Course Name: Renaissance Europe  
Course Code: HIST 312  
Semester: Spring 2016

Scheduling: Monday 3:35-6:30

Instructor Data:
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Course Description

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

The course is thematically divided into 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 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, and 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 on republican Florence, the birthplace of the Renaissance, and its godfathers: the Medici; then we will take into account the Italian peninsula, the princes and the princely courts, 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

Objective: to provide the students with a basic knowledge of the Renaissance through an extensive analysis of historical data, literary, artistic and scientific achievements.

Specific Outcome: by the end of the course the students are expected to be able to demonstrate a confident knowledge of significant historical events and personalities which shaped the history of the Renaissance and to recognize and appreciate in detail one single period in the development of history, arts and culture.
Objective: to develop the students’ capacity to think historically, following the dynamics of events and ideas in a certain period of time and understanding their interrelatedness in generating the profile of an epoch.

Specific outcome: by the end of the course the students are expected to be able to distinguish the Renaissance as a peculiar historical epoch and to develop models and concepts for analyzing an historical age integrating political, social and cultural factors that will allow them to compare-contrast this age with other historical periods.

Teaching Method

The teaching is divided between lecture, discussion of the reading material and analysis of primary sources, in class and/or home assignments. Students are also responsible for the success of the teaching method, as the pedagogical value of a method has to be enacted by each participant in the process.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is taken at the beginning of class from the first day of the semester. The student entering class after attendance is taken has to contact the professor at the end and announce his/her presence. However, this does not mean that coming late is accepted. Two late arrivals may be excused, three turn automatically into an absence and will affect the attendance and participation part of the final grade.

Students can miss one week’s work, irrespective of the course formula (three sessions, two sessions, one session). It is their responsibility to make up for the missed work. If they miss a quiz or a report they are not allowed to have it at another time, unless the absence is for certified medical reasons and the professor and Dean agree.

More than one week’s work missed is going to be penalized as follows:
One extra absence: by lowering the attendance and participation grade
Two extra absences: by lowering the final grade by a whole letter grade
Three extra absences: by grading the whole course F

Assessment Criteria

Attendance and Participation 20 %
Mid-term Exam 25%
Final Exam 25%
Paper 30%

Participation:
Participation will be assessed by asking the students to:
- prepare the reading assignments for class; on your lecture schedule you will find the required readings for each lecture; they should be completed before each class meeting as a homework assignment. The reading assignments will be checked by oral questions and short written assignments;
- be active in discussions.

Mid-term and Final Exam:
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.
The evaluation is done according to the following criteria:

- analytical skills
- understanding of the reading material and notes
- study of the reading material and notes
- clarity of expression

**Paper:**

**One paper is required (3000 words approx.)**

- **Paper: delivery date - Week 11**

The essay consists in the articulated and convincing treatment of a topic pertinent to the course, with a clear formulation of the issue to be investigated and an equally clear conclusion.

The topic of the paper is chosen by the student and approved by the professor. Each student will have to submit an abstract of the paper, including a preliminary bibliography. The abstract is a short summary, illustrating the idea of the paper and the thesis.

On the delivery date hard copies typed in standard format are to be handed in to the professor at the beginning of class and an electronic copy is to be submitted by email when requested.

Standard format: Title, 3000 words approx., Arial, 12, 2 line spacing, Bibliography

The evaluation is done according to the following criteria:

- well formulated argument (rhetorical strategy)
- ability to approach an issue from various points of view and evaluate them critically
- good use of bibliography. Sources need to be cited and listed at the end in the Bibliography. Class notes can build the frame of your argumentation, but will not be cited as primary sources
- clarity of expression including quality of style (grammar, spelling).

**Grading System**

A= 93-100; A - = 90-92;  
B+= 87-89; B= 83-86; B -= 80-82  
C+ = 77-79; C = 73-76; C- =70-72  
D+ = 67-69; D = 65-66  
F = below 65

**Academic Honesty**

Academic honesty is essential to education and represents the bond of trust between the university, the instructor and the student.

Academic dishonesty is any action by which a student seeks to claim credit for the intellectual effort of another person or uses unauthorized materials or fabricated information in any academic exercise. It includes unauthorized assistance in tests and examinations; intentionally impeding or damaging the academic work of others; submitting another person’s work as your own, or providing work for this purpose; submitting work of your own that has been substantially edited and revised by another person, or providing such an editing and revision service for others; submitting material from a source (books, articles, internet sites) without proper citation and bibliographic reference; paraphrasing material from a source without appropriate reference and citation; submitting substantially the same piece of work in more than one course without the explicit consent of all the instructors concerned; assisting other students in any of the above acts.

**Required Reading**
The required book is available in Florence (in the library or to be purchased). Margaret L. King, The Renaissance in Europe. London 2003, Copyright: Laurence King Publishing.

Suggested readings:

Course Outline

Week 1:  Introduction: The Renaissance  
Jan 11  Intellectual Movement? Cultural Movement? Historical Period?

Week 2:  The Late Medieval Society: the Roots of the Renaissance  
Jan 18  The late medieval city and the citizen  
The bourgeoisie. The patriciate  
(Reading: King, Introduction, pp. VIII-XV; ch. 1, pp. 18-30; ch. 2, pp. 33-46)

Week 3:  The Renaissance: New Visions  
Jan 25  From the theocentric to the anthropocentric vision of the world: Dante and Petrarch. Humanism and the triumph of the individual  
(Reading: King, ch. 2, pp. 51-56; ch. 3, pp. 65-98)

Week 4:  The Renaissance: New Visions  
Feb 01  The artistic revolution: the Early Renaissance  
The patron and the artist  
(Reading: King, ch. 4, pp. 101-123)

Week 5:  The Renaissance: Florence  
Feb 08  The Godfathers of the Renaissance: the Medici  
Girolamo Savonarola and the medieval revival  
(Reading: King, ch. 7, pp. 212-213; R. Roeder, Lorenzo de’ Medici, pp. 206-221)

Week 6:  The Renaissance in Italy  
Feb 15  The Italian states: Republics and Principalities  
The prince and the artistic patronage: Gonzaga and Montefeltro  
(Reading: King, ch. 7, pp. 195-206; A. Cole, Art of the Italian Renaissance Courts, pp. 66-90; 143-155)

Week 7:  Mid-Term in-class exam  
Feb 22

Week 8:  The Renaissance in Italy  
Feb 29  The prince and the artistic patronage: the Papacy  
The Italian political crisis: the Italian wars (1494-1530)  
(Reading: King, ch. 6, pp. 167-179; ch. 7 pp. 216-222)

Week 9:  The Renaissance in Italy  
Mar 14  Thinking the crisis: Machiavelli; Guicciardini; Castiglione  
(Reading: King, ch. 8, pp. 225-242)
Week 10:  The Renaissance Beyond the Alps  
Mar 21  Charles V and European Politics  
The centers of the Renaissance in Europe  
(Reading: King, ch. 10, pp. 287-318)

Week 11:  The Renaissance and the Reformation  
Apr 04  Erasmus, Luther and the Protestant Reformation  
(Reading: King, ch. 9, pp. 267-281)

Week 12:  The Renaissance and the Reformation  
Apr 11  The Catholic Reformation  
The new science: Copernicus; Galilei  
(Reading: King, ch. 9, pp. 281-284; ch. 11, pp. 330-337)

Week 13:  Final in-class exam  (date to be announced)