

IS102 RENAISSANCE ART AND THOUGHT: RENAISSANCE FLORENCE

BA2 Core Course, Fall 2019

Instructors: 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:

Ian Lawson	i.lawson@berlin.bard.edu	Mondays, 10:30-12:30
Geoff Lehman	g.lehman@berlin.bard.edu	Tuesdays, 14:00-16:00
Katalin Makkai	k.makkai@berlin.bard.edu	TBD
Laura Scuriatti	l.scuriatti@berlin.bard.edu	Tuesdays, 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:

Giovanni Boccaccio, *The Decameron* (ISBN: 0140449302)

Leon Battista Alberti, *On Painting* (ISBN: 0300000014)

Leonardo da Vinci, *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci*, ed. I. Richter (ISBN: 0192838970)

Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince* (ISBN: 978-0226500447)

Baldassare Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier* (ISBN: 978-0393976069)

Giorgio Vasari, *The Lives of the Artists* (ISBN: 978-0192834102)

Suggested:

Erwin Panofsky, *Perspective as Symbolic Form* (ISBN: 978-0942299533)

Library and book purchase policies

The college book policy for 2019-2020 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 3

Introduction to Florence, the Renaissance, and Art
(plenary session in the lecture hall)

Reading:

Boccaccio, *The Decameron*: Prologue; First Day: Introduction

Thursday, September 5

Boccaccio, I

Reading:

Boccaccio, *The Decameron*: First Day: 1, 2, 3, and Conclusion; Third Day: Introduction, 1, 10, and Conclusion

Sunday, September 8

Visit to the Gemäldegalerie

(11:00, 12:30, 14:30, 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 10

No class

Thursday, September 12

Boccaccio, II (lecture: Laura Scuriatti)

Reading:

Boccaccio, *The Decameron*: Tenth Day: Introduction, 10, and Conclusion; Epilogue

Tuesday, September 17

Donatello

Visual assignment: group presentation

No reading assignment

II. PERSPECTIVE

Thursday, September 19 **Alberti, I** (lecture: Geoff Lehman)

Reading:

Alberti, *On Painting*, Prologue and Book I

Tuesday, September 24 **Alberti, II / Masaccio and Uccello**

Visual assignment: group presentations

Reading:

Alberti, *On Painting*, Book II

Thursday, September 26 No class

Sunday, September 29 **Visit to the Gemäldegalerie**

(11:00, 12:30, 14:30, 16:00)

Visual assignment: group presentation

Reading:

Alberti, *On Painting*, Book III

Tuesday, October 1 **Color Theory** (lecture: Ian Lawson)

Visual assignment: paintings by Leonardo, Raphael, and Michelangelo

Thursday, October 3 No class

Sunday, October 6 **Visit to the Bode Museum**

(11:00, 12:30, 14:30, 16:00)

Reading:

Panofsky, *Perspective as Symbolic Form*, Section III

Tuesday, October 8 **Panofsky / Piero della Francesca**

Reading:

Panofsky, *Perspective as Symbolic Form*, Section IV

Thursday, October 10 **Leonardo, I** (lecture: Geoff Lehman)

Reading:

Leonardo da Vinci, *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci*, edited by I. Richter: I. True Science: 1-8; II. The Universe: 6-9, 13-19, and 60-61; III. Flight: 1-7; IV. The Arts: 4-9, 16-34, 92-96, 103, and 126-129

Tuesday, October 15 **Leonardo, II**

Visual assignment: group presentations

Reading:

Leonardo da Vinci, *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci*, edited by I. Richter: IV. The Arts: 153-170, 183-187, 192-195, 197-198, 204-205, and 212-216

Thursday, October 17 **Leonardo, III**

Reading:

Leonardo da Vinci, *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci*, edited by I. Richter: IV. The Arts: 35-46, 53-54, and 78-90; V. Tales and Allegories: 50-51; VI. Reflections on Life: 20-23

Sunday, October 20 **Visit to the Gemäldegalerie**

(11:00, 12:30, 14:30, 16:00)

Reading:

Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Dedicatory Letter, I, V-IX, and XIII

Tuesday, October 22 **Machiavelli**

Reading:

Machiavelli, *The Prince*, XV-XVIII, XXI-XXIII, and XXV-XXVI

Thursday, October 24 No class

Midterm essay due: 23:59 on Saturday, October 26

FALL BREAK (October 28-November 3)

III. HARMONY AND GRACE

Tuesday, November 5 **Brunelleschi**

Visual assignment: group presentations

Reading:

Alberti, *On the Art of Building*, VI.1-3 and IX.5

Thursday, November 7 **Castiglione** (lecture: Katalin Makkai)

Reading:

Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, Dedicatory Letter and Book I, sections 1-28

Tuesday, November 12 **Raphael, I**

Reading:

Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, Book I, sections 29-31, 37, and 47-56

Thursday, November 14 **Raphael, II**

Visual assignment: group presentation

Reading:

Vasari, *Lives of the Artists*, Prefaces to Books I, II, and III

Sunday, November 17 **Visit to the Gemäldegalerie**

(11:00, 12:30, 14:30, 16:00)

Visual assignment: group presentation

Reading:

Tasso, *Jerusalem Delivered*, Canto XIV, 50-79

Vasari, *Lives of the Artists*, Life of Raphael, pp. 330(bottom)-338 and Life of Titian, pp. 500-504

IV. HUMANISM

Tuesday, November 19 No class

Thursday, November 21 **Pico della Mirandola**

Reading:

Pico della Mirandola, *On the Dignity of Man*

Tuesday, November 26 **Michelangelo, I**

Visual assignment: group presentation

Reading:

Michelangelo, Poems nos. 46, 61-62, 151-152, and 164-167

Vasari, *Lives of the Artists*, Life of Michelangelo, pp. 414-415

Thursday, November 28 No class

Sunday, December 1 **Visit to the Bode Museum**

(11:00, 12:30, 14:30, 16:00)

Visual assignment: group presentations

Reading:

Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, Book IV, sections 49-56

Tuesday, December 3 **Michelangelo, II** (lecture: Geoff Lehman)

Reading:

Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, Book IV, sections 57-73

Thursday, December 5 **Michelangelo, III**

Reading:

Michelangelo, Poems nos. 239-43

Vittoria Colonna, *Poems for Michelangelo*, nos. 1,3, 9, 21, 30, 42, 45, 60, 72, 98, 102, and 103

FINAL PRESENTATIONS

Tuesday, December 10

Thursday, December 12

Final essay due: 23:59 on Thursday, December 19