

# GONZAGA-IN-FLORENCE SYLLABUS

Course: VART 293 INTRODUCTION TO FLORENCE

3 Credits

Instructor: Professor Mercedes Carrara



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## OFFICE HOURS

9:30-10:30 MTR by appointment or simply open door policy

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

A survey of Florentine art and history, always regarding the contemporary European trends and events of the time, starting with the founding of Roman Florence in 59 BC and ending with the death of Piero de' Medici in 1469.

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

The course introduces students, through two in-class lectures and a weekly two-hour field trip, not only to Florentine history, art and culture but also to their European counterparts.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will become literate, not only in Florentine art, history, and culture but also in the most important European artistic and literary movements from the fall of the Roman Empire, to the Carolingian revival, feudalism, the rise of Romanesque and Gothic art, the beginnings of the Renaissance. Students will have a deep understanding of why Florence is regarded as the cradle of the Renaissance after having related the artistic, literary, and political currents taking place in the Italian city states, Germany, France, England, and Spain.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

Through in-class lectures and power point presentations students will become competent in European art, history, and culture.

Through the weekly tours students will be exposed to the various periods of Florentine art and history: from the Etruscan and Roman archaeological remains to Giotto's frescoes in Santa Croce and Andrea da Firenze's post-plague frescoes in Santa Maria Novella. They will look at the model of Brunelleschi's Early Renaissance dome, Donatello's sculpture, Ghiberti's Gates of Paradise, and Michelangelo's Pietà in the Cathedral Museum among other things.

Those interested can act as volunteer English speaking guides in Florence's major churches through Ars et Fides (Art and Faith), the no-profit organization promoted by Monsignor Timothy Verdon, one of the ten Canons of the Florence Cathedral. Lay people volunteer to act as guides for two or three hours a week showing visitors the interior of the church of their choice. The layman in charge of training future guides is Mr. Mario Lastrucci, who assists the instructor in the weekly tours.

The churches are the Duomo, the Medici church of San Lorenzo, the Franciscan church of Santa Croce, and the Dominican church of Santa Maria Novella. This a voluntary service available to those enrolled in the class to assist the Florentine community and church visitors. Volunteers will be judged and given credit on their participation by Ars et Fides staff members.

## GRADING AND OTHER POLICIES

Students will be graded on two exams and a journal. They will also be graded on two class discussions where they will act as presenters of a chosen topic. These presentations will allow them

to review the material covered, both in the class room and the weekly tours, preparing them for the midterm and the final.

The mid-term will be on **Tuesday, October 27**. The final will be posted with the final exam schedule. Final project is due on **Tuesday, December 1**.

### **ABSENCE POLICY ON WEEKLY TOURS**

Weekly tours of two class periods each will be held every Wednesday morning. The tour is **worth one credit** thus **attendance is mandatory**. Students can only miss two tours but must **make up at least one of them**. For the make up tour, the student will pay his/her own fare and will **attach the ticket stub to the report of the missed tour pointing out favorites. It should be handed in as soon as possible. There will be no grade change.**

Each student will be assigned a tour group and will always remain with that particular group. The professor and her assistants will rotate every week so that all students will be able to listen to all three of them every three weeks. All tours held every Wednesday are conducted in exactly the same way. It is the professor who prepares the handouts which are distributed before each tour. A tour question will be included in **both** midterm and final.

### **ABSENCE POLICY ON LECTURES AND EXAMS**

In class lectures are worth two credits. Following university policy, students are allowed four absences. At the fifth absence the grade goes down of a half letter point: from A to A-, A- to B+, B+ to B and so on. There will be **no written make up tests** without a medical certificate.

Grades: (A 100-94) (A- 93.5—89) (B+ 88.5--85.5) (B 85—84) (B- 83.5--79) (C+ 78.5--75.5)  
(C 75—74) (C- 73.5—69) (D+ 68.5--65.5) (D 65—59) (F 48—0)

### **REQUIRED READING**

1. Students will be given two packets, one for each part of the course and handouts for every weekly tour prepared by the instructor. The handouts are based on the didactic material used by every museum in Florence for Art History professors, translated into English by the instructor.
2. Christopher Hibbert, *Rise and Fall of the House of Medici*, chapters 1-8. There are many copies available in the library.
3. Ferdinand Schevill, *Medieval and Renaissance Florence*, Part 1. It is available in the library and will complement the packets for a more detailed description of the events.
4. Gene Brucker, *Florence: the Golden Age, 1138 – 1737*. It is also on reserve in the library and is wonderful for the journal entries due weekly.
5. John Hale, *Florence and the Medici*

### **COURSE OUTLINE & SCHEDULE**

#### **September**

- 22 Introduction to course, Lex Julia and the founding of Roman Florence
- 23 Division of the Roman Empire into East and West
- 24 Tour: Archaeological Museum

- 29 Barbarian invasions, Fall of the Western Empire, Odoacer and Theodoric
- 30 Byzantine rule, Lombard invasion, Charlemagne, Treaty of Verdun, feudalism, 11<sup>th</sup> century religious revival in Florence

#### **October**

- 1 Tour: Roman Florence and the 11<sup>th</sup> century religious revival
- 6 Eleventh Century Religious Revival, lay investiture the First Crusade
- 7 Pope Gregory VII and Henry IV, Countess Matilda, the 12<sup>th</sup> century Consular Age
- 8 Tour: Santa Maria Novella and the Dominican Order
- 13 Frederick Barbarossa, Henry VI, Tuscan League of 1197, Pope Innocent III

- 14 Innocent III crowns Otto IV as HRE, sends his ward Frederick II to win German crown
- 15 Tour: Santa Croce and the Franciscan Order
  
- 20 Frederick's death, Florence's Primo Popolo (first "democracy"), its defeat in 1260
- 21 Class discussion, review of class material
- 22 Tour: Cathedral Museum
  
- 27 Review of class material and tours with students as presenters
- 28 Exam
- 29 Tour: to be announced

### November

- 3 Ghibelline dominion over Florence, king Louis IX of France and Charles of Anjou
- 4 Florence's second "democracy": the Signoria, Ordinances of Justice, civil war
- 5 Tour: Piazza Signoria, Davanzati Palace, Orsanmichele, Dante's area
  
- 10 Dante and his Divine Comedy
- 11 Florence (1302 – 43): Bardi and Peruzzi bank crash, dictatorship Duke of Athens
- 12 Tour : Palace of Parte Guelfa, Baptistry Doors, Duomo
  
- 17 Third attempt at democracy 1343-1382, Ciompi Revolt of 1378. Hibbert's chapter 1
- 18 The Visconti threat, end of Great Schism Avignon. Rinaldo degli Albizzi as oligarch, Giovanni di Bicci's death, Cosimo il Vecchio and his exile. Hibbert's chapters 2-3.
- 19 Tour: Convent of San Marco
  
- 24 Cosimo's return from exile, his art patronage, the Great Council of the Church. Hibbert's chapters 4-5
- 25 Cosimo's foreign policy regarding Milan and Venice, as banker and art patron Hibbert's chapters 6-7
- 26 Thanksgiving trip to Bosnia and Croatia

### December

- 2 Piero the Gouty, Hibbert's chapter 8. Class discussion, review of class material and Hibbert's book with students as presenters
- 3 Uffizi Gallery
  
- 9 Final date for handing in the project. Tour review with students acting as presenters
- 10 Santissima Annunziata, exterior of Medici Palace, San Lorenzo

### FINAL PROJECT

There is no final paper. Students will do a weekly journal of **both the class and weekend tours** commenting and researching their favourite things. Each entry can be from two to four pages long and should be illustrated through pictures, postcards or drawings. It will be a keepsake to remind them of their Florence experience. Every Tuesday the instructor will pick ten journals from each section **at random** grading the various entries. A perfect score can be obtained **only** if the entries have been done week by week.

A journal is the perfect way of integrating class lectures and tours. Students should always try to relate the information learnt in the classroom to their field trips. Every Wednesday tour is a visual reminder of the in-class lectures. Every weekend tour is related to an artistic or historical period that is covered in class. If students have not gone on a weekend tour but have gone on their own, they should mention it and write about the things that impressed them the most.... A bibliography should be included after each entry, including **books**, not just websites.