IS102 RENAISSANCE ART AND THOUGHT: RENAISSANCE FLORENCE

BA2 Core Course, Fall 2018
Instructors: Rodolfo Garau, Ian Lawson, Geoff Lehman (coordinator), Katalin Makkai, Laura Scuriatti
Course Times: Tuesday, 10:45-12:15 and Thursday, 10:45-12:15

Email and Office Hours:
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Geoff Lehman  g.lehman@berlin.bard.edu  Tuesdays, 14:00-16:00
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Laura Scuriatti  l.scuriatti@berlin.bard.edu  Thursdays, 13:30-15:30

Course Description
In this course we examine the visual and intellectual culture of Renaissance Florence. A sustained engagement with a number of principal monuments in Florentine painting, sculpture, and architecture provides the basis for a consideration of key values within the development of Renaissance art that also shape, more broadly, the thought, cultural practices, and everyday experiences of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The Renaissance could arguably be characterized as a historical period in which the visual arts played the leading role in the culture as a whole. Thus, the focus on works of visual art, in a sustained dialogue with literary, philosophical, and political texts of the period, opens upon a consideration of broad, trans-disciplinary problems such as the emergence of new models of subjectivity and objectivity, the relationship between religious and secular experiences, the framing of early modern political thought, and the origins of the scientific method. The course is structured around four principal topics, each a defining value for the visual arts between the thirteenth and the sixteenth centuries that is also central to the development of Renaissance thought: self-reflexivity, perspective, harmony and grace, humanism. The direct experience, evaluation, and interpretation of individual works of art are a crucial part of the course and, with this in mind, there will be several visits to Berlin museums – specifically, the Gemäldegalerie and the Bode Museum, with their extensive Renaissance collections – to encounter works of art firsthand.

Course Books
Note that there is no reader required for the course.
Required:

Suggested:
Erwin Panofsky, Perspective as Symbolic Form (ISBN: 978-0942299533)
Library and book purchase policies
The college book policy for 2018-2019 is that reserve stocks of books will be lent to students on the basis of need, or (thereafter) on a first come first served basis. Books not yet owned by the college will be purchased only to create a small library reserve collection, and for students receiving more than 70% financial aid. Otherwise, students must purchase all course books.

Visual Resources
(1) Drive lc60 on the Bard College Berlin network (accessible only from on-campus computers)
(2) The Web Gallery of Art: https://www.wga.hu

Requirements

Academic Integrity
Bard College Berlin maintains the staunchest regard for academic integrity and expects good academic practice from students in their studies. Instances in which students fail to meet the expected standards of academic integrity will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct, Section III Academic Misconduct.

Attendance
For this class attendance is mandatory, and active participation in discussions will be an essential part of the course. More than two absences (that is, absences from two sessions of 90 minutes) in a semester will significantly affect the participation grade for the course. Readings should be done in advance of the class for which they are assigned. Please refer to the Student Handbook for regulations governing periods of illness or leaves of absence.

Museum Visits
Six of our scheduled classes will be museum visits. Since it is not possible to go to a museum during our scheduled class time, museum classes will normally be on Sundays and each museum class will replace a regular Tuesday or Thursday class, usually from the preceding or following week.

Assessment
Participation
Students should arrive to each class on time and prepared. Being prepared means (1) having completed the assigned reading (in the specific editions indicated above), (2) bringing to class a non-electronic copy of the assigned reading, and (3) being ready to initiate and to contribute to discussion.
Engagement in class discussion should be regular as well as productive; quantity alone will not favorably affect the participation grade.

Writing Assignments
There will be two principal assignments over the course of the term: a midterm essay of 6-7 pages (2000-2300 words) and a final essay of 9-10 pages (3000-3300 words), due at the end of the term. Students will also have the option of giving a final presentation to accompany their final essay and as part of the final essay grade.
Policy on late submission of papers
From the Student Handbook on the submission of essays:
Essays that are up to 24 hours late will be downgraded one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). Instructors are not obliged to accept essays that are more than 24 hours late. Where an instructor agrees to accept a late essay, it must be submitted within four weeks of the deadline and cannot receive a grade of higher than C. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment.

Grade Breakdown
Class participation: 30%
Midterm essay: 30%
Final essay: 40% OR Final presentation: 10% and Final essay: 30%

Schedule

I. SELF-REFLEXIVITY

Tuesday, September 4
Introduction to Florence, the Renaissance, and Art
(plenary session in the lecture hall)
Reading:
 Boccaccio, *The Decameron*: Prologue; First Day: Introduction

Thursday, September 6
Boccaccio, I
Reading:
 Boccaccio, *The Decameron*: First Day: 1, 2, 3, and Conclusion; Third Day: Introduction, 1, 10, and Conclusion

Sunday, September 9
Visit to the Gemäldegalerie
(11:00, 12:00, 14:00, 15:00, 16:00)
Visual assignment: group presentation
Reading:
 Boccaccio, *The Decameron*: Fourth Day: Introduction and 2; Sixth Day: Introduction and 5; Eighth Day: Introduction and 3

Tuesday, September 11
No class

Thursday, September 13
Boccaccio, II (lecture: Laura Scuriatti)
Reading:
 Boccaccio, *The Decameron*: Tenth Day: Introduction, 10, and Conclusion; Epilogue

Tuesday, September 18
Donatello
Visual assignment: group presentation
No reading assignment

II. PERSPECTIVE
Thursday, September 20  Alberti, I (lecture: Geoff Lehman)  
Reading:  

Tuesday, September 25  No class

Thursday, September 27  Alberti, II / Masaccio and Uccello  
Visual assignment: group presentations  
Reading:  
Alberti, *On Painting*, Book II

Sunday, September 30  Visit to the Gemäldegalerie  
(11:00, 12:00, 14:00, 15:00, 16:00)  
Visual assignment: group presentation  
Reading:  
Alberti, *On Painting*, Book III

Tuesday, October 2  Color Theory (lecture: Ian Lawson)  
Reading:  
TBA

Thursday, October 4  No class

Sunday, October 7  Visit to the Bode Museum  
(11:00, 12:00, 14:00, 15:00, 16:00)  
Reading:  
Panofsky, *Perspective as Symbolic Form*, Section III

Tuesday, October 9  Panofsky / Piero della Francesca  
Reading:  
Panofsky, *Perspective as Symbolic Form*, Section IV

Thursday, October 11  Leonardo, I (lecture: Geoff Lehman)  
Reading:  

Tuesday, October 16  Leonardo, II  
Visual assignment: group presentations  
Reading:  

Thursday, October 18  Leonardo, III  
Reading:  
Midterm essay due: 23:59 on Saturday, October 20

Tuesday, October 23
No class

Thursday, October 25
Machiavelli
Reading:

Saturday, October 27
Visit to the Gemäldegalerie
(11:00, 12:00, 14:00, 15:00, 16:00)
Reading:
Machiavelli, *The Prince*, XXI-XXIII and XXV-XXVI

FALL BREAK (October 29-November 4)

III. HARMONY AND GRACE

Tuesday, November 6
Brunelleschi
Visual assignment: group presentations
Reading:
Alberti, *On the Art of Building*, VI.1-3 and IX.5

Thursday, November 8
Castiglione (lecture: Katalin Makkai)
Reading:
Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, Dedicatory Letter and Book I, sections 1-28

Tuesday, November 13
Raphael, I
Reading:
Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, Book I, sections 29-31, 37, and 47-56

Thursday, November 15
Raphael, II
Visual assignment: group presentation
Reading:

Sunday, November 18
Visit to the Gemäldegalerie
(11:00, 12:00, 14:00, 15:00, 16:00)
Visual assignment: group presentation
Reading:
Vasari, *Lives of the Artists*, selections
Torquato Tasso, *Jerusalem Delivered*, Canto XIV, 51-79

IV. HUMANISM
Tuesday, November 20  No class

Thursday, November 22  **Pico della Mirandola** (lecture: Rodolfo Garau)
Reading:
  Pico della Mirandola, *Discourse on the Dignity of Man*

Tuesday, November 27  **Michelangelo, I**
Visual assignment: group presentation
Reading:
  Michelangelo, Poems nos. 46, 61-62, 151-152, and 164-166
  Vittoria Colonna, selected poems

Thursday, November 29  No class

Sunday, December 2  **Visit to the Bode Museum**
(11:00, 12:00, 14:00, 15:00, 16:00)
Visual assignment: group presentations
Reading:
  Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, Book IV, sections 49-56

Tuesday, December 4  **Michelangelo, II** (lecture: Geoff Lehman)
Reading:
  Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, Book IV, sections 57-73

Thursday, December 6  **Michelangelo, III**
Reading:
  Michelangelo, Poems nos. 167 and 239-43
  Vittoria Colonna, selected poems

**FINAL PRESENTATIONS**

Tuesday, December 11

Thursday, December 13

Final essay due: 23:59 on Thursday, December 20