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

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THE RENAISSANCE, 1300-1600

Subject Description. “Renaissance” is the French word for rebirth; in this class, we will ask what was “reborn” in Europe from 1300 to 1600. At the end of the term, we will evaluate the success of this rebirth ca. 1600. Along the way we will consider Renaissance arts and letters, the impact of religious reformation on theology and politics, the place of women in the Renaissance, and sixteenth-century European interaction with the peoples of the Americas.

Subject Requirements. Attendance and class participation is mandatory. Students will take a map quiz, write four three-page papers, and prepare a final project and make an oral presentation on it. I will hand out instructions for these assignments later in the term. There is no midterm or final exam in this subject. 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	25 points
Map Quiz	5 points
Three-Page Papers	20 points each (four papers total)
Oral Report on Final Project	15 points
<u>Final Project</u>	<u>75 points</u>
TOTAL	200 points

Required Reading. The five 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 Making of the West: Peoples and Cultures*, on reserve in the Humanities Library.

Rice & Grafton, *The Foundations of Early Modern Europe, 1460-1559*, 2nd Edition. (RG)
Francesco Petrarch, *The Secret* (Bedford/St Martin’s edition, edited by Carol E. Quillen)
Antonio Manetti, *The Fat Woodworker* (Italice Press ed.)
Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince* (Bedford/St Martin’s edition, edited by William J. Connell)
Bartolomé de las Casas, *The Devastation of the Indies* (Johns Hopkins ed.)

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>
- Avoiding Plagiarism: <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

Sept. 3. Introduction: Was it a Renaissance?

Week Two

Sept. 8. Historians Debate the Renaissance

- 1) *Jacob Burckhardt, Excerpts from *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, in Zachary S. Schiffman, *Humanism and the Renaissance* (Houghton Mifflin, 2002), 11-26.
- 2) *William J. Bouwsma, "The Worst of Times," in *The Waning of the Renaissance, 1550-1640* (Yale UP, 2000), 112-28.
- 3) **OPTIONAL:** Read more Burckhardt at <http://www.boisestate.edu/courses/hy309/docs/burckhardt/burckhardt.html>

Sept. 10. The Discarded Image

- 1) RG, 18-26
- 2) *Excerpts from Nicholas Oresme, Nicholas of Cusa, and Nicholas Copernicus, in *The Portable Renaissance Reader*, 580-93.
- 3) **Map Quiz**

Week Three

Sept. 15. The Beginnings of Humanism in Fourteenth-Century Italy

- 1) RG, 1-10, 77-89
- 2) *Francesco Petrarck, "The Ascent of Mount Ventoux"

3) Francesco Petrarch, *The Secret*, 1-70, 149-58

Sept. 17. Petrarch

- 1) Francesco Petrarch, *The Secret*, 70-148

Week Four

Sept. 22. **NO CLASS (Institute Holiday)**

Sept. 24. **NO CLASS**

- 1) **First Short Paper Due**

Week Five

Sept. 29. Manuscript and Print, 1450-1550

- 1) *Asa Briggs and Peter Burke. "The Print Revolution in Context," in *A Social History of the Media: From Gutenberg to the Internet* (Polity Press, 2nd ed., 2005), 13-50
- 2) *Houghton Library. MS Typ 041. Chronique du monde depuis la création, et des rois de France
- 3) *Houghton Library. MS typ 555. C'est la Bible hystoriale
- 4) *Anonymous, *Here begynneth a mery gest and a true howe Iohan splynter made his testament* (1520 printed work) [EEBO online version]
- 5) [optional] *Anthony Grafton, "The Humanist as Reader," in *A History of Reading in the West*, eds. Guglielmo Cavallo and Roger Chartier (Massachusetts, 1999), 179-212

Oct. 1. Visit to The Houghton Library, Harvard University

Week Six

Oct. 6. Brunelleschi: Architecture and Illusion

- 1) RG, 90-104
- 2) Antonio Manetti, *The Fat Woodworker*, all
- 3) *Valentin Groebner, "Are We Who We Appear to Be? Narratives of Identification," in Groebner, *Who Are You? Identification, Deception, and Surveillance in Early Modern Europe* (Zone Books, 2007), 17-29.
- 4) In-class video on fifteenth-century Florentine architecture and art

Oct. 8. Renaissance Perspective: Another Illusion?

- 1) *Martin Kemp, "Linear Perspective from Brunelleschi to Leonardo," in *The Science of Art: Optical Themes in Western Art from Brunelleschi to Seurat* (Yale, 1990), 8-52.
- 2) *Adrian Randolph, "Renaissance Genderscapes," in *Structures and Subjectivities: Attending to Early Modern Women*, ed. Joan Hartman and Adele Seeff (Newark: University of Delaware Press; London: Associated University Presses, 2006).

Week Seven

Oct. 13. NO CLASS – COLUMBUS DAY

- 1) **Second Short Paper Due**

Oct. 15. Late Medieval Politics: Italy and Burgundy

- 1) RG, 110-145
- 2) *Backgrounds: Early Modern Italian Renaissance (a web site with an introduction to fifteenth and sixteenth century Italian peninsular politics)

Week Eight

Oct. 20. Early Modern Politics: Spain and Its Dominions

- 1) Connell edition of *The Prince*, 1-68
- 2) *"Niccolò Machiavelli," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (online)

Oct. 22. Machiavelli

- 1) Connell edition of *The Prince*, 68-123

Week Nine

Oct. 27. Women and Gender in the Renaissance

- 1) *Carole Levin, "Women in the Renaissance," in *Becoming Visible: Women in European History*, eds. Renate Blumenthal, *et al.*, (Houghton Mifflin, 3rd ed., 1998), 152-73
- 2) *Elissa B. Weaver, "Gender," in *A Companion to the Worlds of the Renaissance* ed. Guido Ruggiero (Blackwell, 2002), 188-207
- 3) *Francesco Barbaro, "On Wifely Duties (1416)," in *The Italian Renaissance: The Essential Sources* ed. Kenneth Gouwens (Blackwell, 2004), 150-69

Oct. 29. Women and Art in Italy

- 1) *Giovanni Boccaccio, *Decameron X*, 10 (story of Griselda). Available online via course website.

- 2) *Cristelle L. Baskins, "Griselda, or the Renaissance Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelor in Tuscan *Cassone* Painting," *Stanford Italian Review* 10 (1992): 153-75

Nov. 1 (Saturday), 1 PM.

- 1) Visit to the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum to see "The Triumph of Marriage: Painted Cassoni of the Renaissance" (Guest Speaker and Co-Curator of the exhibit: Professor Cristelle Baskins, Tufts University)
- 2) **Third Short Paper Due**

Week Ten

Nov. 3. Catholic Renewal

- 1) RG, 146-52
- 2) *Excerpts from various writings of Erasmus of Rotterdam, in *The Portable Renaissance Reader*, 80-6, 401-8, 717-21
- 3) *Erasmus, "The Paraclesis," in John C. Olin, ed. *Christian Humanism and the Reformation* (New York, 1975).
- 4) **[optional]** *J. Kelley Sowards, ed. *The Julius Exclusus of Erasmus* (Indiana U.P., 1968), 45-141.

Nov. 5. Protestant Revolution

- 1) RG, 153-77
- 2) *The debate over free will between Erasmus and Luther, in *The Portable Renaissance Reader*, 677-703

Week Eleven

Nov. 10. **NO CLASS – VETERANS' DAY**

Nov. 12. The Suppression of Peasants and Radical Reformers

- 1) *Hans Hillerbrand, ed. "The Political and Organizational Consolidation of the Reformation in Germany", in *The Reformation* (Baker Book House, 1987, 6th ed.), 372-94
- 2) *Documents regarding the German Peasants' War, in *The Portable Renaissance Reader*, 234-41
- 3) *Hans Hillerbrand, ed. "Radical Reform Movements", in *The Reformation* (Baker Book House, 1987, 6th ed.), 214-38.
- 4) **Final Project Prospectus Due**

Week Twelve

Nov. 17. New World: Exploration and Conquest

- 1) RG, 32-44
- 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
- 3) **[optional]** *Mark A. Burkholder and Lyman L. Johnson, *Colonial Latin America*, 4th ed., 42-59.

Nov. 19. New World: Exploitation?

- 1) Las Casas, *The Devastation of the Indies: A Brief Account*, 27-132 (Donovan introduction optional)

Week Thirteen

Nov. 24. Individual Consultations with Instructor

Fourth Short Paper Due

Nov. 26. Individual Consultations with Instructor

Week Fourteen

Dec. 1. The Late Sixteenth Century: Skepticism, Magic, and Science

- 1) *Michel de Montaigne, "On Cannibals."

Dec. 3. Oral Reports

Week Fifteen

Dec. 8. Oral reports

Dec. 10. Historians Sum Up

- 1) *Randolph Starn, "The European Renaissance," in Guido Ruggiero, ed. *A Companion to the Worlds of the Renaissance* (Oxford, 2002), 39-54.

2) *Paula Findlen, "Possessing the Past: The Material World of the Italian Renaissance," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 103, No. 1 (Feb., 1998), pp. 83-114

3) **Final Projects Due**