

# GONZAGA-IN-FLORENCE SYLLABUS

Course: VART360: Museum Studies  
Credits: 3 Credits  
Instructor: Francesco Vossilla



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## COURSE DESCRIPTION

Museums are the treasure-houses of the human race. European museums, especially those in Florence, preserve artifacts that embody a large part of the cultural heritage of the Western World. It will be our goal to both learn about Museum Studies and to learn from the history of Florentine museums. First we will examine the value and the function of such institutions mainly addressing the social role that museums play in inspiring their visitors to learn about history. Then the class will study the history of Florentine museum as outstanding examples of Italian culture from the Renaissance to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This historical background is the beginning step of Museum Studies, because the historical notion is ensuring museums a peculiar role in the regeneration of local cultures. Researching the history of those collections treasured in a given museum also serves to identify and to represent identity and continuity for the cultural heritage of any modern society at times of grand global changes.

A detailed list of images, topics and reading assignments will be handed weekly.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Attendance at scheduled classes.
2. Careful reading of the assigned pages prior to class sessions and thorough review of class notes
3. Students are expected to participate effectively and imaginatively in class discussions
4. Mid-term and final examinations
5. All students, whether enrolled for credit or audit, are expected to submit one essay (8 to 10 pages each, crisp and well argued) describing the history of a Florentine Museum as well as how its collections are presented to inform, educate and inspire the visitors. Possible choices: Palazzo Vecchio, Opera del Duomo, Uffizi, Museo Stibbert, Bargello, Museo Horne, Museo di San Marco, Accademia, Museo Archeologico, Museo della Specola, Museo degli Argenti
6. *Florence: the city as a museum.* A fundamental aspect of Florence is the peculiar relationship between landmarks (such as the large statues or the architectures in Piazza della Signoria) and Italian history. Choose 2 items from around Florence (building, fountain, bridge, statue, a square, whatever strikes you) that represent to you the Gonzaga-in-Florence experience. Take pictures, print or develop them, and write a short text for any image as if the photos and your writing were going to be a part of an exhibit on Florence as a museum-city. Mount the photos on paper with the printed comments beneath the photo. The text for each of the comments should be no less than 90 words. Write 2 pages as an introduction for your own selection
7. Students have to visit the following museums and places on their own (tickets stubs have to be turned in to the professor):
  1. Piazza e Loggia della Signoria
  2. Santa Maria del Fiore
  3. Santa Croce
  4. Cappelle Medicee and San Lorenzo
  5. Palazzo Pitti
  6. Accademia
  7. Museo degli Argenti
  8. Orsanmichele
  9. Santa Maria Novella
  10. Museo Stibbert
  11. Museo Horne
  12. La Specola
  13. Museo della Scienza
  14. Museo di San Marco

## SCHEDULE

### First week

Thursday

### September 17

Presentation of the Syllabus. What is a Museum?

### Second week

Monday

Tuesday

Thursday

### September 21-24

Types of Museums and the role of Museums (1).

Types of Museums and the role of Museums (2).

Museum Studies and history of Collections. Collections in the Ancient World. Reading assignment: Museum Studies Reading Packet: *A Museum: What is it?* (from *Museums: In Search of a Useable Future*); *The Term Museum and Some Other Terms of Similar Meaning* (from *Museums: In Search of a Useable Future*)

### Third week

Monday

Tuesday

Thursday

### September 28-October 1

Collections in the Middle Ages.

Petrarca, history and the visual arts. The Studiolo

Humanism and Niccolò Niccoli's collection. Reading assignment: from J. VON SCHLOSSER, *Die Kunst und Wunderkammern der Spatrenaissance*, Leipzig 1908, (any english edition)

### Fourth week

Monday

Tuesday

Thursday

### October 5-8

Cosimo il Vecchio and Piero de' Medici.

Lorenzo de' Medici patron of the arts.

A visit to Palazzo Medici.

### Fifth week

Monday

Tuesday

Thursday

Reading assignment:

### October 12-15

Collections in Venice and Rome

Cosimo I de' Medici

The first studiolo in Palazzo Vecchio

F.HASKELL, N.PENNY, *Taste and the Antique*, London 1981, pp.

### Sixth Week

Monday

Tuesday

Thursday

### October 19-22

The Guardaroba

Florence: the city as a museum

A visit to Piazza della Signoria. Reading assignment: D. HEIKAMP, *Mexico and the Medici*, Firenze 1972, pp. 7-33

### Seventh Week

Monday

Tuesday

Thursday

### October 26-29

Francesco de' Medici

*Disegno* unifier of all arts. The birth of modern art history . Moral nature and function of art and history from Savonarola to Vasari. Reading assignment: A. Blunt, *The social position of the Artist*, in *Artistic Theory in Italy*, Oxford 1940, pp. 48-57.

### Mid-Term Examination

### Eighth Week

Monday

Tuesday

Thursday

### November 2-5

*Gallerie*, palaces, churches

*Gallerie*, palaces, churches(2)

A. Kircher and the museum for the Collegio Romano

### Ninth Week

Monday

Tuesday

Thursday

### November 9-12

The Grand Tour (1)

Florence from the Medici to the Asburgo Lorena

The Grand Tour (2). Reading assignment: F. HASKELL, *Patrons and Painters, Arts and Society in Baroque Italy*, London 1980, pp. 178-179, 192-198.

<b>Tenth Week</b>	<b>November 16-19</b>
Monday	Pietro Leopoldo, the new Uffizi. The Zoological Museum. La Specola
Tuesday	Vivant Denon, the Louvre, Napoleonic Florence. The Accademia Galleries in Italy: Florence, Brera, Venice
Thursday	Museo Nazionale del Bargello: a visit
<b>Eleventh Week</b>	<b>November 16-19</b>
Monday	Famous foreigners in Florence. Frederick Stibbert: the man, the collection.
Tuesday	Herbert Percy Horne's ideal Florence. Florentine antiquarians and museums
<b>Twelfth Week</b>	<b>November 30-December 3</b>
Monday	The city, tourism, museums.
Tuesday	Visit to Santa Maria del Fiore, a church as a museum.
Thursday	American Museums and Italian Museums: a brief comparison. Reading assignment: M. WALLACE, <i>Visiting the Past: History Museums in the United States</i> (from <i>Presenting the Past: Essays on History and the Public Museum Studies Reading Packet</i> )
<b>Thirteenth Week</b>	<b>December 7-10</b>
Monday	The city, tourism, museums (2)
Thursday	Class discussion on Your Experience in Florence
<b>Fourteenth Week</b>	<b>December 14-16</b>
Monday	Review for final examination
Tuesday	Review for final examination
Thursday	<b>Final examination</b>

## REQUIRED READING

### ( to integrate with recent English publications concerning the history of Florentine Museums)

- J. VON SCHLOSSER, *Die Kunst und Wunderkammern der Spatrenaissance*, Leipzig 1908, (any English edition)
- A. Blunt, *The social position of the Artist*, in *Artistic Theory in Italy*, Oxford 1940, pp. 48-57.
- D. HEIKAMP, *Mexico and the Medici*, Firenze 1972
- F. HASKELL, *Patrons and Painters. Arts and Society in Baroque Italy*, London 1980
- F.HASKELL, N.PENNY, *Taste and the Antique*, London 1981,
- A Museum: What is it?* (from *Museums: In Search of a Useable Future*, in Museum Studies Reading Pack)
- The Term Museum and Some Other Terms of Similar Meaning* (from *Museums: In Search of a Useable Future*, in Museum Studies Reading Packet)
- Types of Museums and The Role of Museums* (from *Museum Basics*, in Museum Studies Reading Packet)
- M. Wallace, *Visiting the Past: History Museums in the United States* (from *Presenting the Past: Essays on History and the Public* in Museum Studies Reading Packet)
- G. Kulik, *Designing the Past: History-Museum Exhibitions from Peale to Present* ( from Museum Studies Reading Packet)