the Letter from the Director.

Starting Links:

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gracchi_brothers
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emperor_Wu_of_Han

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