

University of TX at Austin
Spring 2016

Italian Renaissance, 1350-1550

HIS 343G (#38595) / EUS 346 (#35555) / RS 357 (#42840) / WGS 340 (#46110)
Meets MWF 9.00-10.00AM in MEZ 1.120

Description. This upper-division course combines lecture and discussion to introduce the cultural phenomena that for two centuries made the Italian peninsula such a lively place. Drawing on a range of primary and secondary source readings, we will explore continuity and change in many realms of human experience. Emphasis falls upon *conversazione* as metaphor and reality. From the “recovery of learning” to the rise of the courts; from calls for Church reform to new trends in moral philosophy; from gender-bending narratives to breakthroughs in art and technology—the Renaissance engaged in dialogue.

This course aims to help you become more thoughtful analyst of historical continuity and change. By semester’s end, you will have read some of the most influential and controversial works from this period; you’ll be able to put them in historical context and explain why they remain compelling today. You will be able to locate ten basic items on a map of Italy; to distinguish between primary and secondary sources; to write a short exam essay that marshals different kinds of evidence to argue a hypothesis. Some of you may choose to speak in detail about a topic you’ve selected for special study.

This course has no prerequisites and assumes no prior knowledge of the subject, but students are presumed to be capable of critical reflection upon lectures, readings, and discussions.

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Office hours: M 2-3pm, Th 8-9am, and by apptmt.

His 343G *Italian Renaissance* is a recommended pre-requisite for **His 350L** *Machiavelli* (Fall 2016), a writing-intensive capstone seminar designed principally for History majors, but open to strong students from other disciplines.

This course carries a Global Cultures flag. Global Cultures courses are designed to increase your familiarity with cultural groups outside the United States. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from assignments covering the practices, beliefs, and histories of at least one non-U.S. cultural group, past or present.

I. COURSE READINGS:

A. Required readings to purchase (be sure to get the recommended translations!):

Boccaccio, *Decameron*, tr. Rebhorn (Norton)
Alberti, *On Painting*, tr. Grayson (Penguin)
Valla, *On the Donation of Constantine*, tr. Bowersock (Harvard UP)
Castiglione, *The Courtier*, tr. Bull (Penguin)

B. Required readings posted on CANVAS:

Petrarch, *Letter to Posterity; Letters to Cicero; Ascent of Mt. Ventoux*
Alberti, *Life ; Book of the Family* (excerpt, tr. Watkins)
Bruni, *Panegyric on the City of Florence* (tr. Kohl)
Pulci, *Play of St. Francis* (tr. Cook)
Nogarola, *Dispute on the Greater Fault of Adam or Eve* (tr. King & Robin)
Machiavelli, *Mandragola* (tr. Newbiggin)
Vasari, *Lives of the Artists* (excerpts, tr. Bondanella)
Colonna, *Poems for Michelangelo* (selected, tr. Brundin)
Aretino, *Master of the Horse* (tr. Giannetti & Ruggiero)

C. Recommended readings:

Burckhardt, *Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*—PCL and online. First published in 1860 as a series of newspaper essays, this book by a friend of Nietzsche's established many of the debates about the significance of the Renaissance that will guide our class.

Burke, *The Italian Renaissance: Culture and Society* (rev. ed. 1987)—PCL, FAL, ARCH. Burke, who thinks like an anthropologist, is always worth reading.

Ruggiero, *The Renaissance in Italy: A Social and Cultural History* (2015)—PCL ebook. An admired social historian contributes the latest overview.

How to Take this Course

(with thanks to Prof. Tona Hagen)

- 1.) You can wade: "Waders" tend to assume that readings and lectures are mutually reinforcing, telling basically the same story. Because they are often new to History as a discipline, waders are mainly concerned with WHAT happened in the past. They collect facts.
- 2.) You can snorkel: "Snorkelers" have had some experience with History classes. They can think historically, noticing inconsistencies and missed opportunities. They respectfully challenge assumptions through lively discussion. Snorkelers are interested in HOW & WHY things happened as they did.
- 3.) You can dive: "Divers" tend to be History majors. They know that it's not what you "get" in this course, it's how deep you go. Divers are critical thinkers who don't take any of the course's structure or content as natural or inevitable. They see (and then fill) the course's gaps. They are curious, passionate, and concerned with WHY HISTORY MATTERS.

II. COURSE POLICIES:

A. Attendance and Communications:

I expect your regular, on-time attendance *every class*. Persistent tardiness will hurt your final grade. Absences will have the same effect.

Some absences are unavoidable, but you must provide documentation. Any written work due on those days must be submitted on schedule (by email attachment, if necessary).

For absences due to religious holy days, UT Austin policy requires that you notify me at least 2 weeks in advance. If you must miss an assignment, I will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work.

I use the CANVAS information management system to record grades, post readings, and make announcements. It is your responsibility to keep your email address up-to-date with the University so that Canvas notifications reach you on time.

Every student has the right to learn in a supportive environment. During class, restrict your electronic devices to course materials only. Failure to comply with this UT Austin policy will hurt your final grade.

Keep in touch! If you are having difficulty with the course or must be absent for a period due to personal issues, email for an office hours appointment. Your professor sincerely wants you to succeed.

B. Assignments and Assessment:

I expect your thorough and on-time preparation of reading and writing assignments, and your engaged participation in every class discussion or small-group activity.

Plus and minus grading will be used in this class. A score rounds up at .5 or higher. In addition, I may adjust grading up or down to reflect individual effort over the arc of the semester.

93-100	A	80-82	B-	67-69	D+
90-92	A-	77-79	C+	63-66	D
87-89	B+	73-76	C	60-62	D-
83-86	B	70-72	C-	59 or lower	F

If you require special accommodations, present your Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) letter during office hours so that you and I can plan together. See <http://ddce.utexas.edu/disability/>

Your final grade will be based on the following work:

1.) A map quiz – you must get a perfect score to pass the course, but the map quiz forms no part of your final grade.

Every Monday morning (except 29 Feb), the first five minutes of class will be devoted to the map quiz. You take it til you get 100%--there is no penalty for taking it numerous times. The blank map used for the quiz is provided on Canvas. Make yourself copies and practice.

2.) Reading worksheets – you'll complete and turn in a one-page worksheet for six major readings. After dropping your lowest score, you'll have five worksheets @ 10% each = **50%** of your final grade.

Print your worksheet, fill it out, and bring it to class. No worksheet, no admission to class that day = 1 absence.

3.) Quizzes – you'll have impromptu, short, low-stress quizzes throughout the semester. Expect solo, paired, and small group quiz activities. Graded *plus* 85-100 / *check* 70-85 / *minus* below 70, these count for **10%** of your final grade.

Quizzes *cannot* be made up because they are designed to forward time-sensitive discussion.

4.) Two exams – on March 11 and May 6, you'll take an exam that consists of four identifications and an essay question. Two exams @ 15% = **30%** of your final grade.

If you have a score of 90% or above on Exam I, and a strong record on worksheets and quizzes, you may substitute a special project for Exam II. You must meet with the professor during *week 9* to set up this option.

Dates to Know

M 25 Jan.	First map quiz
W 3 Feb.	Last day of add/drop
F 11 March	Exam I covering weeks 1-7
14-19 March	Spring Break
21-25 March	Special project option confirmed this week
M 2 May	Final map quiz
F 6 May	Exam II covering weeks 8-14

SCHEDULE OF CLASS MEETINGS

This syllabus represents my current plans and objectives. As we go through the semester, those plans may need to change to enhance your opportunities for learning. Such changes, communicated clearly, are not unusual and should be expected.

Week 1: Introductions

- W 20 Jan Introduction to the course: diagnostics; timelines
- F 22 Jan Overview: political history of the Italian peninsula in its global setting

Week 2: The Plague: Catastrophe and Culture

- M 25 Jan **Map quiz.** Causes and effects
Prepare: Boccaccio, *Decameron*, author's preface and introduction
- W 27 Jan Anticlericalism
Prepare: Boccaccio, *Decameron*, Day I, stories 1 and 2; Day III, stories 1 and 10; Day IV, introduction; Day VI, story 10.
- F 29 Jan Conversation: Finding Meaning
Prepare: Boccaccio, *Decameron*, Day X, story 10

Week 3: Individualism

- M 1 Feb **Map quiz.** Imitation and/or Originality
Prepare: Petrarch, *Two Letters to Cicero*; *Letter to Posterity* [c]
- W 3 Feb The First Tourist
Prepare: Petrarch, *Ascent of Mt. Ventoux* [c]
- F 5 Feb Conversation: Allegory
Prepare: reading tba; Worksheet 1 [c]

Week 4: Artists and Patrons

- M 8 Feb **Map quiz.** Leon Battista Alberti
Prepare: Alberti, *Life* and excerpt from *On the Family* [c]
- W 10 Feb Professionalization
Prepare: Alberti, *On Painting*, prologue and Books II & III
- F 12 Feb Conversation: Patron and Artist
Prepare: ppt of paintings [c]; Worksheet 2 [c]

Week 5: Civic Humanism

- M 15 Feb **Map quiz.** Milan is a principality
Prepare: Bonvesin de la Riva, excerpts [c]
- W 17 Feb Florence is a republic
Prepare: Bruni, *Panegyric* [c]
- F 19 Feb The Papal State is a remnant of empire
Prepare: *Donation of Constantine*

Week 6: Not Pagans, But Christians

- M 22 Feb **Map quiz.** Rhetoric as History?
Prepare: Valla, *On the Donation of Constantine*, part 1
- W 24 Feb Philology as History?
Prepare: Valla, *On the Donation*, part 2
- F 26 Feb Conversation: Rhetoric vs History?
Prepare: Reading tba; Worksheet 3

Week 7: What Difference Did Printing Make?

- M 29 Feb Group 1 to HRC (Group 2 no class)
All prepare: Nogarola, *Dispute* [c]
- W 2 March Group 2 to HRC (Group 1 no class)
All prepare Pulci, *Play of St. Francis* [c]
- F 4 March Conversation: Manuscript and Print
Prepare: reading tba

Week 8: EXAM I

- M 7 March Review for Exam I
W 9 March Practice for Exam I
F 11 March **Exam I** (four identifications and an essay question)

March 14-19 Spring Break

Week 9: Gender at Court I: La Principessa

- M 21 March Collecting
Prepare: Isabella D'Este, selected letters on purchases [c]
- W 23 March Musicians
Prepare: Isabella D'Este, selected letters on music [c]

F 25 March Isabella D'Este III
Prepare: IDEA, "About Isabella D'Este"
<http://isbelladeste.web.unc.edu>

Week 10: Moral Philosophy

M 28 March Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*
Prepare: Bruni, transl., *Nicomachean Ethics*, excerpt [c]

W 30 March Plato, *Republic*
Prepare: Ficino, comm. On Plato, *Symposium*, excerpt [c]

F 1 April Conversation: George of Trebizond, *Comparison of Aristotle & Plato*
Prepare: Hankins, "George of Trebizond, Renaissance Libertarian" [c];
Worksheet 4 [c]

Week 11: Domestic Politics

M 4 April Ends & Means
Prepare: Machiavelli, *Mandragola* [c]

W 6 April Conversation: Domestic allegory?
Prepare: reading tba

F 8 April The Court as domestic space
Prepare: Castiglione. *Courtier*, author's dedication + Bk. 1 from "I have
spent a long time" to "anywhere in Italy"

Week 12: Games & Manners

M 11 April Prepare: Castiglione, *Courtier*, Bk. 1 through p. 73

W 13 April *Sprezzatura*, "a certain nonchalance"
Prepare: Castiglione, *Courtier*, Bk. 1, p. 73 to the end

F 15 April Conversation: Rules of Courtly *conversazione*

Week 13: Inventing the History of Art

M 18 April A Language for Art
Prepare: Vasari, *Lives of the Artists*, preface, preface to part II, preface
to part 3 [c]

W 20 April A History of Art
Prepare: Vasari, *Lives of the Artists*, the Life of Michelangelo, extracts
[c]

F 22 April Vittoria Colonna and Michelangelo
Prepare: Colonna, *Sonnets for Michelangelo*, nos. 1, 26, and 94 [c]
and “Plaint... on the Passion of Christ” [c]

Week 14: Servitude

M 25 April Pleasing the prince
Prepare: Aretino, *Il marescalco*; Worksheet 6

W 27 April The Italian Wars
Prepare: Cellini, *Autobiography* and Guicciardini, *History of Italy*
(excerpts on the Sack of Rome)

F 29 April Conversation: The End of the Renaissance?
Prepare: Spanish Italy and Italians in Spain ppt

Week 15: EXAM II

M 2 May Review for Exam II

W 4 May Practice for Exam II

F 6 May Exam II (four identifications and an essay question)

Additional Notices

Policy on Academic Integrity. Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. Read details at: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/scholdis.php>

The General Information Catalog at the University of TX Austin states, “After a grade has been reported to the registrar, it may not be changed unless an error was made by the instructor.”

Undergraduate Writing Center & Sanger Learning Center. Your student fees pay for these services:

The Sanger Learning Center (<http://www.lifelearning.utexas.edu/>) provides free individualized assistance with such topics as time management, in-class notetaking, reading efficiency, etc.

The Undergraduate Writing Center (<http://www.uwc.utexas.edu/>) offers free, individualized, expert help with writing for any UT undergraduate, by appointment or on a drop-in basis. See also the UWC handouts on common writing problems (<http://projects.uwc.utexas.edu/handouts/>).