

# CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY

## SSC 301 HISTORY OF THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE

Fall 2015-16

Prof . Marcello Bellini

Monday, 17.50 – 19.10 P.M.

Wednesday, 17.50 – 19.10 P.M.

Office hours: Monday, Wednesday 19.10-20.10 P.M. Contact at: [bellinimarcello@libero.it](mailto:bellinimarcello@libero.it)

Additional costs: about 50 Euro (details at point 9)

*But it is in Italy, in the fifteenth century, that the interest of the Renaissance mainly lies - in that solemn fifteenth century which can hardly be studied too much.*

W. Pater

### **1 – DESCRIPTION**

This course explores the historical, literary and cultural developments of one of the most remarkable and vibrant periods of Italian history: the Renaissance. Students will be introduced to the main historical developments of the Renaissance period from the late fourteenth century to the end of the sixteenth century. The Renaissance is above all the age of the individual and the affirmation of his/her achievements, best summed up by the credo "Man – the measure of all things". The focus of this course is therefore upon great personalities of the Italian Renaissance mainly in the fields of the visual arts, literature and philosophy, but also drawn from those of politics and civic life. These include key figures of the most prominent Italian families: the Medici, the Sforza, the Della Rovere; artists and architects: Brunelleschi, Leon Battista Alberti, Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo; writers, poets and philosophers: Dante, Petrarca, Boccaccio, Pico della Mirandola, Machiavelli, as well as merchants and bankers. All these individuals left their mark in Italy between the early 1400s and the late 1500s.

This course explores the historical, literary and cultural developments of one of the most remarkable and vibrant periods of Italian history: the Renaissance. To actually study this movement, which so profoundly shaped Western culture, in the city of its birth, offers students the unique opportunity of experiencing at first hand the achievements of that age. On-site visits are therefore an integral part of this course.

### **2 OBJECTIVE, GOALS and OUTCOMES**

The main aim of the course is to teach students, through an extensive analysis of historical data and literary and artistic achievements, how to recognize and appreciate in detail one single period in the development of Italian arts, literature, history and culture - as it emerged in its birthplace – Florence – and as it developed in other parts of Italy.

Through the observation and analysis of "samples" of masterpieces of the intellectual and artistic achievements of the period, students will come to understand a large portion of the Renaissance and will be able to relate the historical background to literature, the fine arts, philosophy and politics.

By the end of the course, students should be able to demonstrate:

- a confident knowledge of the main historical events and personalities which shaped the Italian Renaissance
- a critical approach and active observational skills towards the many aspects analyzed in the course.
- an ability to synthesize information from a range of primary sources in both oral and written form
- a capacity to construct a relevant and analytical response to an historical question
- self-management skills.

### **3 - PREREQUISITES**

- The course is open to advanced, intermediate and beginner students of the topic. Although a background in European history would be helpful, it is not a prerequisite of the course. All topics will be analyzed without presumption of foreknowledge.
- The class is in English, but the terminology used will sometimes be in Italian when a translation is not appropriate.

### **4 - METHOD**

The course will be structured in lectures in-class discussions and on-site visits to key museums

## **5 – ASSESSMENT/COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

Students are asked to take careful notes during every lecture, presentation and in class activity: they are to be considered a fundamental didactic base for the whole course. Large space will be left to in-class guided discussions and to the student's presentations on various topics.

Because the lectures tend to be interactive and a discussion will follow to some lecture, students will have many opportunities to show that they have done the assigned readings.

Assigned readings must be done before each class and form the basis for class discussions; students will not be immediately graded on their comments in class, but the reading will certainly improve their performance in the exams and failure to do any reading for class will certainly damage their grade because they will not be able to do well in the quizzes.

Grades will be calculated on the basis of class participation (10%), mid-term Exam (identifications, short answers) (30%), Final Exam (30%), Final Paper (30%)

Students are required to write one term paper. The deadline for the paper is Feb 4.

Length requirement for paper: 6/7 pages ( i.e.2000 words), typed (font Arial, size 12,double spaced).

Hard copies typed in standard format are to be handed in to the professor and an electronic copy is to be submitted by e-mail (when required).

**Participation** means active engagement in the course; being consistently prepared for class (having really read that day's assignments) asking questions, responding to questions: offering your own insights and opinions: attentive listening to others.

## **6 – EXAMS**

The **Mid term exam** (identifications, short answers) will take place on **December 16 at 17.50 P.M.**

The **Final Exam** will take place between **February 8 - 10** . Exact day and time to be announced.

Should issues of academic dishonesty arise (plagiarism and so on), the teacher will refer to the CSU written policy on such matters.

**Remember that the dates of the exams can NOT be changed for any reason, so please organize your personal schedule accordingly.**

## **7 – EVALUATION and GRADING SYSTEM**

10% Class participation

30% Mid-term test

30% Final Exam

30% Final Paper

**A = 100 - 93%,    A- = 92 - 90%,    B+ =89 - 87%,    B = 86 - 83%,    B- = 82 - 80%,**

**C+ = 79 - 77%,    C- = 76 - 73%,    C- = 72 - 70%,    D = 69 - 60%,    F = 59 - 0%**

## **8 – ATTENDANCE AND BEHAVIOUR**

Attendance to all CSU courses is mandatory. Two unexcused absences are allowed during the semester but more than two unexcused absences will lower your grade (excused absences will be accepted for serious medical reasons or emergencies) as follows: 3 unexcused absences, lowers one letter grade; 4 unexcused absences, lowers two letter grades; 5 unexcused absences, lowers 3 letter grades. More than **five unexcused absences will result in failure of the course.**

In order not to disrupt the class, punctuality is required. Students are expected to be in class at the beginning of the class hour; any delay exceeding ten minutes will be considered an absence.

Dates of mid-term and final exams **can not** be changed for individual travel plans or personal needs. Students should take note of the dates and hours of the midterm and final exams and plan their trips after the last exam. It is important to inform friends and relatives about these exam dates so that no tickets are purchased for you that will interfere with these exam dates. Missing the midterm or the final exam will mean failure of the course.

During the academic year photocopies and other material may be distributed in class by the instructors. Students who were not in class are responsible for getting the material from their classmates and making their own photocopies.

**Other class policies:**

Use of the computer in class is restricted to oral presentations, unless previously approved by the professor.

Eating is NOT allowed in class.

Cellular phones must be **turned off** or placed on **silent mode** during class.

Academic dishonesty: should issues of academic dishonesty arise (plagiarism and so on), the teacher will refer to the CSU written policy on such matters.

## **9 - READINGS and SOURCES**

- The required and mandatory readings have been collected in a special READER, photocopied and bound, which must be purchased by each student at the copy center CENTRO STAMPA TOSCANA NUOVA, Via degli Alfani 103r, tel. 055 2381232. The reader requires approximately Euro 20.00.
- The specific readings for the course are indicated on the class schedule (see point 13 A)
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The reader contains excerpts from the following books, which are also recommended for individual study and research:

- F. Hartt, *History of Italian Renaissance Art*
- A. Blunt, *Artistic Theory in Italy 1450-1600*
- A. Macadam, *Blue Guide –Florence*
- P. Bargellini, *Florence the Magnificent*
- C. Hibbert, *The Rise and Fall of the House of Medici*
- F. Ames-Lewis et al., *The Early Medici and their artist*
- N. Machiavelli, *The Prince*
- B. Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*
- B. Cellini, *Autobiography*

### **General bibliography**

C. Black, M. Greengrass, D. Howarth et al., *Atlas of the Renaissance*  
G. Brucker, *Renaissance Florence*  
J. Kraye, *Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Humanism*,  
J. Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*  
P. Burke, *The Renaissance*  
J. Hale, *Civilization of Europe in the Renaissance*  
G. Holmes, *The Florentine Enlightenment*  
L. Martines, *Power and Imagination: City States in Renaissance Italy*  
P. Burke, *The Italian Renaissance: Culture and Society in Italy*  
E. Garin, *Renaissance Characters*  
G. Brucker, *Florence, the Golden Age*  
S. Baldassarri and A. Saiber, ed., *Images of Quattrocento Florence*  
ed. Jill Kraye, *Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Humanism*,  
D. Herlihy, *The Black Death and the Transformation of the West*

### **Politics**


J. R. Hale, *Florence and the Medici*  
L. Martines, *April Blood: Florence and the Plot against the Medici*  
J. M. Najemy, *Italy in the Age of the Renaissance*  
J. M. Najemy, *A History of Florence*  
F. W. Kent, *Lorenzo de' Medici and the Art of Magnificence*  
C. Hibbert, *The Rise and Fall of the House of Medici*,  
J.R. Hale *Florence and the Medici: the pattern of control.*

### **Social life**

L. B. Alberti, *The Family in Renaissance Florence*  
G. Brucker, *Giovanni and Lusanna*  
P. Gavitt, *Charity and Children in Renaissance Florence*  
M. King, *Women of the Renaissance*  
S. K. Cohn, *Women in the Streets: Essays on Sex and Power in Renaissance Italy* .  
C. Klapisich Zuber, *Women, Family and Ritual in Renaissance Italy*  
Ann Crabb, *The Strozzi of Florence: Widowhood and Family Solidarity in the Renaissance*

## Visual arts

M. Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy*  
R. Goffen, ed., *Masaccio's Trinity*  
R. Goldthwaite, *The Building of Renaissance Florence*  
E. H. Gombrich, *Symbolic Images*  
F. Hartt, *History of Italian Renaissance Art*  
D. V. Kent, *Cosimo de' Medici and the Florentine Renaissance*  
E. Panofsky, *Renaissance and Renascences in Western Art*  
B. Santi, *The Palazzo Medici Riccardi*  
G. Vasari, *The Lives of the Artists*  
E. Welch, *Art and Society in Italy*  
E. Welch, *Art in Renaissance Italy*  
A. Grafton, *Leon Battista Alberti: Master Builder of the Italian Renaissance*  
B. Santi, *Palazzo Medici Riccardi and the Benozzo Gozzoli Chapel*  
D. Kent, *Cosimo de' Medici and the Florentine Renaissance*  
F. Ames-Lewis et al. *The early Medici and their artists*,  
F. Hartt, *History of Italian Renaissance Art*,  
Paoletti Radke, *Art in Renaissance Italy*  
J. Beck, *Italian Renaissance Painting*  
K. Clark, *The Art of Humanism*,

 Please check the CSU library for new entries and other useful reading material.

**For every lecture handouts with general information will be provided**

### **10- ADDITIONAL COSTS**

Visits approx. 30 Euro

Readings approx 20 Euro

### **11 – VISITS and TRIPS**

Some of the following visits to museums and churches are included in this course. In case of visits to museums or churches the student should expect to pay regular entrance fee (an approx. tot. of Euro 30,00) These visits are mandatory and count as regular attendance. They usually take place during regular class time (unless specified differently due to specific time schedules). The class will meet outside the entrance of the museum or the church

- Church of Santa Croce (4 Euro)
- Church of Santa Maria Novella (2,50 Euro)
- Palazzo Medici-Riccardi (2,50 Euro)
- Brancacci Chapel, Carmine Church (2,50 Euro)
- Galleria dell'Accademia (11 euro)
- Galleria degli Uffizi (14 euro)
- Galleria Palatina, Palazzo Pitti (12 euro)

Walking tours (see lecture schedule) are to be considered "visits", even though we are not necessarily entering any museum.

### **IMPORTANT GUIDELINES FOR VISITS**

- Make sure you know the exact meeting point and time for each visit (see lecture schedule)
- If there is an entrance fee to pay, please have correct change ready. Entrances charges are listed in point n° 10
- Dress appropriately: when visiting churches, no short pants, no sleeveless tops/dresses for women, no mini-skirts or tank-tops and men should uncover their heads.
- Dress comfortably: comfortable footwear and light bags are a good idea, since there will be a lot of walking and standing.
- No food or drink (not even small water bottles) allowed inside museums and churches.
- For note-taking: do not forget that you can rarely sit down on visits, therefore a small hard-backed notebook is the most useful.
- Please do not be late at the meeting point, as the class cannot wait for you to start a visit.
- If you miss a visit you must go independently as soon as possible to the museum/ church in question with the appropriate explanatory handout (supplied by the instructor).
- In no circumstances can friends, family, or anyone not enrolled in the course join museum visits.

## 12 – MATERIALS

No specific materials required. Be prepared for outdoor walking

## 13A– CLASS SCHEDULE

*THIS SCHEDULE MAY BE SUBJECT TO CHANGES DUE TO MUSEUM SCHEDULES.*

### WEEK I:

Nov 2-4

LECTURE: FROM THE MEDIEVAL TO THE RENAISSANCE  
WORLD: GENERAL IDEAS (PART I)

St. Francis of Assisi (1186-1226) and the theocentric vision of the world. Petrarch (1304-1374), a transitional figure between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance; the first humanist: “Moving ahead by moving back”. Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494), a universal man of the Renaissance and the anthropocentric vision of the universe. His Oration on the Dignity of man.

 **Reading assignment:** Reader: *Petrarch*:99-112. *Pico*: 153-163.

### WEEK II:

Nov 9-11

LECTURE:FROM THE MEDIEVAL TO THE RENAISSANCE WORLD.  
GENERAL IDEAS (PART II).

The emergence of the individual: Lorenzo Ghiberti makes the “Gates of Paradise”; Benvenuto Cellini writes his “Autobiography”; Pietro Aretino blackmails everyone “except our Lord- but only because he never met him” ( Paolo Govio); Pope Pius II creates his ideal, the city of Pius, known as Pienza

 **Reading assignment** Reader: *The images of Man* 262-278

### WEEK III:

Nov 16


**NO CLASS DUE TO CSU FIELD TRIP TO ROME.**

**To make-up this class, 30 minutes will be added on to the following 3 classes: Nov. 18, Nov. 23 & Nov. 25.**

Nov 18\*\*

LECTURE: CIVIC AND POLITICAL LIFE IN THE RENAISSANCE (PART I).

The rise of a great dynasty: the Medici. The early members of the family: Giovanni, the founder of the bank; Cosimo il Vecchio “padre della patria o padrino della patria?” (father of his country or godfather of his country?). The Council of Ferrara/Florence (1439). Florence, the new Athens. The foundation of the first European public library (1444 at San Marco).

 **Reading assignment** Reader: *Enemies of Albizzi* 42-63. *Marsilio Ficino* 129-143.


**NOTE: TODAY'S CLASS WILL BE EXTENDED 30 MINUTES TO RECUPERATE CLASS MISSED ON NOV. 16 FOR CSU FIELD TRIP.**

### WEEK IV:

Nov 23-25

LECTURE: CIVIC AND POLITICAL LIFE IN THE RENAISSANCE (PART II).


The rise of a great dynasty: the Medici. The early members of the family: Giovanni, the founder of the bank; Cosimo il Vecchio “padre della patria o padrino della patria?” (father of his country or godfather of his country?). The Council of Ferrara/Florence (1439). Florence, the new Athens. The foundation of the first European public library (1444 at San Marco).

 **Reading assignment** Reader: *Enemies of Albizzi* 42-63. *Marsilio Ficino* 129-143.

**NOTE: THESE TWO CLASSES WILL BE EXTENDED 30 MINUTES EACH TO RECUPERATE CLASS MISSED ON NOV. 16 FOR CSU FIELD TRIP.**

### WEEK V:

Nov 30 - Dec 3 LECTURE: LORENZO THE MAGNIFICENT (1449-92), THE NEEDLE OF THE ITALIAN POLITICAL COMPASS. (PART I) Reading assignment  
The Medici and Michelangelo. Girolamo Savonarola, the “unarmed prophet” and the political, religious, cultural and artistic changes in the late 15 th century.

 **Reading assignment** Reader: *The needle of the Italian compass 156-174.*

### WEEK VI:

Dec 7 - 9 LECTURE: THE MEDICI DUKES:  
Cosimo I and the foundation of the Accademia delle Arti di Disegno (1561) and its impact on the social position of the artist. From craftsman to academician. The building of the Uffizi, the acquisition of Palazzo Pitti and the architectural renewal of Florence.

 **Reading assignment** Reader: *Cosimo I 261-274*

LECTURE: DECLINE OF A DYNASTY:  
Cosimo II , Ferdinando II and his heirs. The Medici and Science- Galileo Galilei and The Medici.

### WEEK VII:

Dec 14 **Class – mid-term review**

Dec 16 **Mid-Term Exam**

**HOLIDAY BREAK: December 18 / January 3, 2016**

### WEEK VIII:

**Jan 4 NO CLASS TODAY. To make-up this class, 30 minutes will be added on to the following 3 classes: Jan. 11, 13 & 18.**

LECTURE: RENAISSANCE “HOW TO” MANUALS. (PART I)  
How to be a perfectly accomplished courtier: Castiglione (1478-1529) and “The Book of the Courtier”. How to form the perfect ruler: Machiavelli (1469-1527) and “The Prince”. A secular vision of life and politics..

 **Reading assignment** Reader: *Castiglione 197-249*

**Jan 6 NO CLASS DUE TO ITALIAN NATIONAL HOLIDAY EPHIPHANY**

### WEEK IX:

Jan 11 -13 LECTURE: RENAISSANCE “HOW TO” MANUALS. (PART II)  
Castiglione (1478-1529) and “The Book of the Courtier”. Machiavelli (1469-1527) and “The Prince”.

 **Reading assignment** Reader: *Machiavelli 491-494; 258-290*

**NOTE: THESE TWO CLASSES WILL BE EXTENDED 30 MINUTES EACH TO RECUPERATE CLASS CANCELLED ON JAN. 4.**

### WEEK X:

Jan 18-20

#### LECTURE: DID WOMEN HAVE A RENAISSANCE?

The life and times of three women of the age, Artemisia Gentileschi, Vittoria della Rovere and Anna Maria Ludovica de Medici will be explored and discussed to discover if women of the age were part of this rebirth


**NOTE: THE CLASS ON JAN. 18 WILL BE EXTENDED 30 MINUTES TO RECUPERATE CLASS CANCELLED ON JAN. 4.**

### WEEK XI:

Jan 25- 27

#### LECTURE: THE DOWNFALL OF THE RENAISSANCE:

Factors in the crisis: the discovery of the New World; the new science (from Copernicus to Galileo); Protestantism; Reformation and Catholic Counter-reformation ; the discovery of the infinite (Giordano Bruno); the end of the anthropocentric vision of the universe. "Out, out, brief candle! Life's but a walking shadow; a poor player, that struts and frets his hour upon the stage, and then is heard no more: it is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." (Shakespeare) (PART I)

 **Reading assignment** Reader: *Reformation 179-184; The scientific revolution 187-203.*


### WEEK XII:

Feb 1 - 3

#### LECTURE: THE DOWNFALL OF THE RENAISSANCE:

Factors in the crisis: the discovery of the New World; the new science (from Copernicus to Galileo); Protestantism; Reformation and Catholic Counter-reformation ; the discovery of the infinite (Giordano Bruno); the end of the anthropocentric vision of the universe. "Out, out, brief candle! Life's but a walking shadow; a poor player, that struts and frets his hour upon the stage, and then is heard no more: it is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." (Shakespeare) (PART II)

#### **SUMMARY OF THE COURSE: REVIEW**

 **Reading assignment** Reader: *Reformation 179-184; The scientific revolution 187-203.*

### WEEK XII:

Feb 8 - 10

**FINAL EXAM – exact day and time to be announced**

### **13 B ALTERNATIVE LESSON**

Should the instructor be indisposed or otherwise unable to attend, a substitute teacher (whenever available) will conduct the scheduled or a pre-prepared alternative lesson\* at the regular class time.

\*Introductory reading followed by the viewing of the video: *The Medici- Godfathers of the Renaissance.*

After watching the DVD the students will have to take a quiz. The quiz will consist of questions about the most important parts of the video and the responses to these questions must be written. The material will be collected by the substitute.