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# Living History: Experiencing Great Events of the Ancient and Medieval Worlds

Course Guidebook

Professor Robert Garland  
Colgate University



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**Robert Garland, Ph.D.**  
Roy D. and Margaret B. Wooster  
Professor of the Classics  
Colgate University

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**P**rofessor Robert Garland is the Roy D. and Margaret B. Wooster Professor of the Classics at Colgate University, where he served for 13 years as Chair of the Department of the Classics and was Director of the Division of the Humanities. He received his B.A. in Classics from The University of Manchester in 1969, where he graduated with first class honours. He obtained his M.A. in Classics from McMaster University in 1973 and his Ph.D. in Ancient History from University College London in 1981.

Professor Garland was the recipient of the George Grote Prize in Ancient History in 1982. He was a Fulbright Scholar and fellow at the Center for Hellenic Studies in Washington DC (1985–1986) and a visiting scholar at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton (1990). He has taught at the University of Reading, the University of London, Keele University, and the University of Maryland at College Park. He also was the Benjamin Meaker Visiting Professor at the University of Bristol (1995). In addition to his 28 years of teaching classics at Colgate University, Professor Garland has taught English and drama to secondary school students and lectured at universities throughout Britain and at the British School at Athens.

Professor Garland's research focuses on the social, religious, political, and cultural history of both Greece and Rome. He has written 12 books and many articles in both academic and popular journals. His books include *The Greek Way of Death* (which has been translated into Japanese); *The Piraeus: From the Fifth to the First Century B.C.*; *The Greek Way of Life: From Conception to Old Age*; *Introducing New Gods: The Politics of Athenian Religion*; *Religion and the Greeks* (which has been translated into Greek); *The Eye of the Beholder: Deformity and Disability in the Graeco-Roman World*; *Daily Life of the Ancient Greeks* (which has been translated into

Greek); *Surviving Greek Tragedy*; *Julius Caesar*; *Celebrity in Antiquity: From Media Tarts to Tabloid Queens*; *Hannibal* (which has been translated into German); and *Wandering Greeks: The Ancient Greek Diaspora from the Age of Homer to the Death of Alexander the Great*. His expertise has been featured in the History Channel's *The True Story of Troy*, and he often has served as a consultant for educational film companies.

Professor Garland's previous Great Courses are *Greece and Rome: An Integrated History of the Ancient Mediterranean* and *The Other Side of History: Daily Life in the Ancient World*. ■

# Table of Contents

---

## INTRODUCTION

Professor Biography .....	i
Course Scope .....	1

## LECTURE GUIDES

### LECTURE 1

Ramesses II: Heartbeat of History .....	3
---	---

### LECTURE 2

Marathon: The Persians Have Landed! .....	10
---	----

### LECTURE 3

<i>Oresteia</i> : Judgment at the Dionysia .....	18
--	----

### LECTURE 4

Attack on Attica: Pericles's Gamble .....	25
---	----

### LECTURE 5

Socrates on Trial: For the Defense .....	33
--	----

### LECTURE 6

Conspiracy! Murder of Philip II .....	41
---------------------------------------	----

### LECTURE 7

Alexander the Great: Punjab Revolt .....	48
--	----

### LECTURE 8

Pyrrhus: Deadly Dreams of Empire .....	57
--	----

### LECTURE 9

India's Ashoka the Great Repents .....	64
--	----

### LECTURE 10

Hannibal: Rome Holds Its Breath .....	72
---------------------------------------	----

## Table of Contents

---

<b>LECTURE 11</b>	
The Final Days of Julius Caesar.....	80
<b>LECTURE 12</b>	
Antony and Cleopatra's Death Pact .....	88
<b>LECTURE 13</b>	
Jesus under Surveillance and Arrest .....	96
<b>LECTURE 14</b>	
Jerusalem Tinderbox: Temple in Flames .....	103
<b>LECTURE 15</b>	
Roman Colosseum: Blood in the Arena .....	110
<b>LECTURE 16</b>	
Visigoth King Alaric Descends on Rome .....	118
<b>LECTURE 17</b>	
Nika Riots at the Racetrack: Theodora.....	126
<b>LECTURE 18</b>	
The Concubine Empress: Wu Zetian.....	133
<b>LECTURE 19</b>	
Muhammad's Awakening and Escape.....	140
<b>LECTURE 20</b>	
Charles Martel Defeats the Muslims.....	148
<b>LECTURE 21</b>	
Culture Shock! Travels of Ibn Fadlan .....	156
<b>LECTURE 22</b>	
Vladimir Smashes the Idols of the Rus.....	163
<b>LECTURE 23</b>	
Charlemagne Saves Leo III, Rogue Pope .....	171

## Table of Contents

---

### LECTURE 24

Urban II Unleashes the First Crusade .....	178
--	-----

### SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL

Bibliography.....	185
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# Living History: Experiencing Great Events of the Ancient and Medieval Worlds

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## Scope:

In this course, we will experience a number of key events in the ancient world by concentrating our attention on historical moments when an individual has an illuminating revelation or where the tide of history changes dramatically. Sometimes, an occurrence in the space of a moment changes the world forever.

We will meet some remarkable women. We will be at the Battle of Actium, when Mark Antony takes flight for Egypt with his lover Cleopatra and then the two of them undertake a suicide pact. We will see a common concubine become empress of China, when China is one of the most traditional societies in the world. We will be in Constantinople when the Byzantine empress Theodora saves her husband Justinian from ending his life in ignominy.

We also will meet some extraordinary men. We will be among the jurors who will try and condemn Socrates to death. We will be with Alexander the Great when his men finally refuse to take another step forward into the unknown. We will wait apprehensively for the arrival of Hannibal outside the gates of Rome just after he has won a spectacular victory. We will be in Jerusalem for the trial of a seemingly insignificant prophet from Galilee. We will accompany the prophet Muhammad when he escapes his assassins by a hair's breadth and establishes a community of believers now accounting for 20 percent of the world's population.

This course identifies a particular type of history that is truly alive, because of the intensity and urgency of the events that it explores. This means experiencing history by entering into it imaginatively, engaging with the personas of its actors, and considering what it was like to be a particular person on a particular day facing a particular reality. This also means asking what it would have been like either to witness some earth-shattering event or to be a participant in that event.

The history that we will encounter will be alive, charged with poignancy, excitement, and intensity, and will be entered into empathetically. We will break down the events of the past into specific days, hours, and moments, so that we can hear the heartbeat of history. ■