

GONZAGA-IN-FLORENCE SYLLABUS

Course: HIST 315 Renaissance Europe
Credits: 3 Credits
Instructor: Roberto Sabbadini



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SCHEDULE: MONDAY- TUESDAY - THURSDAY 9:35-10:35

OFFICE HOURS: TUESDAY, 10:40-11:40. Contact at: roberto.sabba@libero.it

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The Renaissance was a time of unprecedented cultural creativity. It has been described as the historical phenomenon that contributed decisively to shape the Western identity by combining the Judeo-Christian and classical traditions.

In this course we will examine the main characteristics of this intellectual movement, exploring the “new worlds” created by scholars, artists, philosophers, political theorists, all contributors to this ‘golden age’ of cultural renewal; at the same time we will also consider the Renaissance as a broader cultural movement by analyzing the unique social context that produced the extraordinary achievements of the great scholars and artists and we will try to understand to what extent these achievements changed the society as a whole.

The course is thematically divided in different sections. First of all we will investigate the *social and cultural roots* of the Renaissance through the analysis of the most dynamic sectors of the late medieval society. We will then examine the *new visions*, the intellectual and educational phenomenon now known as ‘humanism’ and the dramatic transformations in painting, sculpture, architecture, that gave the Renaissance its name.

The Renaissance first occurred in a specific place, Florence, and then spread to the rest of the Italian peninsula and beyond the Alps. Following this diffusion we will travel in time and space focusing first of all over *Florence*, the birthplace of the Renaissance, and its ‘godfathers’, the Medici; then we will take in account the *Italian peninsula*, the dramatic political changes of the early sixteenth century and how they influenced the world of thought and art. Finally we will follow the influence of the movement in a wider *European context* focusing above all on the intersections between the Renaissance and the Reformations, one of the major historical phenomena in the Early Modern period.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course is designed to provide the students with a basic knowledge of the Renaissance; through an extensive analysis of historical data and literary, artistic and scientific achievements, the students will be able to recognize and appreciate in detail one single period in the development of history, arts and culture.

The Renaissance will be investigated as an intellectual and as a cultural movement. Through this approach students will come to understand the roots of the Western identity and will be able to relate the social and cultural background to the main intellectual achievements.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course, students are expected to be able to:

- display a confident knowledge of the main historical events and personalities which shaped the history of the Renaissance.

- display a critical approach and active observational skills towards the multifarious aspects analyzed in the course.
- develop models and concepts for analyzing culture, society and politics that can be applied to many different situations, both historical and contemporary.

GRADING AND OTHER POLICIES

Students will be evaluated on the basis of two in-class examinations (mid-term and final), a paper and class participation proportionally broken down as follows:

30% Mid-term Exam
 30% Final Exam
 30% Paper
 10% Class Participation

Students will have a mid-term exam and a final exam organized in the same way and each composed of three parts: a long essay, short answers and short definitions/identifications. The final exam is not cumulative.

Students are required to write one term paper. The dead-line for the paper is March 6th. Length requirement for paper: 7-8 pages (i.e. 2000-2300 words), typed (font Arial, size12, 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 email.

Following **grading system** will be observed:

0 – 59.9 = **F** 60.0 – 69.9 = **D** 70.0 – 72.4 = **C-** 72.5 – 77.4 = **C** 77.5 – 79.9 = **C+**
 80.0 – 82.4 = **B-** 82.5 – 87.4 = **B** 87.5 – 89.9 = **B+** 90.0 – 92.4 = **A-** 92.5 - 100 = **A**

Course Organization

The course will be structured in lectures, in-class discussions, home assignments and oral presentation of the papers. Individual study of the notes, the readings, and the handouts at home is required after every lecture and on a weekly basis. On the course schedule students will find the required readings for each lecture.

Attendance

University policy allows a maximum of six absences for a three credit course.

At the seventh absence the student's grade is lowered of a half point grade: from A to A-, A- to B+, B+ to B, and so on.

REQUIRED READING

M. L. King, *The Renaissance in Europe*. London 2003.

Suggested readings:

G. Brucker, *Renaissance Florence*. Berkeley 1983.
 P. Burke, *The Italian Renaissance. Culture and Society in Italy*. Princeton 1986.
 E. Garin (ed.), *Renaissance Characters*. Chicago and London 1991.
 J. Hale, *The Civilization of Europe in the Renaissance*. New York 1993.
 L. Jardine, *Worldly Goods. A New History of the Renaissance*. New York-London 1996.
 Ch. Nauert, *Humanism and the Culture of Renaissance Europe*. London 1995.

COURSE OUTLINE & SCHEDULE

- Week 1: ***Introduction: The Renaissance***
Cultural Movement? Historical Period?
Reading: Introduction, pp. VIII-XV; ch. 1, pp. 1-18
- Week 2: ***The Late Medieval Society: the Roots of the Renaissance***
The late medieval city and the citizen
The bourgeoisie. The patriciate
Reading: ch. 1, pp. 18-30; ch. 2, pp. 33-46
- Week 3: ***The Late Medieval Society: the Roots of the Renaissance***
The Papacy and the Church
Reading: ch. 6, pp. 167-179
- Week 4: ***The Renaissance: New Visions***
From the theocentric to the anthropocentric vision of the world: Dante and Petrarch. The recovery of the classical culture. Humanism
Reading: ch. 2, pp. 51-56; ch. 3, pp. 65-98
- Week 5: ***The Renaissance: New Visions***
The artistic revolution: the Early Renaissance
The patron and the artist
Reading: ch. 4, pp. 101-130
- Week 6: ***The Renaissance: Florence***
The 'godfathers' of the Renaissance: the Medici
Girolamo Savonarola and the 'medieval' revival
Reading: ch. 7, pp. 212-213; ch. 6, pp. 190-192
- Week 7: ***Review and mid-term exam***
- Week 8: ***The Renaissance in Italy***
The Italian states and Italian politics: *Comuni*, *Signorie*, Principalities.
The prince and the artistic patronage
Reading: ch. 7, pp. 195-206; ch. 4, pp. 107-120
- Week 9: ***The Renaissance in Italy***
The Italian political crisis: the Italian wars
Thinking the crisis: Machiavelli; Guicciardini; Castiglione
Reading: ch. 7, pp. 216-222; ch. 8, pp. 225-242
- Week 10: ***The Renaissance Beyond the Alps***
Kings and kingdoms: the rise of the territorial state
Habsburg and Valois: the conflict for the European supremacy
Reading: ch. 10, pp. 287-297

Week 11: ***The Renaissance Beyond the Alps:***
The High Renaissance
The centres of the Renaissance in Europe
Reading: ch. 4, pp. 130-134; ch. 3, pp. 298-318

Week 12: ***The Downfall of the Renaissance***
Erasmus and Christian humanism
Luther and the Protestant Reformation
Reading: ch. 9, pp. 267-281

Week 13: ***The Downfall of the Renaissance***
The Catholic Reformation
The new science: Copernicus; Galilei
Reading: ch. 9, pp. 281-284; ch. 3, pp. 330-337

Week 14: ***Oral Presentations. Review***

Final Exam (date to be announced:)