The History of the Italian Renaissance
History 302, Section 1, Fall 2010
T&Th 8-9:15 B030 JFSB

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The Italian Renaissance is one of the few historical eras that still speaks to our modern sensibilities. We are moved by its great paintings and sculpture, we are still inspired by Leonardo and Michelangelo, we still read Machiavelli with pleasure or perhaps dismay. Central to our attraction is the perception that it marks the beginning of the modern age, that Renaissance Italy saw the first stirring of modern, individualistic, secular sensibilities which arose in contrast to the perceived backwardness and darkness of the Middle Ages. Whether these assumptions are warranted or not does not detract from our continued enthusiasm for the Renaissance.

The objective of this course is two-fold, both historical and historiographical: first, to examine the events, trends and key personages of the Renaissance, and second, to examine the way historians have understood and depicted this period, its relationship to the modern world, and how these views have changed over time. By the end of the semester you should be familiar with the general outlines and specific problems of Italian history during this era, and you should appreciate the very real challenges of historical chronology, periodization and the ideologies that move us to organize the past in the ways that we do.

Prerequisites
History 200, History 201-202 (or equivalent), English 115

Rules of the game
1. I do not require that you attend class, but you are responsible to stay informed of changes in the schedule, assignments, etc.
2. While attendance is not required, if you do come I expect you to be on time and to be attentive. Please observe the following common courtesies during class:
   1) Do not disrupt class by arriving after class has started or leaving before it has ended. If you cannot make it to class on time, or if you need to leave early, just skip that day’s class.
   2) Be engaged during class: please do not read the newspaper, study for other classes, write letters, text message, play on your computer, or sleep.
3. **Exams must be taken on the day scheduled.** Do not sign up for the class if you already know you have a conflict. Given the size of the class, the logistics of scheduling multiple test times make this impossible.

4. **Assignments are due at the beginning of class. Late assignments will be docked 10% the first day, and 2% each additional day they are late.** If you are sick or have an emergency, let me know beforehand and I will try to accommodate you. Some assignments cannot be turned in late.

5. **I will not accept assignments that are left on my door or sent via email.**

6. **Academic Dishonesty in any form will earn you an automatic failing grade for the class and a referral to the Honor Code Office.** If you have any questions regarding what constitutes academic dishonesty, please refer to the BYU Honor Code: http://honorcode.byu.edu/.

7. **Sexual Discrimination or Harassment:** Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination against any participant in an educational program or activity. Title IX also prohibits sexual harassment of students by university employees, other students, and visitors to campus. If you encounter sexual harassment or gender-based discrimination, please talk to the professor; contact the Equal Employment Office at 1-888-238-1062 (24-hours), or www.ethicspoint.com; or the Honor Code Office at x2847.

8. **Students who have a disability** that may affect their performance in this course, should get in touch with the office of Services for Students with Disabilities (1520 WSC). This office can evaluate disabilities and assist me in arranging for reasonable accommodations.

9. **Class Participation:** To encourage learning, I will call on students at random to participate in class. This may include responding to questions, summarizing readings, explain concepts, etc. If you feel uncomfortable with being called on to participate, please let me know in private.

10. **Cypher in the Snow:** It is easy to get lost at BYU and in a big class. While I can’t have all students over to dinner, I’d like to meet with each one of you at least briefly, either during my office hours, or before or after class. Please make sure to come introduce yourself at some point in the semester. Also, I would like each of you by the end of the second week of class to e-mail me a brief, interesting message introducing yourself.

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**Texts**

The History Department requires a minimum of 1500 pages of reading per semester for its courses. The following books are available in the Bookstore and from several online sources.

Stefano Carboni, *Venice and the Islamic World, 828-1797*

Cecelia Ferazzi, *Autobiography of an Aspiring Saint*

Heather Gregory, *Selected Letters of Alessandra Strozzi*
David Herlihy, *The Black Death and the Transformation of the West*
Margaret King, *The Renaissance in Europe*
Machiavelli, *The Prince*
Jonathan Woolfson, *Renaissance Historiography*
Course Reader (on Blackboard)

**Course Requirements**

1. **Research Paper**  
   See attached guidelines.  
   210 pts total

2. **Mid-term exam**  
   In Testing Center. The exam will include short answers and a selection of essay questions.  
   100 pts

3. **Final exam**  
   In class. The exam will include short answers and a selection of essay questions.  
   100 pts

4. **Miscellaneous Exercises**  
   Throughout the semester you will be required to complete an array of diverse assignments, some in-class, some out of class, related to readings and class discussions.  
   90 pts total

   **A. Geography Quiz:** A brief quiz on the cities and regions in Italy, to familiarize you with the landscape we will be studying. Study the maps on pages 49 and 218 in King.  
   **10 pts**

   **B. Historiographical Outline:** Throughout the semester, each day that you are assigned a chapter in the Woolfson book, you will turn in a brief historiographical outline. This will include two items:  
   1) a timeline with the key developments or interpretations (4-5) in the historiographical debate, each labeled (by individual or concept) and described in 1-2 sentences.  
   2) the percentage of the total chapter that you read (“I read 14% of today’s assignment”). Historiographical outlines must be typed, are due at the beginning of class, and cannot be turned in late.  
   **5 pts each, total 40 pts**

   **C. In-Class Writing:** On days a number of unannounced days during the semester, I will ask you to take a few minutes and write about some aspect of a text you have read (including King and the reader). In addition to your response to the question, you will indicate the percentage of the text you read. Your responses will be graded based on evidence (and quantity) of reading, thoughtful reflection and insight, and quality of writing. These assignments cannot be made up if missed.  
   **5 pts each, 40 pts total**

4. **Extra Credit**  
   If you fill out the online course evaluation thoughtfully with written feedback, you will earn 5 extra points on the final.  
   **5 pts**

   **Total: 500 points**

**Participation:** Those who contribute to the learning atmosphere of the class by regular, reasoned participation will be given special consideration at grade time.
Nota bene: Assignments will be graded within two weeks of the due date, and grades will be posted on Blackboard. You are responsible to keep track of your grades throughout the semester. Any errors or omissions must be brought to my attention within a week of the grade being posted.

Grading Philosophy
Please understand that your grades reflect how well you meet learning expectations, not how hard you worked.

The A recognizes excellent performance, and is reserved for outstanding students. Their work is always characterized by a mastery of the material, excellent exposition, thoughtful analysis, engaged classroom participation, in short, a solidly above average performance that exceeds course expectations.

The B grade is characterized by a sound understanding of the material, good exposition, regular class participation, but is perhaps somewhat lacking in critical analysis. This grade range covers average (B-) to slightly above average (B+) performance.

The C grade indicates a satisfactory, but slightly below average effort. Students have a working knowledge of the material, but their work is often unpolished and has minimal analysis, and they rarely participate in class. A C grade still fulfills all the basic course requirements.

The D grade indicates unsatisfactory work, which is still nonetheless worthy of credit. A D effort is characterized by minimal knowledge of the material, careless work and an absence of reflection or analysis.

E work fails to meet the minimum requirements for the course, and does not merit any credit.
### Tentative Course Schedule

**Week 1**  
Aug 31  
Th- King Intro, Reader #1, Woolfson ch. 1

Sept 2  
Class Introduction / Reading and Writing in History Courses

**Week 2**  
Sept 7  
The Renaissance Problem: Burckhardt's Heirs and Opponents

Sept 9  
Europe and Italy circa 1000  
☞ Geography Quiz

**Week 3**  
Sept 14  
The Rise of the Communes

Sept 16  
The Black Death

**Week 4**  
Sept 21  
Transformation, 1350-1400, The Renaissance?

Sept 23  
The Institution of the Church in Late Medieval Italy

**Week 5**  
Sept 28  
Popular Piety in the Renaissance

Sept 30  
St. Francis of Assisi and the Problem of Wealth

**Week 6**  
Oct 5  
Medieval Thought and Early Humanism

Oct 7  
Later Humanism  
☞ Paper proposal and bibliography due

**Week 7**  
Oct 12  
Renaissance Women: Nuns

Oct 14-15  
Midterm in Testing Center

**Week 8**  
Oct 19  
Renaissance Women: Motherhood

Oct 21  
Renaissance Families and Renaissance Individualism

**Week 9**  
Oct 26  
The Anthropological Renaissance

Oct 28  
*The Medici: Godfathers of the Renaissance*
Week 10  Tu- King ch. 4, Reader #12, Wolfson ch. 7
Nov 2     Proto-Renaissance Art
Nov 4     Renaissance Art: The Quattrocento

Week 11  Tu - Carboni, Venice and the Islamic World, Wolfson ch. 3; Th- King ch. 7, Wolfson ch. 13
Nov 9     The Renaissance in a Global Context
Nov 11    Diplomacy and Warfare in the Renaissance
           Paper outline due

Week 12  Tu- King ch. 8
Nov 16    1494: The End of the Italian Renaissance?
Nov 18    Paper Workshop
           First draft of paper due, 2 copies

Week 13
Nov 23    No class - Friday Instruction
Nov 25    Thanksgiving

Week 14  Th- Machiavelli, The Prince
Nov 30    Savonarola and the Culture of Renaissance Italy: Food, Music and Costume
Dec 2     Machiavelli

Week 15
Dec 7     Renaissance Art: The Cinquecento
           Final draft of paper due

Dec 14    Final Exam in Class 3-6 PM
Researching Renaissance Italy

Research, analysis and writing are at the heart of the historical process, and while you may never become a professional historian, mastering these skills will help you in whatever you choose to pursue. An important part of your learning about the Renaissance will be to do in depth research into some aspect of this important era. This research project will be the culmination of this course, and will represent the bulk of your grade - be sure to give it your best effort.

Assignment: For this assignment you will choose some aspect of the history of Italy, 1200-1600 that interests you, research it exhaustively, and present your findings in a written paper. I have listed a few potential topics which may be of interest to you, but you are free to write on any topic that you wish.

- The influence of non-European regions on the Renaissance
- Ottomans in European art: 1453-1650
- Islam and Christianity in the Renaissance
- Renaissance travel and travel literature
- Southern Italy in the Renaissance
- Renaissance crime and criminals
- Venice's stato da mar empire
- Renaissance foodways

Audience & Style: The audience for your paper will be an average, college educated person. You may assume this person has a good general knowledge of history. You should write in a way that will be accessible to a non-BYU audience. The tone of your paper should be professional and formal. Avoid slang, contractions, and informal dialogue.

Requirements:
Length: 8-10 double-spaced pages.
Research: Your paper should incorporate the best and most appropriate sources available for your topic. You must use both scholarly books as well as academic journal articles in sufficient quantity to provide a complete and balanced treatment of the topic. In almost no instance are any internet sources acceptable: if you intend to use an internet source, check with me beforehand. You are encouraged but not required to use primary sources.
Historiography: Each paper must exhibit a familiarity with the historiographical dialogue that it is engaging. This may be done through a discussion of the relevant texts and arguments directly in the text, or more indirectly in an extensive footnote.

Format: Your paper must fulfill all the following formatting guidelines. Papers that do not, will be returned.
- Title Page with clear, engaging title
- Stapled
- Page Numbering (top center, except 1st page, bottom center)
- Footnotes, not endnotes
- Double spaced
- 1 inch margins all around
- Bibliography divided into primary and secondary sources
- Footnotes in Turabian format
Quotes over 3 lines in length must be single-spaced and double indented
A 12 point font
Notes, bibliography and all formatting must be in Turabian style

Schedule: You must meet the following deadlines throughout the semester, leading up to the final draft. In order to receive the grade for the research project, you must complete all elements of the assignment.

Oct 1 1 page proposal with 1 page bibliography due
Nov 3 First draft (not rough) due for peer review (bring 2 copies)
Nov 10 Peer review and critique with marked up draft due
Nov 5-19 Consultation with TA
Dec 10 Final draft due

Grading: There are 210 total points possible for this assignment. In order to receive full credit you must complete all the steps of the project - proposal, outline, critique, first and final drafts. Some assignments are graded, others are process assignments, which must be completed at an acceptable level or your grade will be reduced by the indicated number of points.

Proposal- +10 pts
The proposal should describe your project, your questions, your sources, the problems you anticipate, etc. You should also indicate tentative conclusions that you think may come out of your research. Be as specific as you can, it will save you lots of work. Your proposal should be one single-spaced page, as should your bibliography.

Outline- up to -5 pts
Prepare a working outline to help you organize and write your paper. Your outline should be detailed and descriptive, perhaps in a prose format rather than the usual minimalist outline.

Peer Critique- up to -5 pts
Your critique should include a careful assessment of argument, evidence, research, style and clarity of presentation. Your criticisms should indicate concrete ways that the paper may be improved. Use the attached rubric. Be fair but do not pull punches.

First Draft- up to -40 pts
This is not a rough draft. Your paper should be polished, complete with footnotes, bibliography, abstract, title page, all in Turabian format. If your first draft is in good shape, you will have little fine tuning for the final draft. First drafts that appear to have been thrown together will be graded severely. You receive no positive points for the first draft, but if it is incomplete or a rough draft your final paper grade will be docked up to 20 points. Bring 2 copies of the first draft to class. The first draft cannot be turned in late.

Final Draft- +200 pts
The name says it all. It should be perfect. Your paper will be graded using the attached rubric.

Your paper will be graded on the quality of its argument, the strength of its research, the clarity of its organization and composition, and on its adherence to assignment guidelines. The following rubric will be used as a guideline in grading your essay.