



## **ARTH 310: The Italian Renaissance: Art, Invention, and Culture**

### **Course Syllabus**

**Spring Semester 2022**

**Instructor:** Jennifer S. Griffiths, PhD

**Credits:** 3

**Contact Hours:** 45

**Prerequisites:** None

**Class Hours:** TBA

**Office Hours:** TBA

**Course Type:** Standard Course

**Lab Fee:** TBA

### **Course Description**

This course is conceived as a study of the lives and works of significant artists of Italian Renaissance painting, sculpture, and architecture covering the period 1200-1600 with a focus on central Italy. Emphasis will be placed on the urban centers of Siena, Florence, Rome, and Perugia. Artists to be studied include Ambrogio Lorenzetti, Giotto, Filippo Brunelleschi, Piero della Francesca, Plautilla Nelli, Botticelli, Luca Signorelli, Leonardo da Vinci, Sofonisba Anguissola, Pietro Perugino, Michelangelo, and Raphael. We will learn about the political, social, and cultural contexts in which works of art were produced and viewed. We will discuss aspects of function, materials, iconography, and style. Classes will combine lecture, discussion, in-class activities, and on-site visits. Student reading and participation is mandatory. There will be special focus placed on artists and artworks that can be viewed in person and on site. Some consideration will be given to the classical roots of the Italian Renaissance (Etruscan, Greek, and Roman) and to subsequent developments (Mannerism, Baroque) in so far as this provides a context for understanding the origins and legacy of the Renaissance. The goal of the course is to help students develop art appreciation, historical comprehension, and critical reasoning skills.

### **Learning Outcomes and Assessment Measures**

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

<b>Learning Outcomes</b>	<b>Assessment Measures</b>
	<b>Course requirements that will be used to assess students' achievement for each learning outcome</b>
Analyze Renaissance art in cultural context	Exams, writing assignments
Identify elements of style and technique in Renaissance painting, sculpture, and architecture.	Exams, writing assignments

Summarize relationships between monuments or objects and the religious, political, social, and/or economic circumstances of their production.	Class discussion, Exams, Writing assignments
Distinguish the functions of Renaissance buildings and objects.	Class discussion, Exams, Writing assignments
Discuss major points of scholarly debate within the field of Renaissance art.	Class discussion, Exams, Writing assignments
Describe works of art in articulate prose.	Exams, Writing assignments

## Course Materials

### Readings

All reading materials will be made available in digital format on Moodle.

Please see “Umbra Institute Course Materials - Textbooks and Readers” handout provided in the orientation folder for more information.

## Assessment

Participation	10%
Quizzes	10%
Midterm Examination	20%
Final Examination	20%
Writing Portfolio	40%

## Grading

Letter grades for student work are based on the following percentage scale:

Letter Grade Range	Numerical Score Equivalent	Student Performance
A	93% - 100%	Exceptional
A-	90% - 92%	Excellent
B+	87% - 89%	Superior
B	83% - 86%	
B-	80% - 82%	
C+	77% - 79%	Satisfactory
C	73% - 76%	
C-	70% - 72%	
D+	67% - 69%	Low Pass
D	63% - 66%	
D-	60% - 62%	
F	59% or less	Fail (no credit)

## Course Requirements

Grades are based on:

### *Participation (10%)*

You will earn this percentage of your grade by regular attendance, regular contributions to class discussion, and

timely completion of all assignments inside and outside the classroom.

#### *Quizzes (10%)*

Each week you will have a very basic 5-question online quiz to review material.

#### *Midterm Examination(20%)*

The midterm exam will consist of 10 image identifications and 2 comparative essay questions.

#### *Final examination (20%)*

The final exam will consist of 10 image identifications and 2 comparative essay questions.

#### *Portfolio (40%)*

The portfolio is the largest component of assessment consisting of an accumulation of reading summaries, group activities, ekphrastic writings, formal analyses, and comparative analyses. These short writing assignments will be done on a weekly basis. Final portfolios will be graded on the completion of all required elements, quality of effort, and formal presentation. Complete instructions will be discussed in class and articulated on Moodle.

#### Course Content Disclaimer

This class will address sensitive topics such as religious belief and changing social mores in a frank manner.

#### Attendance Policy

Absences for Covid-related circumstances: in order to keep the entire Umbra community healthy and to comply with local laws, you may not enter the Umbra premises if you have a temperature of 37.5 °C (99.5 °F) or higher. For all students who display any relevant symptoms, the procedure will be the following:

1. avoid going to class;
2. immediately notify the Student Services staff;
3. be prepared to get tested for COVID at a local pharmacy within the day.

The following additional conditions apply:

- Students may attend classes remotely and without academic penalty via Zoom or Skype *but only* if they are waiting for the test to be scheduled or performed.
- Students with a positive test result (or who have been in close contact with someone who tested positive) must follow all applicable quarantine or isolation requirements and may attend classes remotely, *without academic penalty*.
- Students with a negative test result are allowed to attend class in person.

It is Institute policy that students with symptoms be tested. Any student refusing testing will not be admitted to the Institute under any circumstances and any absences will not be considered eligible for an extra absence for any classes missed. In other words, refusing a test and staying in one's apartment is considered an unexcused absence.

Class attendance (in person or through live connection) is mandatory. Students are allowed two "free" absences, which do not need to be justified. However, it is considered common courtesy to inform the instructor of your absence when possible. It is the students' responsibility to keep them in case of real necessity (sickness or any other unforeseen inconvenience that may prevent students from being in class).

**Additional absences relating to illness may be approved by the Academic Director but only if a medical certification is provided.**

Each additional absence, unless for a very serious reason, will lower the students' grade by one grade level (i.e., a final grade of a B+ would be lowered to a B). If students miss class, they are responsible for obtaining class notes from other students and/or for meeting the professor during office hours. It is also the policy of the Institute that any student who has eight or more absences automatically fails the class.

Except in the case of medical emergencies, absences are not accepted when tests are scheduled; tests cannot be made up. Furthermore, scheduled times and dates indicated for exams, quizzes, oral presentations, and any other graded assignments cannot be changed for any reason. Even if more sections of the same class are activated, students may only take exams during the scheduled times and dates for the section they are enrolled in.

**Late Assignments**

Each student is allowed one extension of 24 hours on an assignment that has to be handed in. After that, the assignment will be marked zero.

**Academic Integrity**

All forms of cheating (i.e., copying during exam either from a fellow student or making unauthorized use of notes) and plagiarism (i.e., presenting the ideas or words of another person for academic evaluation without acknowledging the source) will be handled according to the Institute Academic Policy, which can be found in the Umbra Institute Academic Policies and Conduct Guidelines.

**Classroom Policy**

Students are expected to follow the policy of the Institute and demonstrate the appropriate respect for the historical premises that the school occupies. Please note that cell phones must be turned off before the beginning of each class. Computers and other electronic devices cannot be used during class lectures and discussions.

## Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Assignments

### WEEK 1

#### **Out of Antiquity**

*What is a "renaissance"? What is humanism?*

Day 1: Greek and Roman Influences

Day 2: Byzantium and Beyond

#### Readings for the week:

Stephen Greenblatt, "Preface" to *The Swerve: How the World Became Modern* (London: The Bodley Head, 2011), pp. 1-13.

Walter Isaacson, Excerpt from Ch. 8. "Vitruvian Man" in *Leonardo da Vinci* (Simon and Schuster, 2017), pp. 148-157.

Carboni, Stefano. "Islamic Art and Culture: The Venetian Perspective." In *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art (March 2007)

[http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/isac/hd\\_isac.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/isac/hd_isac.htm)

### WEEK 2

#### **Writing the Renaissance**

*How did Giorgio Vasari shape our modern understanding of the Renaissance?*

Day 1: The *Lives* and its Legacy

Day 2: Giotto, Masaccio, Brunelleschi, Donatello, Properzia de Rossi, and Michelangelo

#### Readings for the week:

Giorgio Vasari, Preface to *The Lives of the Artists* (1550), trans. Julia Conway Bondanella and Peter Bondanella (London and New York: Oxford University Press), pp. 1-6.

Fredrika H. Jacobs, "The Construction of a life: Madonna Properzia De' Rossi 'Schultrice' Bolognese" in *Word & Image* 9:2 (1993), pp. 122-132.

Documentary Film: Andrew Graham Dixon, *Travels with Vasari (Parts I and II)*, 2008 (2hrs total)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IZ31OKYtass&ab\\_channel=CPWeyant](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IZ31OKYtass&ab_channel=CPWeyant)

### WEEK 3

#### **Precursors, Purposes, and Patrons**

*What are tempera and buon fresco? What were the primary functions of images in Italian society at this time?*

Day 1: Religious Iconography: Duccio, Cimabue, Giotto

Day 2: Political Iconography: Lorenzetti

#### Readings for the week:

Keith Christiansen, "Duccio and the Origins of Western Painting" in *MET Bulletin* (2008), Read pages pp. 7-23 only and examine images closely.

Nicolai Rubinstein, "Political Ideas in Sienese Art: The Frescoes by Ambrogio Lorenzetti and Taddeo di Bartolo

in the Palazzo Pubblico” in *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* (1958), pp. 179-207.

Video: “Giotto, Padua and 13<sup>th</sup>-century Frescoes” 18 mins.

<https://www.padovanet.it/en/notizia/20210708/video-giotto-padua-and-13th-century-frescoes>

#### WEEK 4

##### **Architecture: Man as the Measure of All Things**

*Who was Filippo Brunelleschi? How did architecture reflect humanist concerns?*

Day 1: Brunelleschi, Ghiberti, and Donatello

Day 2: Alberti, and Michelozzo

##### Readings for the week:

Carroll William Westfall, “Society, Beauty, and the Humanist Architect in Alberti’s de re aedificatoria” *Studies in the Renaissance* 16 (1969), pp. 61-79.

Mary Garrard, Ch. 2 “Technology and the Mastery of Physical Nature: Brunelleschi and Alberti” in *Brunelleschi’s Egg: Nature, Art, and Gender in Renaissance Italy* (Berkeley: California UP, 2012), pp. 33-53.

Documentary Short: “How an Amateur Built the World’s Biggest Dome” (3.5 mins)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= IOPIGPQPuM&ab\\_channel=NationalGeographic](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= IOPIGPQPuM&ab_channel=NationalGeographic)

#### WEEK 5

Day 1: Portfolio and Thematic Review

Day 2: In person Midterm

#### WEEK 6

##### **Painting: Practices and Perspectives**

*How did the concept of Alberti’s Window revolutionize visual culture in Europe?*

Day 1: Masaccio, Fra Angelico, Paolo Uccello

Day 2: Piero della Francesca, Mantegna

#### VISIT TO COLLEGIO DEL CAMBIO AND CAPPELLA SAN SEVERO

##### Readings for the week:

Sylvia Ferino, “A Master-painter and his Pupils: Pietro Perugino and his Umbrian Workshop” *Oxford Art Journal* 2:3 (October 1979), pp. 9-14.

James Galloway, “Perspectives on Mathematics in Art History” in *Math Horizons* (2008), pp. 16-19.

Mary Garrard, “Art and the Lifelike” excerpt from Ch. 3 “Genesis and the Reproduction of Life: Masaccio and Michelangelo” in *Brunelleschi’s Egg* (2012), pp. 56-58.

#### SEMESTER BREAK

## WEEK 7

### Public Sculpture: Purpose and Power

*Who were the Medici family and how did they use art?*

Day 1: Donatello

Day 2: Cellini and Michelangelo

### TRIP TO FLORENCE

#### Readings for the week:

Yael Even, "The Loggia dei Lanzi: A Showcase of Female Subjugation" *Woman's Art Journal* (Spring-Summer 1991), pp. 10-14.

Sarah Blake McHam, "Donatello's Bronze "David" and "Judith" as Metaphors of Medici Rule in Florence" in *The Art Bulletin* 83:1 (2001), pp. 32-47.

Video: Guan Xiao Installation, *David*, Venice Biennale 2017

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c3Y7UpGPZXg&ab\\_channel=AMenad%C3%A8o-aRTs-](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c3Y7UpGPZXg&ab_channel=AMenad%C3%A8o-aRTs-)

## WEEK 8

### Portraiture

*What did a portrait signify to artist, patron and viewer in early modern visual culture?*

Day 1: Piero della Francesca, Perugino, Sofonisba Anguissola

Day 2: Leonardo, Raphael, Titian, Pontormo, Bronzino

#### Readings for the week:

Gabrielle Langdon, Excerpts from *Medici Women: Portraits of Power, Love and Betrayal* (University of Toronto Press, 2007), pp. 11-16 and 61-62.

Dany Milzman, "The Leonardo Hidden from Hitler in Case it Gave Him Magic Powers," BBC Online (October 30, 2014)

Julia Fiore, "The Renaissance Portrait that Helped End a War" *Artsy* (August 14, 2018) Online.

<https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-renaissance-portrait-helped-war>

Documentary Film: Andrew Graham Dixon, *Secrets of the Mona Lisa*, 2015 (53 mins.)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mapbnXZ9gnE&list=PLM4S2hGZDSE7j9WroCOYzobXhxH\\_B1wFv&t=0s&ab\\_channel=ArtDocumentaries](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mapbnXZ9gnE&list=PLM4S2hGZDSE7j9WroCOYzobXhxH_B1wFv&t=0s&ab_channel=ArtDocumentaries)

## WEEK 9

### The Nude

*What symbolic meanings did Renaissance Italian artists attribute to the male and female nude?*

Day 1: Botticelli, Titian, and the Female Nude

Day 2: Donatello, Michelangelo, and the Male Nude

#### Readings for the week:

David Rosand, "So-and-so Reclining on Her Couch" in *Studies in the History of Art* 45 (1993), pp. 100-119.

Yael Even, "The Heroine as Hero in Michelangelo's Art," *Woman's Art Journal* 11:1 (Spring-Summer 1990), pp. 29-33.

Patricia Rubin, ““Che è di questo culazzino!”: Michelangelo and the Motif of the Male Buttocks in Italian Renaissance Art” in *Oxford Art Journal* 32:3 (2009), pp. 429-446.

## WEEK 10

### The Artist at Court

*How did the role of the artist change in the Renaissance?*

Day 1: Mantegna, Leonardo, Anguissola, Titian

Day 2: Pinturicchio, Raphael and Michelangelo at the Papal Court

#### Readings for the week:

Charles Hope, “Titian as a Court Painter” in *Oxford Art Journal* (1979), pp. 7-10.

Cecilia Gamberini, “Sofonisba Anguissola at the Court of Philip II” in *Women artists in Early Modern Italy* (London: Brepols 2016), pp. 29-38.

Art Curious Podcast Episode 33 “Rivals: Raphael vs. Michelangelo” (32 mins.)

<https://www.artcuriouspodcast.com/artcuriouspodcast/33>

Art Curious Podcast: Episode 45 “Shock Art: Michelangelo’s The Last Judgment” (25 mins.)

<https://www.artcuriouspodcast.com/artcuriouspodcast/45>

## WEEK 11

### Special Academic Events Week

Portfolio Presentations and Final Exam