

The University of Delaware Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures
Distinguished Scholars Lecture Series Presents

The Virtues of Violence:

Amphitheaters, Gladiators, and the Roman System of Values



a richly illustrated public lecture by

Kathleen M. Coleman

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Harvard University

7:30 pm, Thursday, November 10, 2011

**Trabant Theater in the Trabant University Center, University of Delaware
17 West Main Street, Newark, Delaware**

Gladiatorial combat was staged all over the Roman Empire, yet gladiatorial spectacles occupied an ambiguous position in Roman society: gladiators were despised as slaves, or their equivalent, but still had a great personal following; despite the legal stigma attached to their profession, their tombstones proudly boast of it; the Romans were extraordinarily sentimental about their domestic pets, and yet they killed animals wholesale in the arena; pagan philosophers and the early Christians thought that watching the games ruffled a person's spiritual calm, but they scarcely objected to what looks to us like the cruelty inherent in the spectacles. Drawing on mosaics, epitaphs, monumental remains, and other types of evidence, this lecture tries to identify the values and counter-values that accommodated what seems to us to be such an uncivilized practice.

**For directions to the University of Delaware and for a campus map: www.udel.edu/visitus/.
Reception to follow**