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COURSE DESCRIPTION
The most important functions of museums are preservation, education, and improving the social fabric of their communities. Therefore 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. The cultural strength of Florence is also the foundation of its economic present and future, because museums play a major role in cultural tourism, attracting significant numbers of visitors from other countries.

This class strives to acquaint students of art, philosophy, science, business and communication with the ethical issues and opportunities faced by both American and Italian museums in contemporary society. It will be our goal to learn about Museum Studies and to investigate 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 any city and any culture.

Then the class will study the history of Florentine museum as outstanding examples of Western culture from the Renaissance to the 20th century, also visiting many local churches and museums. 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.

On a theoretical level students situate museums socially, historically and economically, acquiring conceptual tools necessary to explore the manner in which museums interpret their collections, serve their audiences, respond to new technologies, and come to grips with
complex ethical issues including the cultural implications of the work they do and the extent of its impact from any local community (here Florence) to the global market.

A list of reading assignments will be handed weekly.
A detailed list of images will be handed at the beginning of the semester.
There is to be no eating during class. Cell phones must be switched off. Laptop computers may not be used during class to take notes

Course requirements

All students, whether enrolled for credit or audit, are expected to submit two essays.

For the first one, students will write about the history of a Florentine Museum, also describing how artefacts are presented to inform, educate and inspire the visitors. As a matter of fact the success of such institutions requires the combined skills of a variety of museum professionals and the participation and contribution of the audiences and communities being served by museums. Possible choices: Palazzo Vecchio, Opera del Duomo, Uffizi, Museo Stibbert, Bargello, Museo di San Marco, Accademia, Museo Archeologico, Museo della Specola, Museo degli Argenti

The second essays/ project could be labeled 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), Italian history and local economy.
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.

Mid-Term and Final examinations are comprehensive written exams.
Both Midterm and Final exams consist of two sections: slide identifications with comments and a longer essay question

Final examinations must be administered only during the week indicated in the GIF Academic Calendar (Dec. 12th.-16th.), and only
on the day and at the time indicated in the Final Exam Schedule, which will be published by the Registrar's Office.

**Grading System**

- Research papers 30%
- Midterm Exam 20%
- Final Exam 40%
- Attendance and Participation 10%
SCHEDULE

First week (Sept. 15th)
Presentation of the Syllabus. What is a Museum?
Types of Museums and the role of Museums
Reading assignment: A Museum: What is it? and The Term Museum and Some Other Terms of Similar Meaning from A. Wittlin, Museums: In Search of a Useable Future) pp. 1-2; 221-225

Second week (Sept. 19th, 21st, 22nd.)
Museum Studies and history of Collections. Collections in the Ancient World.
Florence: the city as a museum
Visit to piazza della Signoria.
Collections in the Middle Ages

Third week (Sept. 26th, 28th, 29th.)
Humanism and Niccolò Niccoli's collection.
Cosimo il Vecchio and Piero de' Medici.
Lorenzo de'Medici patron of the arts. Disegno unifier of all arts.
A visit to Piazza SS. Annunziata, Palazzo Medici, Piazza S. Marco.

Fourth week (Oct. 3rd, 5th, 6th)
The birth of modern art history. Moral nature and function of art and history from Savonarola to Vasari.
Visit to Cappella Medici, San Lorenzo
Reading assignment: G. Savonarola, Sermons, in Philosophy of Art Reader, pp. 149-150

Fifth Week (Oct. 10th, 12th, 13th)
Cosimo I. The first studiolo in Palazzo Vecchio.
The Guardaroba
Reading assignment: to be assigned
Sixth Week (Oct. 17th, 19th, 20th.)
Francesco de'Medici.
The Uffizi. Gallerie, palaces, churches
Visit to Palazzo Vecchio
Reading assignment: to be assigned

Seventh Week (Oct. 24th, 26th, 27th)
The Grand Tour (1).
Mid-Term Examination
Florence from the Medici to the Asburgo Lorena
Eighth Week (Oct. 31st, Nov. 2nd, 3rd.)
Kircher and the museum for the Collegio Romano.
Visit to the Uffizi
Pietro Leopoldo, the new Uffizi.

Ninth Week (Nov. 7th, 9th, 10th)
The Zoological Museum. La Specola
Museo Nazionale del Bargello: a visit.
Vivant Denon, the Louvre, Napoleonic Florence. The Accademia Galleries in Italy: Florence, Brera, Venice
Reading assignment: Dominique Vivant Denon and the Louvre, from E. Alexander, Museum Masters, pp. 81-110.

Tenth Week (Nov. 14th, 16th, 17th)
Famous foreigners in Florence. Frederick Stibbert: the man, the collection. Florentine antiquarians and museums
Visit to Santa Maria del Fiore, a church as a museum
Reading assignment: Types of Museums and the Role of Museum; Introducing interpretations in T. Ambrose, C. Paine, Museum Basics, pp. 6-11, 67-69

Eleventh Week (Nov. 28th, 30th, Dec. 1st.)
Herbert Percy Horne's ideal Florence.
Visit to Santa Croce
The city, tourism, museums
Twelfth Week (Dec. 5th, 7th.)

American Museums and Italian Museums: a brief comparison

Class discussion on Your Experience in Florence. Review for final exam

Thirteenth Week (Dec. 12th-16th)

Final exams
REQUIRED READINGS

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


A. BLUNT, *The social position of the Artist*, in *Artistic Theory in Italy*, Oxford 1940, in pp. 48-57 (*in Renaissance Philosophy of Art Reader*, pp.188-193)


F. HASKELL, *Patrons and Painters. Arts and Society in Baroque Italy*, London 1980

*Dominique Vivant Denon and the Louvre*, from *Museum Masters* in Museum Studies Reading Packet, pp. 81-110.


*The Term Museum and Some Other Terms of Similar Meaning*, from *Museums: In Search of a Useable Future*, in Museum Studies Reading Packet pp.221-22

*Types of Museums and The Role of Museums*, from *Museum Basics*, in Museum Studies Reading Packet, pp.6-11
