Imperial Expansion and Domestic Problems

- Imperial expansion brought wealth and power but also class tensions (unequal distribution of wealth and strained governmental capacity)
  - Lands conquered by Rome often fell into the hands of wealthy families who established latifundia, enormous plantations which used the large land size and slave labor to produce products at a much cheaper cost than could the traditional, smaller Roman landowners.
  - Wealthy families used this economic edge to push smaller landowners out of business and gobble up their lands as well.
  - This displaced many small farmers, who moved to the cities, causing overcrowding among the plebeians and not enough jobs to support them.
Imperial Expansion and Domestic Problems

- The Roman currency was devalued causing a high rate of inflation. This meant that the plebeians did not have enough money to buy the things they could previously afford.
- Political leaders began fighting amongst themselves.
Imperial Expansion and Domestic Problems

- During the next two hundred years, the republican constitution was dismantled and a centralized imperial form of government was imposed.
- The Gracchi brothers supported land redistribution to help solve the problems; both were assassinated.
- For the next 100 years, dissatisfied Roman citizens sought leadership from politicians and generals who promised protection and justice.
- Policies often reflected the interests of the ruling elite and their class rather than concerns for the empire as a whole.
- With tension rising, politicians and generals jockeyed for power and position.
  - Years of terror and civil war resulted as poor Romans joined the personal armies of ambitious generals.
The Foundation of Empire

- Julius Caesar: very popular social reformer and conqueror (brought Gaul under Roman control)
  - Seized Rome in 49 B.C.E.
  - Claimed the title "dictator for life," 46 B.C.E.
  - Social reforms and centralized control
- Large-scale building projects and entertainment to employ the urban poor and keep them happy; Roman citizenship to imperial provinces
- Confiscated land from his opponents and redistributed it among his army’s veterans
- Ruling elite was threatened by him so they organized his assassination in 44 B.C.E. (stabbed him to death)
  - His death only brought more chaos for 13 years
The Foundation of Empire

- Octavion brought civil conflict to an end (nephew and protégé of Julius Caesar)
  - Defeated his rival Mark Antony (and Cleopatra) and used the victory to consolidate his rule
  - Senate bestowed the title "Augustus Caesar", 27 B.C.E. (title suggested divine or semidivine status)
  - "Monarchy disguised as a republic" – preserved republican offices and included members of the elite in his government while still giving most power to himself (the republic was essentially over and Rome was now an empire led by a single emperor)
- Created a new standing army under his control
- Ruled for 45 years unopposed and allowed the institutions of empire to take root
Continuing Expansion and Integration

- Roman expansion into Mediterranean basin, western Europe, down Nile to Kush
- *Pax Romana* (Roman Peace), for two and a half centuries, which facilitated trade and communication throughout the empire
- Well-engineered Roman roads; postal system
- Roman law--tradition: Twelve Tablets (450 B.C.E.) – basic law code for citizens
  - Defendants were innocent until proven guilty
  - Defendants had a right to challenge their accusers before a judge (trials)
Economy and Society

The expansion of Roman rule brought economic and social changes for people throughout the Mediterranean basin; this expansion was sustained through the use of slave labor and the confines of a patriarchal society.
Trade and Urbanization

- Commercial agriculture played a pivotal role in the economic integration and expansion of the Roman empire.
- Because of well-built roads, security of travel, and a consistent and enforced system of laws...
  - Merchants could be assured a steady supply of high-demand products and luxury goods.
  - Commercial farmers could be assured of markets and dependable prices for their crops.
  - Consumers, especially in Roman cities, could be assured of an array of goods and services not available in the Mediterranean before the rise of the Roman empire.
Trade and Urbanization

- Roman advances in engineering resulted in the construction of aqueducts, which brought huge amounts of fresh drinking water from the mountains into Roman cities.
- The invention of concrete made huge building projects possible and affordable.
- Sewage and plumbing systems, public baths, hippodromes, and arenas became part of every major Roman city.
Owners of *latifundia* (plantations) focused on specialized production for export while Roman expansion meant the creation of a growing urban society in all parts of the empire. 

- Mediterranean trade
  - Sea lanes linked ports of the Mediterranean
  - Roman navy kept the seas largely free of pirates
  - The Mediterranean became a Roman lake
Trade and Urbanization

- The city of Rome
  - Wealth of the city fueled its urban development
  - Statues, pools, fountains, arches, temples, stadiums
  - Rome attracted numerous immigrants
  - Attractions: baths, pools, gymnasia, circuses (oval structures for chariot races – Circus Maximus), stadiums (battles to the death; gladiators and animals – Roman Coliseum), amphitheaters
  - *If you get a chance on your home computer – check out Google Earth Ancient Rome (3D images and recreations – awesome!)*
Notebook Pages and Homework

- NB 44 – yesterday’s class notes
- NB 45 – map
- NB 46 – today’s Crash Course
- NB 47 – today’s class notes

Homework – NB 49 Cornell Notes on 274-276 on Family and Society