

## Reading Response #2

Emperor Augustus' behavior in regards to his family and personal life rarely line up with his laws. More often than not Augustus will break his own laws or find a loophole so that he and his family can pursue their own agendas. One of the main examples of this is his marriage with Livia. The Julian Laws on Classes Permitted to Marry states the following, "The Julian Law exempted women from marriage for one year after the death of a husband and six months after a divorce." (Lewis & Reinhold, 607). We know that Augustus met Livia while she was very pregnant and married her while she was pregnant, so he did not follow his own laws here, "...And at once took Livia Drusilla from her husband Tiberius Nero, although she was with child at the time..." (Suetonius.2.243.62). While Augustus was loose with his laws when it came to himself, he was strict when it came to others, especially those of lower class. This shows how he was more of a control freak than a person who really cared about the purity of the Roman people, "As a patron he was no less strict than gracious and merciful... But he forced Polus, a favourite freedman of his, to take his own life, because he was convicted of adultery with Roman matrons." (Suetonius.2.251.67). Augustus is quick to kill others breaking his laws, but will silently do whatever he wants, "He could not dispose of the charge of lustfulness and they say that even in his later years he was fond of deflowering maidens..." (Suetonius.2.257.71). While it is clear Suetonius attempts to aggrandize Augustus in this biography, even he cannot completely dismiss Augustus' hypocrisy. I believe that Augustus wanted to use these laws more as a form of control on the upper class, giving him another way to hold power over them: by deciding who they can marry and share intimacy with. Augustus himself has no true moral problem with these acts, they're just another way for him to have more control over his people and have the illusion that he is a moral and pure ruler.