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21H.311 The Renaissance, 1300-1600  
Fall 2004

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## THE RENAISSANCE, 1300-1600

**Subject Description.** The “Renaissance” as a phenomenon in European history is best understood as a series of social, political, and cultural responses to an intellectual trend which began in Italy in the fourteenth century. This intellectual tendency, known as humanism, or the *studia humanitatis*, was at the heart of developments in literature, the arts, the sciences, religion and government for almost three hundred years. In this class, we will highlight the history of humanism, but we will also study religious reformations, high politics, the agrarian world, and European conquest and expansion abroad in the period.

**Subject Requirements.** Attendance and class participation is mandatory. There will be a cumulative final exam at the end of the semester. In addition, students will take a map quiz, write six two-page papers, and one eight to ten-page paper due on 12/6. I will hand out instructions for these assignments later in the term. Each assignment will be weighted as follows in the calculation of the final grade, although these calculations will also take into account improved performance during the course of the semester:

Class Participation	30 points
Two-Page Papers	10 points each (six papers total)
Map Quiz	10 points
Long Paper	40 points
<u>Final Exam</u>	<u>60 points</u>
TOTAL	200 points

**Required Reading.** The following books are available for purchase at the MIT Bookstore; they should also be on reserve in the Hayden Library. Some readings, indicated by an asterisk (\*), will be available on the class web site as e-reserves. If you want more background reading on this period in European history, consult Lynn Hunt, *et al. The Challenge of the West*, on reserve in the Humanities Library.

Rice & Grafton, *The Foundations of Early Modern Europe, 1460-1559*, 2nd Edition. (RG)  
Ross & McLaughlin, *The Portable Renaissance Reader* (RR)  
Emmanuel Leroy-Ladurie, *Montaillou: The Promised Land of Error*  
Petrarch, *The Secret*  
Machiavelli, *The Prince*  
N. Z. Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre*

**Statement on Cheating and Plagiarism:** The web now hosts many sites which offer college-level papers of varying quality on a variety of topics. I am well acquainted with these sites, and

with others that offer detection services to professors. **Buying a paper and submitting it as your own work is cheating. Copying sections from someone else's print or online work into your own without an acknowledgement is plagiarism.** MIT has strict policies against both activities that I will enforce. For the appropriate MIT definitions and policies, visit the following websites. If you are uncertain about what constitutes cheating or plagiarism, please contact me **before** submitting the work in question.

- MIT Online Writing and Communication Center: <http://web.mit.edu/writing>
- Plagiarism and How to Avoid It: <http://web.mit.edu/writing/Citation/plagiarism.html> (Be sure to check out the links to sites at the University of Toronto and Texas A & M.)

### **Class Meetings and Reading Assignments**

#### **Week One**

9/8. Introduction: The History of Renaissance History

#### **Week Two**

9/13. Geography, Demography, Global Trade, 1300-1600

- 1) Leroy-Ladurie, *Montaillou*, 3-135.

9/15. The World of the Peasantry ca. 1300

- 1) Leroy-Ladurie, *Montaillou*, 139-230.

#### **Week Three**

9/20. The Black Death

- 1) \*Barbara Tuchman, "'This is the end of the world': The Black Death", in *A Distant Mirror: The Calamitous Fourteenth Century*, 92-125.
- 2) \*Boccaccio, Introduction to *The Decameron*, 49-68.

#### **Map Quiz**

9/22. The Discarded Image

- 1) RR, 580-3

#### **First Paper Due**

#### **Week Four**

9/27. The Beginnings of Humanism in Fourteenth-Century Italy

- 1) RG, 1-10, 77-90
- 2) RR, 120-30
- 3) Petrarch, *The Secret*, 1-70, 149-58

9/29. Petrarch

Petrarch, *The Secret*, 70-148.

**Second Paper Due**

### **Week Five**

10/4. Civic Humanism in Early Fifteenth-Century Italy and beyond

1) \*Introduction and Bruni's *Panegyric to the City of Florence* in Benjamin G. Kohl and Ronald G. Witt, eds. *The Earthly Republic: Italian Humanists on Government and Society* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978), 121-175.

2) RR, 476-9

10/6. Art and Culture in Fifteenth-Century Italy

1) RG, 90-114

2) RR, 140-5, 527-40

3) \*Pat Simons, "Women in Frames: The Gaze, the Eye, the Profile in Renaissance Portraiture", *History Workshop* 25 (1988):38-57.

**Third Paper due**

### **Week Six**

10/11. **Columbus Day – No Class**

10/13. A Visit to the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University

1) \*Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy* (Oxford U.P., 1988, 2nd ed.), 1-27

**Fourth Paper Due**

### **Week Seven**

10/18. Burgundy and Late Medieval Politics in the North

1) RR, 185-202

10/20. The New Monarchies & The Invasion of Italy

1) RG, 110-45

2) RR, 279-94

### **Week Eight**

10/25. Politics Reinvented

1) Machiavelli, *The Prince*, all.

10/27. Christian Humanism in the North

- 1) RR, 80-6, 401-8, 717-21
- 2) \*J. Kelley Sowards, ed. *The Julius Exclusus of Erasmus* (Indiana U.P., 1968), 45-141.

### **Week Nine**

11/1. Martin Luther and the Protestant Challenge

- 1) RG, 146-77
- 2) RR, 677-703.

11/3. The Age of Reformations

- 1) RG, 178-202
- 2) RR, 234-41
- 3) \*Hans Hillerbrand, ed. "Radical Reform Movements", in *The Reformation* (Baker Book House, 1987, 6th ed.), 214-38.

**Fifth Paper Due**

### **Week Ten**

11/8. Sixteenth-Century Peasants I

- 1) Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre*, 1-61

11/10. Sixteenth-Century Peasants II

- 1) Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre*, 62-125

**Sixth Paper Due**

### **Week Eleven**

11/15. 1543: The Copernican Revolution

- 1) RG, 18-26
- 2) RR, 584-611

11/17. 1543: The Vesalian Revolution

- 1) RR, 552-73

**Visit to the Dibner Library**

### **Week Twelve**

11/22. Individual consultations with instructor

11/24. Review

**Week Thirteen**

11/29. Portuguese Expansion

- 1) RG, 32-38
- 2) Long Paper Due

12/1. Spanish Exploration

- 1) RG, 38-44
- 2) RR 146-57

**Week Fourteen**

12/6. Spanish Conquest

- 1) \*Mark A. Burkholder and Lyman L. Johnson, *Colonial Latin America*, 4th ed., 42-59.
- 2) \*Stuart B. Schwartz, ed. "The Siege and Fall of Tenochtitlan", in *Victors and Vanquished: Spanish and Nahua Views of the Conquest of Mexico* (Bedford/St. Martins, 2000), 182-213.

12/8. Conclusion: The Future of the Renaissance

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**DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF FINAL EXAM TBA.**