

# CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY

## CSU Virtual International Program

### SSC 301 HISTORY OF THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE

#### Spring Semester VIP 2020

Prof . Marcello Bellini

Online Class: Mon 17.00 – 18.00 through March 27

Online class Mon 18.00 – 19.00 as of March 30

Office hours: By Appointment

Credits – 3 CSU semester units.

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Location of Course – Online Zoom / Canvas

*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.

**CSU GE category: D5**

#### **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.

### **General Course Requirements**

You are responsible for the weekly readings, the information given to you in class, on handouts **and via email**. Part of your grade will be determined by regular attendance, participation in class discussions and active engagement in all activities of this course. ***Make sure to check your email on a regular basis for updates and additional information.***

### **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 **April 20 at 18.00 P.M.**(Florence Time)

The Final Exam will take place on **Monday, May 25** .

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

10% Assignment

25% Mid-term test

25% 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%

The + and - symbols will be used for grading (except for A+). Specific information about the paper, exams and other projects will be given to you during the semester. Late work... ***insert your policy here....***

You must complete all work assigned in the course to pass the class (**optional**).

**A** Student performance has been outstanding and indicates an exceptional degree of academic achievement in meeting learning outcomes and course requirements

**B** Student performance has been at a high level and indicates solid academic achievement in meeting learning outcomes and course requirements

**C** Student performance has been adequate and indicates satisfactory academic achievement in meeting learning outcomes and course requirements

**D** Student performance has been less than adequate and indicates deficiencies in meeting the learning outcomes and/or course requirements

**F** Student performance has been unacceptable and indicates a failure to meet the learning outcomes and/or course requirements

**VERY IMPORTANT: Failure to complete all work and exams assigned in the course could result in failure of the class.**

### **Class Code of Conduct**

Activities unrelated to the course (including private conversations, emailing, text messaging, reading, web surfing, etc.) are not permitted during class time. Please turn off or put all electronic devices on silent mode prior to the beginning of the class.

### **Academic Dishonesty Will Not Be Tolerated.**

Any form of plagiarism or cheating may result in a failing final grade in the course and might be reported to IP and your campus. You are better off spending your time studying for the class. If you have questions about what constitutes academic dishonesty, please refer to the student handbook and catalog of your campus and also ask me and/ or the Resident Director for more information.

### **Important: Exams**

You must attend all exams and quizzes as scheduled. Make-up exams are given only for valid reasons. Please check your academic calendar **for specific dates of exams.**

### **Students with Disabilities**

Upon identifying yourself to the instructor and the university, students with disabilities will receive reasonable accommodation for learning and evaluations. For more information, contact your teacher if you need special accommodations.

### **Copyright and Privacy Laws**

Texts, films, videos, and other material used in this course can be reproduced in any format including scanning, electronic downloading or sharing of files, only for class use.

In addition, class lectures, discussions, and activities can be reproduced and used in any format, including electronic, with the consent of the instructor and/or guest speakers.

### **Changes- Important**

Information contained in this syllabus, including the class calendar, other than that mandated by the University, may be subject to change with advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.

## **8 – ATTENDANCE AND BEHAVIOUR**

For on-line classes, the teacher will track attendance through the Canvas portal.

### **Other class policies:**

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.
- 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. Klapisch Zuber, *Women, Family and Ritual in Renaissance Italy*  
Ann Crabb, *The Strozzi of Florence: Widowhood and Family Solidarity in the Renaissance*  
C. Raffini, M. Ficino, P. Bembo, B. Castiglione – *Philosophical, Aesthetical and Political Approach in Renaissance Platonism*, Lang  
M.A. Johnstone, *Life in Florence in the 15th century*

### **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 Resuscitations 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**

Not applicable unless student decides to purchase materials.

### **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.

### **13A– CLASS SCHEDULE**

#### **WEEK I: (Classes Held In Florence)**

Feb. 24-26

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: (Classes Held In Florence)**

Mar. 2 - 4

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

## Classes suspended March 9 – 12

### WEEK III:

Mar. 16 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.*

### WEEK IV:

Mar. 23 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 V:

Mar. 30 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*

### WEEK VI:

Apr. 6 LECTURE: DECLINE OF A DYNASTY:  
Cosimo III , Ferdinando II and his heirs.  
The Medici and Science- Galileo Galilei and The Medici.

### WEEK VII:

Apr. 13 **NO CLASS - PUBLIC HOLIDAY – EASTER MONDAY**  
**Make-up class on Friday, April 24: 6 – 7 pm**

### WEEK VIII:

Apr. 20 **Mid-Term Exam**

**Apr. 24 MAKE-UP CLASS, 6 – 7 PM, for class cancelled on April 13.**  
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:

Apr. 27 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:

May 4 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:

May 11 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:

May 18 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 XIII:

May 25 **FINAL EXAM – exact day and time to be announced**  
*(Final Papers are due on the day of the Final Exam)*