



## Greece and Rome: An Integrated History of the Ancient Mediterranean

by **Robert Garland** ([Biography](#))

The following materials are provided to enhance your learning experience. Click the links below for free information including a professor-authored course summary, recommended web links, and a condensed bibliography.

- [Course Summary](#) - Professor's written description of the course.
- [Professor Recommended Links](#)
- [Condensed Bibliography](#) - Prepared by the professor for this course.

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### Course Summary

Most courses on Greek or Roman history are just that—courses on either Greek or Roman history. This one will venture into relatively unexplored territory by investigating the numerous ways in which two very different cultures intersected, coincided, and at times collided. The relationship between the Greeks and the Romans has virtually no parallel in world history in that their contact created a unique fusion of cultural expression identified as “Greco-Roman.” The backdrop to this course is the Mediterranean, which not only served to facilitate trade and other encounters but also gave a degree of uniformity to the lives of the peoples living around its circumference.

Traditionally, ancient historians have tended to characterize Greco-Roman culture in terms of Rome's “debt” to Greece. This course will demonstrate that while the Romans did indeed owe a great deal to Greek creativity and inventiveness, they transformed everything that they borrowed into a distinctly Roman form. Moreover, though many Greeks disdained Romans as the uncultivated product of an upstart and inferior civilization, they benefited greatly from the relationship, notably because of the stable political conditions that prevailed under Roman rule in the eastern Mediterranean from the middle of the 2nd century B.C. onwards. These conditions provided the seedbed in which Hellenism could continue to flourish and evolve until late antiquity and beyond.

Our course has three specific foci: The first is political and military. It begins in the middle of the 8th century B.C., when Rome was founded and when the Greeks were beginning to establish colonies in Italy. It continues down to A.D. 500, well into the Byzantine era, named after Constantinople, formerly Byzantium, which became the new capital of the Roman Empire. The lectures will trace the course of events that determined the relationship between the two peoples throughout this period of 1,500 years. It will give emphasis to the cultural contacts that took place in Campania (southern Italy) and Sicily before Rome subjugated the whole of Italy; to the military successes Rome achieved against Pyrrhus of Epirus, who established control of southern Italy and posed a threat to Rome's increasing dominance; to the wars that the Romans fought against the Hellenistic monarchs who assumed control of the fragmented empire of Alexander the Great; and to the wars they fought against Mithradates VI of Pontus, who led a rebellion against Roman rule in Asia and mainland Greece.

The second focus of the course is on those aspects of life in the ancient Mediterranean which, broadly speaking, all ancient peoples faced, and to which they responded somewhat similarly. These include attitudes toward death, sexuality, and leisure. We will also examine attitudes toward women, foreigners, and slaves, whom all Mediterranean cultures treated as inferior to the male citizen body. The interaction between the two peoples is colored and even dominated by the fact that the Romans, having subjugated the Greeks, then set the latter to work as slaves. This was particularly true in areas that we consider to be the reserve of professionals, such as in medicine and education.

The third focus of the course is the variety of ways in which the Greeks and Romans interacted with one another on a cultural level. The forms of cultural expression that we will investigate include religion, art, architecture, medicine, science, technology, various literary genres, education, and philosophy. Although Greek cultural achievements provided the original point of departure in all these areas, the Romans were never merely derivative.

The course will then return to the period when the Jews, Christians, Greeks, and Romans came increasingly into contact and conflict with each other. We will see how Greece (notably Athens), thanks to imperial patronage, recovered much of its former cultural glory; how a shift in the balance of power between the western and eastern halves of the empire occurred after the foundation of Constantinople by Emperor Constantine I in A.D. 330; and finally how a “parting of the ways” took place when the two halves finally split after the death of Theodosius I in A.D. 395. Even then, however, their destinies remained entwined, as the Byzantine Emperor Justinian sought to recover control of Italy before the Lombards effectively erased his achievement.

Throughout our course we will call upon a wide variety of sources—literature, archaeology, the visual arts, coinage, inscriptions—in order to assemble the fascinating but complex picture of two peoples in constant and indissoluble contact.

[Return To Top](#)

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#### Professor Recommended Links

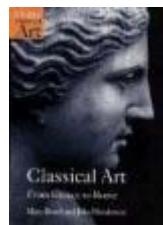
- <http://wings.buffalo.edu/AandL/Maecenas>
- <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu>
- <http://www.tlg.uci.edu/index/resources.html>

[Return To Top](#)

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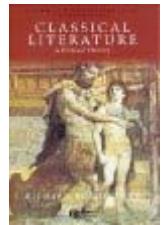
#### Condensed Bibliography

These selected titles from the reading list are now available on Amazon.com. Click here for more information and/or to order them.



- Beard, Mary, and John Henderson. *Classical Art: From Greece to Rome*

Entertaining and provocative account of Greek and Roman art, with fascinating insights into its modern reception.



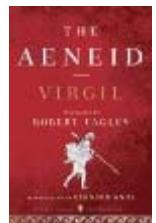
- Rutherford, Richard. *Classical Literature: A Concise History*

Comprehensive introduction to classical literature, arranged genre by genre.



- Alcock, Susan. *Graecia Capta: The Landscapes of Roman Greece*

Excellent study of the plight of Greece under Roman rule.



- Virgil. *The Aeneid*

Arguably the key work for understanding how Greek impacted upon Roman literature.

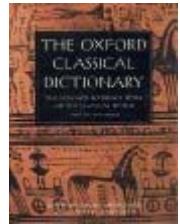
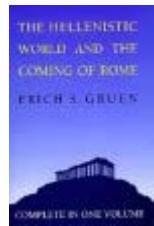


- Walbank, F.W. *The Hellenistic World*

Covers both the cultural as well as the political developments of the Hellenistic era.

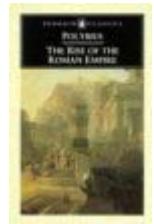
- Gruen, Erich. *The Hellenistic World and the Coming of Rome*

Masterly account of Rome's political impact on the Greek world, combined with interesting assessment of Greece's response to Roman rule.



- Hornblower, Simon and Antony Spawforth. *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*

Justifiably billed as "the ultimate reference work on the Classical World."



- Polybius. *The Rise of the Roman Empire*

The only surviving historical account of the first half of the second century BC, critical in Rome's relations with the Greek world.

In some cases the only available book from Amazon is a newer edition than the one used by the professor. The edition used by the professor may be available on the used market.

[Return To Top](#)