



CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM - FIRENZE

SSC 301 HISTORY OF THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE

Prof . Marcello Bellini

Class: Mon/Wed 17.50 – 19.10 P.M.

Office hours: Mon/Wed 19.10-20.10 P.M.

Contact at: bellinimarcello@libero.it

Additional class costs: about 50 Euro (details at point 10)

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, galleries, churches and palaces.

5 – ASSESSMENT

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 the week of Feb 6-8, on the day of the final exam. To be announced. 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 20 at 17.50 P.M.** Class will be held as usual on Mon., Dec. 18.

The Final Exam will take place between **February 12 - 15.** 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 BEHAVIOR

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 could 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 five 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 could 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)
-

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*

 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.
- Make sure you always have your map and know where to go.


12 – MATERIALS

No specific materials required. Be prepared for outdoor walking

13A– CLASS SCHEDULE - THIS SCHEDULE IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE DUE TO MUSEUM SCHEDULES.

WEEK I:

Nov 6-8 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 13-15 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 20-22 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.*

WEEK IV:


Nov 27-29 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-*

WEEK V:

Dec 4 - 6

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 11-13

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 III , Ferdinando II and his heirs.
The Medici and Science- Galileo Galilei and The Medici.

WEEK VII:

Dec 18

Class – mid-term review

Dec 20

Mid-Term Exam

HOLIDAY BREAK: December 22 / January 7, 2018

WEEK VIII:

Jan 8 - 10

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*

WEEK IX:

Jan 15 - 17

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*

WEEK X:

Jan 22 - 24

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

WEEK XI:

Jan 29-31

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 5 – 7

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 12 - 14

FINAL EXAM – exact day and time to be announced
(Final Papers are due on the day of the Final Exam)