



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

Course Syllabus

Fall Semester 2025

Instructor: Giampiero Bevagna, MA

Credits: 3

Contact Hours: 45

Prerequisites: none

Class Meeting Days & Time: Mondays and Wednesdays, 2:15 pm – 3:45 pm

Office Hours: By appointment

Course Type: Standard Course

Course Fee: USD\$215

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 Duccio, Giotto, Filippo Brunelleschi, Donatello, Piero della Francesca, Botticelli, Luca Signorelli, Leonardo da Vinci, 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 and to subsequent developments 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

Below are the course's learning outcomes, followed by the methods that will be used to assess students' achievement for each learning outcome. By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- *identify* elements of style and technique in Renaissance painting, sculpture, and architecture (quizzes, writing assignments, exams)
- *distinguish* different kinds of methodological approaches to art history and art historical analysis (readings, discussion, quizzes)
- *summarize* relationships between paintings, monuments, or objects and the religious, political, social, and/or economic circumstances of its production. (discussion, writing assignments, exams)
- *analyze* how visual images communicate complex religious, political, and cultural meanings (discussion, writing assignments, exams)

Course Materials

Readings

A course reader, including all the indicated readings, will be available. The course's Moodle site is the primary location for readings and assignments.

Assessment

Attendance	10%
Video	30%

Midterm Exam	20%
Final Exam	20%
Quizzes	20%

Grading

Students are reminded that it is their responsibility to note the dates of exams and other assignments. No alternative exam dates will be offered and professors are not required to give partial credit for any late work (they do so at their discretion: the Institute's default policy is no extensions and a zero for any work turned in late). Students who book travel when they have an exam or other assessment will have to change their plans or accept a zero. 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)

Please note: Decimal and centesimal numerals between 1-4 are rounded down while 5-9 are rounded up: e.g., expect 89.4 to be 89.0 while 89.5 to round up to 90.

Course Requirements

Grades are based on the following criteria.

Attendance (10%)

Attendance is an essential part of this course. You are allowed 2 unexcused absences per course without penalty, per Institute policy. If you attend all the other meetings, you will receive 10% for this part of your grade. There are no make-ups offered for attendance.

Exam 1: Midterm (20%)

The exam will consist of 2 essay questions that ask students to analyze artworks with references to pertinent weekly readings and class topics. See the full prompt in Moodle.

Exam 2: Final (20%)

The exam will consist of 2 essay questions that ask students to analyze artworks with references to pertinent weekly readings and class topics. See the full prompt in Moodle.

Quizzes (20%)

At the end of each section of the program, students will take a quiz on the artists they have studied in class or at the museum. This is a short quiz (10 minutes) in which students will identify a series of artworks, indicating their authorship, date, and place of origin, with references to pertinent weekly readings and class topics. See the full prompt in Moodle.

Video (30%)

Students will produce a short video of one of the works in the Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria (GNU). Students should study the work carefully and write a short text describing and explaining it. The teacher will provide materials and help throughout the project. See the full prompt on Moodle for more information.

Extension & Submitting Late Work

Work submitted after the deadline will receive a grade of zero, not partial credit. Each student is allowed one extension of 24 hours over the entire semester. This can be used for any assignment but the final project. Students need to email the instructor before the deadline and inform the instructor of their use of the extension. Any work submitted after the 24-hour extension will be marked zero. As for all policies, exceptions can be made by the Director for students with special accommodations or in case of medical emergencies, etc.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is expected and mandatory for classroom times and co-curricular activities. The first two absences per course due to illness will be considered excused “sick days” and do not require medical documentation. To receive additional excused absences due to illness, students are required to see a local physician or request a letter from an Institute-approved doctor documenting they should be excused from class for illness.

Unexcused absences will adversely affect a student’s academic performance and will result in a reduction of the student’s final course grade by 2% per absence up to a maximum of 10%. Excessive unexcused absences may result in a failing grade or disciplinary action. It is the student’s responsibility to be aware of the number of absences or late arrivals for each course, and to ask the instructor when in doubt.

If students miss class, they are responsible for obtaining class notes from other students and/or for meeting the professor during office hours. Any work missed in class because of an excused absence may be made up within one week of the return to the class. Any work missed that was a quiz or other test must be made up outside of class time and will, in the interest of intellectual honesty, be a slightly different test than the one given in class.

Presence during mandatory field trips is especially important. Missing a mandatory field trip for a course, unless for a very serious reason that is communicated to Umbra staff in a timely manner, will lower the students’ grade by half a letter grade (i.e., a final grade of a B+ would be lowered to a B).

Legitimate reasons for an excused absence or tardiness include death in the immediate family, religious observances, illness or injury, local inclement weather, and medical appointments that cannot be rescheduled. Absences relating to illness may be excused by the Director, but only if a medical certification is provided.

Students who request an approved absence to observe a religious holiday must submit a formal request to the Institute’s Director within one week after the add/drop period when course schedules, including any field trips, are finalized. No exceptions will be made after this deadline.

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.

Tardiness Policy

Students are expected to attend all classes punctually. Any student arriving up to 15 minutes late or leaving up to 15 minutes earlier than the scheduled class end time will be marked as tardy. Each incident of tardiness (late arrivals to or early departures from class) is 0.5% off the final grade. However, should a student arrive more than 15 minutes late or depart more than 15 minutes before the conclusion of the class, it will be recorded as an absence.

Students are also expected to remain in class during the time of instruction except for a reasonable amount of time to use the restroom. Students who leave class and do not return during the class session will receive an unexcused absence or late penalty.

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.

Utilizing ChatGPT or other artificial intelligence (AI) tools for the generation of content submitted by a student as their own as part of any assignment for academic credit at the Institute constitutes a form of plagiarism. Should the Institute become aware of a student’s use of such platforms and services, the student will be subject to the same consequences and judicial proceedings as are in place for plagiarism (defined above).

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 (for example, ear buds) cannot be used during class lectures and discussions.

Laptop/Smartphone Policy

An ever-increasing body of research shows that open laptops and telephones in the classroom create distraction (both visual and auditory) for those using them and those around them. You can type faster than you can write, and as a result you end up processing less when you're simply typing notes. For this reason, students are asked to keep computers and phones away and use a regular notebook. There are three exceptions: 1) if you have an accommodation; 2) if you make an office hours appointment with me to discuss the use of a computer; 3) if we have an in-class tutorial about online research tools.

Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Assignments

WEEK 1

SEP 8	<p><i>INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE</i></p> <p><i>GEOGRAPHY AND CHRONOLOGY OF 13TH-16TH CENT. ITALY</i></p>
SEP 10	<p><i>WHAT IS 'RENAISSANCE'?</i></p> <p><i>GIORGIO VASARI'S "LIVES".</i></p> <p>READING #1:</p> <p>G. VASARI, <i>THE LIVES OF THE ARTISTS, TRANSLATED WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES</i> BY J. CONAWAY BONDANELLA AND P. BONDANELLA, (OUP, 1991) VII-XIV</p>

WEEK 2

SEP 15	<p><i>BACK TO ANTIQUITY</i></p> <p>READING #2:</p> <p>F. HARTT, D. WILKINS, <i>HISTORY OF ITALIAN RENAISSANCE ART</i>, 7TH (PEARSON, 2007) 18-20</p> <p>C. EVERHART QUILLEN, "HUMANISM AND THE LURE OF ANTIQUITY," IN J. M. NAJEMY (ED.), <i>ITALY IN THE AGE OF THE RENAISSANCE 1300-1550</i>, (OUP, 2004) 37-47</p> <p>S. GREENBLATT, <i>THE SWERVE</i> (NEW YORK: NORTON, 2011)</p>
SEP 17	<p><i>PRODUCING ART:</i></p> <p><i>WORKSHOPS AND TECHNIQUES.</i></p> <p><i>PATRONS, ARTISTS & AUDIENCES.</i></p> <p>READING #3:</p> <p>JOHN T. PAOLETTI, GARY M. RADKE, "ART IN RENAISSANCE ITALY," (LAURENCE KING PUBLISHING, 2005) 12-40</p>

WEEK 3

SEP 22	<p><i>"PRIMA MANIERA": DUCCIO, CIMABUE, GIOTTO, MARTINI, (LORENZETTI)</i></p> <p>READING #4:</p> <p>F. HARTT, D. WILKINS, <i>HISTORY OF ITALIAN RENAISSANCE ART</i>, 7TH 45-52, 73-94, 103-121</p>
SEP 24	<p>VISIT GNU</p>
SEP 26	<p>ASSISI</p>

WEEK 4

SEP 29	QUIZ #1 <i>THE 1401 COMPETITION.</i> <u>READING #5:</u> S. J. CAMPBELL, M. W. COLE, <i>ITALIAN RENAISSANCE ART</i> , (LONDON: THAMES & HUDSON LTD, 2012) 67-76
OCT 1	<i>"SECONDA MANIERA": Ghiberti & Brunelleschi</i> <u>READING #6:</u> S. J. CAMPBELL, M. W. COLE, <i>ITALIAN RENAISSANCE ART</i> , (LONDON: THAMES & HUDSON LTD, 2012) 105-109

WEEK 5

OCT 6	<i>"SECONDA MANIERA": Donatello & Masaccio</i> <u>READING #7:</u> F. HARTT, D. WILKINS, <i>HISTORY OF ITALIAN RENAISSANCE ART</i> , 7TH EDITION, 188-193, 196-199, 206-220, 249-251, 254-261, 298-302
OCT 8	VISIT GNU

WEEK 6

OCT 13	QUIZ #2 <i>LEONBATTISTA ALBERTI</i> <u>READING #8:</u> F. HARTT, D. WILKINS, <i>HISTORY OF ITALIAN RENAISSANCE ART</i> , 7TH EDITION, 239-245
OCT 15	MIDTERM EXAM

SEMESTER BREAK = OCTOBER 20-26

WEEK 7

OCT 27	<p><i>LORENZO'S FLORENCE: BOTTICELLI, VERROCCHIO</i> .</p> <p><u>READING #8:</u></p> <p>F. HARTT, D. WILKINS, <i>HISTORY OF ITALIAN RENAISSANCE ART</i>, 7TH EDITION, 327-347, 350-356</p>
OCT 29	<p><i>ROME REBORN: THE SISTINE CHAPEL.</i></p> <p><u>READING #9:</u></p> <p>S. J. CAMPBELL, M. W. COLE, <i>ITALIAN RENAISSANCE ART</i>, (LONDON: THAMES & HUDSON LTD, 2012) 289-294</p>

WEEK 8

NOV 3	<p><i>PERUGINO & 15TH CENT. PERUGIA.</i></p> <p><i>VISIT THE COLLEGIO DEL CAMBIO + GNU</i></p> <p><u>READING #10:</u></p> <p>SYLVIA FERINO, "A MASTER-PAINTER AND HIS PUPILS: PIETRO PERUGINO AND HIS UMBRIAN WORKSHOP," <i>OXFORD ART JOURNAL</i> 2:3 (OCTOBER 1979), 9-14</p> <p>F. HARTT, D. WILKINS, <i>HISTORY OF ITALIAN RENAISSANCE ART</i>, 7TH EDITION, 369-376, 385-387</p>
NOV 5	<p><i>"TERZA MANIERA": LEONARDO DA VINCI.</i></p> <p><u>READING #11:</u></p> <p>WALTER ISAACSON, EXCERPT FROM CH. 8. "VITRUVIAN MAN" IN <i>LEONARDO DA VINCI</i> (NEW YORK: SIMON AND SCHUSTER, 2017), 148-157</p> <p>S. J. CAMPBELL, M. W. COLE, <i>ITALIAN RENAISSANCE ART</i>, (LONDON: THAMES & HUDSON LTD, 2012) 342-354</p>

WEEK 9

NOV 10	<p>QUIZ #3</p> <p><i>MICHELANGELO I</i></p> <p><u>READING #12:</u></p> <p>F. HARTT, D. WILKINS, <i>HISTORY OF ITALIAN RENAISSANCE ART</i>, 7TH, 469-480</p> <p>S. J. CAMPBELL, M. W. COLE, <i>ITALIAN RENAISSANCE ART</i>, (LONDON: THAMES & HUDSON LTD, 2012) 336-339</p>
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NOV 12	<p><i>RAFFAELLO I</i></p> <p><u>READING #13:</u></p> <p>F. HARTT, D. WILKINS, <i>HISTORY OF ITALIAN RENAISSANCE ART</i>, 7TH, 480-484</p> <p>S. J. CAMPBELL, M. W. COLE, <i>ITALIAN RENAISSANCE ART</i>, (LONDON: THAMES & HUDSON LTD, 2012) 354-358</p>
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NOV 14-15	OVERNIGHT ROME TRIP
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WEEK 10

NOV 17	<p><i>THE NEW VATICAN: BRAMANTE</i></p> <p><u>READING #14:</u></p> <p>F. HARTT, D. WILKINS, <i>HISTORY OF ITALIAN RENAISSANCE ART</i>, 7TH, 489-496</p> <p>S. J. CAMPBELL, M. W. COLE, <i>ITALIAN RENAISSANCE ART</i>, (LONDON: THAMES & HUDSON LTD, 2012) 358-362, 370-372</p>
NOV 19	<p>QUIZ #4</p> <p><i>RAFFAELLO AND MICHELANGELO IN THE VATICAN.</i></p> <p><u>READING #15A:</u></p> <p>S. J. CAMPBELL, M. W. COLE, <i>ITALIAN RENAISSANCE ART</i>, (LONDON: THAMES & HUDSON LTD, 2012) 372-377</p>

WEEK 11

NOV 24	<p><i>RAFFAELLO AND MICHELANGELO IN THE VATICAN.</i></p> <p><u>READING #15B:</u></p> <p>F. HARTT, D. WILKINS, <i>HISTORY OF ITALIAN RENAISSANCE ART</i>, 7TH, 496-514 + 515-540</p>
NOV 26	<p><i>THE END OF RENAISSANCE?</i></p> <p><u>READING #16:</u></p> <p>F. HARTT, D. WILKINS, <i>HISTORY OF ITALIAN RENAISSANCE ART</i>, 7TH, 544-562, 586, 648-662</p>

WEEK 12

DEC 1	QUIZ #5 <i>WORKING AT GNU</i>
DEC 3	<i>WORKING AT GNU</i>

WEEK 13

DEC 8	FINAL EXAMINATION
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