

**VART 294 FLORENCE OF THE MEDICI
SUMMER 2007**

Professor Mercedes Carrara

Office hours: By appointment 8:45-9:45. M. T. W. TH.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

History and art in Florence are linked to the Medici family, thus the title of the course. .

Students will be introduced to the most important moments in Florentine history from its origins, its attempts at democracy during the Middle Ages, and the emergence of the Medici family as rulers of Florence for 303 years.

In-class lectures will be held on Mondays and Wednesdays. Every Tuesday and Thursday the class will go on a guided tour that will make the events covered in class come alive. The tours are an essential part of the course and are of course exam material.

There will be two examinations. The first one will be on Wednesday, **June 6** and the final will be on **Thursday, June 28**. A review session of the material covered for the test and the exam format will be given during the in-class lecture before each test.

The first half of the course covers from Roman Florence founded in the first century BC. to the rule of the older branch of the Medici family with Cosimo il Vecchio, Piero the Gouty, and Lorenzo the Magnificent.

The second part of the course covers the last members of the older branch of the family and the younger branch of the family who became Grand Dukes of Florence until the family died out in 1737.

Students are required to read Christopher Hibbert's Rise and Fall of the House of Medici for a better grasp of the subject. The book is written in a very entertaining style and should be read as a story. The instructor will always refer to the book when lecturing on the Medici family. It would be very helpful to read the chapters discussed in class after each lecture. A study guide on the book will be distributed at the end of the second week. It works much better if the students have read the chapters before using the work sheet.

PAPER TOPICS

A five to ten final paper due on **Wednesday, June 20**. The paper can be from a minimum of five to a maximum of ten pages. There will be a two point penalty for each day's delay if handed after the assigned due date.

Students have a choice of visiting other important sites that have been covered in class but have not been visited on the weekly tours. They will write a report on the site or sites visited and will research the pieces that impressed them the most. The ticket stub should be attached to the project. Some possibilities are:

1. A visit to the Romanesque church of *San Miniato* with sacristy frescoes by Spinello Aretino and the Chapel of the Cardinal of Portugal.
2. Interior of the Florence Cathedral to see the frescoes by Paolo Uccello (*John Hawkwood*), Andrea del Castagno (*Niccolò da Tolentino*) and Giorgio Vasari (*Last Judgment*).

3. A visit to Filippo Brunelleschi's *San Lorenzo*. San Lorenzo was the Medici parish church and the inscription in Cosimo il Vecchio's tomb is in front of the high altar.
4. *Boboli Gardens and Silverworks Museum* in the Pitti Palace. Tour handouts of these sites are available on request.

SCHEDULE OF TUESDAY AND THURSDAY FIELD TRIPS

May

- 22 - Walking Tour of Florence. The first tour helps the students understand the city's expansion from Roman times until the Renaissance.
- 24 - Archaeological Museum. Greek, Roman, and Etruscan works.
- 29 - Santa Maria Novella. The Dominican church of Florence with Giotto's *Crucifix* Masaccio's *Trinity* and other masterpieces.
- 31 - Santa Croce with Giotto's frescoes and Michelangelo's tomb.

June

- 5 - Orsanmichele or Florence's granary..
- 7 - Medici Palace and/or San Lorenzo
- 12 - Accademia with Michelangelo's *David* and four *Prisoners* (**to be confirmed**)
- 14 - Piazza della Signoria with Florence's city hall.
- 19 - Afternoon tour of Uffizi Gallery with *Birth of Venus*. (**To be confirmed.**)
- 21 - Medici Tombs: New Sacristy by Michelangelo and Medici Mausoleum by Nigetti.
- 27- Science Museum.

ABSENCE POLICY

Tours are mandatory. A student can only miss **two in-class lectures**. A missed tour will lower the final letter grade from A to A-, B+ to B, B to B-, C+ to C, and so on. If a student has missed both a tour and two-in-class lectures, the letter grade will go down one full letter (A to B, B to C, etc.).

STUDY GUIDE FOR CHRISTOPHER HIBBERT's Rise and Fall of the House of Medici

Chapter 1

How was the Signoria set up? Number of guilds in government--election system--traditional majority of priors from major guilds. How was this majority altered from 1343-1382? See notes.

Chapter 2

Origins, meanings behind the Medici crest. Salvestrino or Salvestro dei Medici.
Giovanni di Bicci: His family, his business, his participation in the government
His friendship with Baldassare Cossa (Pope John XXIII)
Great Schism of Avignon: Council of Pisa, Council of Constance

Chapter 3

Rinaldo degli Albizzi: His involvement in wars against Milan and Lucca
Cosimo in the "Ten of War Committee", his departure for Verona
Rumors against Cosimo. September 1433: Cosimo's imprisonment and exile

Chapter 4

Why was Cosimo able to return to Florence after only one year?

Chapter 5

Great council of the Church in Ferrara 1438, and in Florence, 1439.
Greek participants, George Gemisthos Plethon and Marsilio Ficino
Lorenzo Ghiberti and Filippo Brunelleschi

Chapter 6

Cosimo's preoccupation with Milan
1. Francesco Sforza, Visconti's death and nomination of King of Naples as heir to Milan
2. Cosimo's support of Francesco Sforza. War against Naples and Venice--Peace of Lodi

Chapter 7

Donatello, Fra Filippo Lippi, and Fra Angelico. Cosimo's family, his death

Chapter 8

Piero the Gouty as head of the family. His ability as a diplomat in France. Paolo Uccello, Gozzoli

Chapter 9

Lorenzo's marriage to Clarice Orsini and the wedding celebrations.

Chapter 10

The Pazzi conspiracy. Concentrate on the characters mentioned in class and no others

Chapter 11

Concentrate on what happened after the failure of the Pazzi conspiracy to eliminate Lorenzo.

Chapter 12

Decline of Medici bank and Turkish capture of Otranto. Why did the Turks leave Otranto?

Chapter 13

Artists mentioned in class, Lorenzo's impulse to learning in Pisa and Florence, his death