**Course Name:** Renaissance Europe  
**Course Code:** HIST 312 ; ITAL 367  
**Semester:** Fall 2017

**Scheduling:** Monday 3:35-6:30

**Instructor Data:**  
Name: Roberto Sabbadini  
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Office hours: Monday: 6:30-7:30 (usually by appointment only)

**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.

**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.

**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 lectures, class discussions, site visits, film screenings.

**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%
Research Paper 30%

**Participation:**
An active participation is expected. There are assigned readings for each week and students need to come to class prepared in order to be a part of guided discussions. Brief written assignments (in-class and/or homework) will be assigned to verify reading, comprehension and to analyse topics and issues that deserve to be debated.
Students are expected to take careful notes during every in-class activity.

**Mid-term and Final Exam:**
Both the Mid-Term and Final Exams are written tests with a variety of questions and each composed of three parts:
Part 1. A long essay question. (graded 40%)
Part 2. Short essay questions. (graded 40%)
Part 3. Identification/definition questions. (graded 20%)
The exams are designed to assess the general knowledge and comprehension acquired and the student’s analytical skills.

**Research Paper:**
The paper is an essay organized around a specific historical event, phenomenon, problem, issue related to the Renaissance and the student is expected to provide an in-depth analysis of the subject. The topic is chosen by the student and must be submitted to the teacher for approval in the form of a short abstract (deadline: lesson 6). The papers must be handed in to the teacher and they cannot be sent by e-mail (deadline: lesson 11).

Length requirement for paper: 2500 words text body, typed (font Arial, size 12, double spaced). The word count does not include separate, mandatory bibliography. The final paper shall have at least five secondary sources (scholarly books and journal articles). Class notes cannot be part of the bibliography.
The paper will be assessed according to the following criteria: thesis statement, analysis, structure, use of secondary sources, competent written form.
## 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

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## Course Schedule

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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Introduction: The Renaissance</strong>&lt;br&gt;Intellectual Movement? Cultural Movement? Historical Period?</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td><strong>The Late Medieval Society: the Roots of the Renaissance</strong>&lt;br&gt;The late medieval city and the citizen.&lt;br&gt;The social structure: Nobles, patricians, artisans, workers.</td>
<td>Reading: King, ch. 1, pp. 22-30; ch. 2, pp. 33-46; ch. 5, pp. 137-146.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td><strong>Site Visit: The Renaissance city.</strong></td>
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| Week 4  | 4 Oct 09 | Topic: **The Renaissance: New Visions**  
From the theocentric to the anthropocentric vision of the world.  
Humanism and the triumph of the individual.  
Reading: King, ch. 3, pp. 65-98. |
|---|---|---|
| Week 5  | 5 Oct 16 | Topic: **The Renaissance: New Visions**  
The artistic revolution: the Early Renaissance.  
The patron and the artist.  
Reading: King, ch. 4, pp. 101-123. |
| Week 6  | 6 Oct 23 | Mid-Term in-class exam |
| Week 7  | 7 Oct 30 | Topic: **The Renaissance: Florence**  
Reading: King, ch. 7, pp. 212-213.  
R. Roeder, Lorenzo de Medici, pp. 206-221. |
| Week 8  | 8 Nov 06 | Topic: **The Renaissance in Italy**  
The Italian states: Republics and Principalities.  
The prince and the artistic patronage: Gonzaga and Montefeltro.  
Reading: King, ch. 7, pp. 195-206.  
| Week 9  | 9 Nov 13 | Topic: **The Renaissance in Italy**  
The Italian political crisis: the Italian wars (1494-1530).  
Thinking the crisis: Machiavelli; Castiglione.  
Reading: King, ch. 7 pp. 216-222; ch. 8, pp. 225-240. |
| Week 10 | 10 | Topic: **The Renaissance Beyond the Alps**  
Charles V and European Politics.  
The centers of the Renaissance in Europe. |
| Week 11 Dec 04 | Topic: **The Renaissance and the Reformations**  
The Papacy.  
Erasmus, Luther and the Protestant Reformation.  
Reading: King, ch. 6, pp. 167-174; ch. 9, pp. 267-271. |
|----------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Week 12 Dec 11 | Topic: **The Renaissance and the Reformations**  
The Catholic Reformation.  
Reading: King, ch. 9, pp. 277-284. |
| Week 13 | Final in-class exam (date to be announced) |