

Florentine Renaissance: A Humanities Seminar
Spring 2024
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This course is an examination of the art, literature, and history of Florence during the first great flowering of the Renaissance. We will read literary texts and examine works of art in class, and discuss all aspects of the works we consider. The arrangement will be roughly chronological. We will consider questions of class, gender, theology, psychology, and more, as we examine some of the major cultural works of the period. We will try to understand why it was the Florentines who initiated a new period of human history, characterized by worldliness and individualism, rigorous craftsmanship, experimentation, resistance to authority, respect for the ancients, and an abiding belief that man is the measure of all things. We meet on Fridays 10am to 12 noon in the Poetry Center.

1. Feb. 2 Florence at the twilight of the Middle Ages. Petrarch's *Rime sparse* and the spirit of the Renaissance. Introduction to Vasari's *Lives*. Duccio, Simone Martini, Cimabue, and Giotto. San Miniato al Monte.
2. Feb. 9 The bronze plaques competition. Ghiberti and Brunelleschi. Donatello and Or San Michele. Paolo Uccello. Boccaccio and the *Decameron*. Massaccio.
3. Feb. 16 The Medici Phenomenon. More Tales of the *Decameron*. Santa Croce. Lorenzo de Medici, *Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne*. Pier della Francesca.
4. Feb. 23 Fra Angelico. San Marco. Andrea del Castagno. The Pazzi Conspiracy. Marsilio Ficino. Pico della Mirandola.
5. Mar. 1 Botticelli. Poliziano. San Lorenzo and the Medici Chapel. Benozzo Gozzoli. Domenico Ghirlandaio. Savonarola. Astrology and the Medici.
6. Mar. 15 Leonardo da Vinci. Influence of Verrocchio. Altarpieces. Scientific and engineering work. Anatomical studies.
7. Mar. 22 Raphael. Influence of Perugino. Bramante.
8. Mar. 29 Michelangelo. Sculpture, architecture, frescoes. Sonnets.
9. Apr. 5 Machiavelli, *The Prince*. The Discourses, plays, letters. Alliances and Relationships.
10. Apr. 12 Benvenuto Cellini, *My Life*. Mannerism: Pontormo, Rosso Fiorentino, Parmigianino. Giulio Romano. Final Reflections.

Book List:

Boccaccio, *The Decameron: A Norton Critical Edition*. Trans. Peter Bondanella and Mark Musa, (Norton Critical Editions) Norton, 1977.
ISBN – 0393091325

Richard Turner, *Renaissance Florence: The Invention of a New Art* (Perspectives Series) Pearson, 1997. ISBN – 0131344013

Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the Artists*, Trans. J.C. Bondanella, and P. Bondanella. (Oxford Classics editions) Oxford University Press, USA, 2008.
ISBN – 0199537194

Machiavelli, *The Prince* (Norton Critical Edition), Trans. Robert Adams, Norton, 2d edition, 1992.
ISBN – 0393962202

Benvenuto Cellini, *My Life*, Trans. P. Bondanella, (Oxford Worlds Classics). 2009.
ISBN – 0199555311

Additional materials will be provided online.