

University of Texas at Austin—Spring 2011  
HIS 343g (39595) / AHC 330 (33195) / RS 357 (44295) / WGS 340 (47670)

***ITALIAN RENAISSANCE (1350-1550)***  
***MWF 9-10am*** ***GAR 1.126***

**Instructor:** Prof. Alison Frazier akfrazier@mail.utexas.edu  
Office: GAR 2.148 Office phone: 475 6375

**Office hours:** M 2.30-4.30pm and by appointment in GAR 2.148  
Feel free to email akfrazier@mail.utexas.edu; I try to answer promptly.

**Course description.** This upper-division course combines lecture and discussion to introduce the political, social, economic, and cultural phenomena that made the Italian peninsula such a lively and influential place between 1350 and 1550. Drawing on a range of primary source readings, we will analyze continuity and change in many realms of human experience. Emphasis will be placed upon the “recovery of learning” and its effect on areas ranging from religion and gender, to economics, technology, and art.

This course aims to help you become a more thoughtful analyst of continuity and change in such contentious areas of history as politics, gender, and religion. By semester’s end, you will have read some of the most influential and controversial works from this period, and will be able to put them in historical context and explain why they remain compelling today.

This course has no prerequisites and assumes no prior knowledge of the subject, but *students are presumed to be capable of critical reflection upon both lectures and readings.*

*Every student has the right to learn in a supportive environment.* Turn off your cellphones. Your laptop may be used only for taking notes or for professor-directed web-surfing. Keep the volume turned off.

**Course readings.** Purchase (p) these books online or through the University Coop, or use copies on 2hr reserve (r) in PCL. Choose these translations only!

Boccaccio, *Decameron* (Musa & Bondanella, trs) (p, r)  
Alberti, *On Painting* (Grayson, tr.) (p, r)  
Valla, *Declamation on the Donation* (Bowersock, tr.) (p, r)  
Castiglione, *Courtier* (Bull, tr.) (p, r)

In a packet (k) from IT Copy. Bring your packet to class when we are using these texts:

Petrarch, *Two Letters to Cicero; Letter on the Plague; Two Sonnets on Laura; Ascent of Mt. Ventoux*  
Leonardo Bruni, *Panegyric on the City of Florence*

Antonia Pulci, *Play of St. Francis*  
 Anthony Grafton, "Importance of Being Printed" (1980)  
 Isotta Nogarola, *Oration on St. Jerome*  
 Niccolò Machiavelli, *Mandragola* (tr. Newbiggin)

In download format. Please print the text and bring it to class for discussion.

Marsilio Ficino, excerpt from *Three Books on Life*  
*See below under week 12*

Recommended:

Burckhardt, *Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (available in many copies in PCL: DG 533 B85 1981 etc.). First published in 1860 as a series of newspaper essays, this book by a friend of Nietzsche's established many of the debates about the significance of the Renaissance that will guide our class.

Caferro, *Contesting the Renaissance* (2010)—available as an ebook through PCL, and also in hard-copy at PCL reserves (24hr checkout). This book questions the principle claims made about the Renaissance that we, too, examine this semester.

**Attendance**

I expect your regular, on-time attendance. Persistent tardiness will hurt your final grade.

You are allowed *two absences* with no questions asked. Note, however, that any written work due on those days must be submitted on schedule. After that, unexcused absences adversely affect your grade.

Excused absences require a note to the professor ahead of time insofar as possible. For unexpected absence due to illness or accident, notify me of your situation as soon as possible and *document it immediately* on return.

For absences due to religious holy days, UT-Austin policy requires that you notify me at least 2 weeks in advance. If you miss an assignment, I will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work.

**Assignments and Assessment**

I expect your thorough and on-time preparation of reading and writing assignments, and your respectful and engaged participation in every class discussion or small-group activity.

Plus and minus grading will NOT be used in this class. A score rounds up at .5 or higher. In addition, I may adjust grading up or down to reflect individual effort over the arc of the semester.

Your final grade will be based on the following work and weighting:

Map quiz (see handout: 100% required to pass course)	0%
Quizzes & discussion (alone, paired, groups)	30%
NB: quizzes cannot be made up. There are eleven quizzes. Your two lowest scores will be deleted. You are responsible for all the material, however, on exams.	
Exam I (in-class, two short essay passages)	20%
Exam II (in-class, non-cumulative, same format)	20%
Special project (see handout)	30%

Dates to know:

Last day to drop class without penalty	2 Feb
Special project decision due in class, in writing	4 Feb
Exam I	9 March
Exam II	6 May

**Keep in touch!** If you are having difficulty with the course or must be absent for a period due to personal issues, stop by during office hours or contact me by email. Don't wait until weeks have passed and it's too late to catch up. Your professor sincerely wants you to succeed.

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## TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

*This syllabus represents my current plans and objectives. As we go through the semester, those plans may need to change to enhance your opportunity for learning. Such changes, communicated clearly, are not unusual and should be expected.*

**Week 1.**      **W 19 Jan**      Introduction: syllabus nuts and bolts  
**F 21 Jan**      Who Invented the Renaissance?

Required preparation for Week 1. Look over the syllabus *carefully* to make sure you have no conflicts with **quiz or exam dates**. Consider the topics listed and think about your **special project** topic.

Optional: Caferro, *Contesting*, chapter I.

**Week 2.**      **M 24 Jan**      Map quiz. What was the Black Death?  
**W 26 Jan**      Plague and the *Decameron*  
**F 28 Jan**      Reading quiz & Discussion of Boccaccio

Required preparation for Week 2. Boccaccio, *Decameron*, preface and

Introduction (1-20); Day I, story I (21-32); Day 10, story 10 (672-84)

Optional. Compare the skeptic Cohn, “The Black Death: The End of a Paradigm” *American Historical Review* 107, 3 (2002): 703-78. (Available as an ejournal through PCL) to the latest science, Haensch et al., “Distinct Clones of *Yersinia pestis*” in the online journal *PLoS Pathogens* (Oct. 2010): <http://www.plospathogens.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.ppat.1001134>

**Week 3.**  
**M 31 Jan**      Map quiz. Boccaccio: Moralist or Seducer?  
**W 2 Feb**        The World of the *Decameron*  
**F 4 Feb**        Reading quiz & Discussion of Boccaccio

Required preparation for Week 3. Boccaccio, *Decameron*, day 1 story 2; day 2 story 7; day 3 stories 1 & 10; day 4 intro and stories 1 & 5; day 6 stories 7 & 10; day 9 story 3; day 10, story 8; author’s conclusion.

Explore: *Decameron Web* at:  
[http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Italian\\_Studies/dweb/dweb.shtml](http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Italian_Studies/dweb/dweb.shtml)

**Week 4.**  
**M 7 Feb**        Map quiz. Petrarch: The First Individual?  
**W 9 Feb**        Imitation or Originality?  
**F 11 Feb**       Reading quiz & Discussion of Petrarch

Required preparation for Week 4. Petrarch, *Letter to Posterity*, two *Letters to Cicero*, *Ascent of Mt. Ventoux* (k) with reading guide

Explore. Go to the HRC Reading Room (Ransom Center, second floor); ask to register as a reader (mention this class). You will be required to watch a short video on handling rare books and manuscripts. When you get your card, fill out a request for HRC 47, a fifteenth-century manuscript of Petrarch’s poems, or for printed book PQ 4476 BI4 ALDINE, an early sixteenth-century copy of Petrarch’s works printed by the most famous early publisher, Aldus Manutius of Venice. These books are not in English, nevertheless, what can you learn about Renaissance cultural values by looking through them? Be a good observer.

**Week 5.**  
**M 14 Feb.**      Map quiz. Leon Battista Alberti: Renaissance Man?  
**W 16 Feb.**      Patrons and Clients, Religious and Secular  
**F 18 Feb.**      Reading quiz & Discussion of Alberti

Required preparation for Week 5. Alberti, *On Painting*, with reading guide.

Explore. An introduction to Brunelleschi’s dome at the Getty Museum site: <http://blogs.getty.edu/iris/inside-brunelleschis-dome/>  
 Scroll down to see an archival document explained, with links to more at “Years of the Cupola Project.”



Being Printed" *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 11, 2 (1980): 265-86  
This journal is available through PCL as an ejournal. Download and print a copy for yourself.

Explore. On Th evening 31 March, Prof Anthony Grafton of Princeton University will speak on Renaissance printing and scholarship. Details TBA.

**Week 12.**  
**M 4 April** Map quiz. Plato & Aristotle in the Renaissance.  
**W 6 April** Marsilio Ficino  
**F 8 April** Reading quiz & Discussion.

Required preparation for Week 12. Ficino, *Three Books on Life*, excerpt from Bk. 3 at <http://people.bu.edu/dklepper/RN242/marsilio.html>

Explore. International Society for Neoplatonic Studies at: <http://www.isns.us/texts.htm>

**Week 13.**  
**M 11 April** Map quiz. Biblical Scholarship & Patristics.  
**W 13 April** St. Jerome in the Renaissance  
**F 15 April** Reading quiz & Discussion.

Required preparation for Week 13. Nogarola, "Oration on St. Jerome" (k)

Explore. Digital Scriptorium: <http://www.scriptorium.columbia.edu/>  
Click on "Search" then type in "Bible" or "Jerome" or "glossa ordinaria" then click on "Images Only"

**Week 14.**  
**M 18 April** Map quiz. Niccolò Machiavelli: Political Realism?  
**W 20 April** Peninsular Politics, 1494-1530  
**F 22 April** Reading quiz & Discussion.

Required preparation for Week 14. Machiavelli, *Mandragola*, with reading guide.

Explore. Reliable information about Machiavelli online at the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy website, article by C. Nederman: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/machiavelli/>

**Week 15.**  
**M 25 April** Map quiz. Baldessare Castiglione: Perfect Courtier?  
**W 27 April** A Brief History of Etiquette  
**F 29 April** Reading quiz & Discussion.

Required preparation for Week 15. Castiglione, *Courtier*, books 1-2

Explore. Art historian Gary Radke (Syracuse University) on Castiglione's *Courtier* and Raphael's famous portrait of Castiglione at: <http://forum-network.org/?videoid=8oe9ajhhy8>

<b>Week 16.</b>	<b>M 2 May</b>	Map quiz. End of Renaissance = End of Middle Ages?
	<b>W 4 May</b>	Catch up. Review for Exam 2.
	<b>F 6 May</b>	<b>EXAM 2 (no blue book required)</b>

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**Other information suggested or required by the University:**

**This course carries the Global Cultures flag.** Global Cultures courses are designed to increase your familiarity with cultural groups outside the United States. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from assignments covering the practices, beliefs, and histories of at least one non-U.S. cultural group, past or present.

**Policy on Blackboard (bb).** In this class I use bb to distribute course materials, to communicate online, to post grades, and to administer the midterm course survey. *Keep your email address current, so that messages sent from bb reach you.*

See: <http://utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.html>

**Academic integrity.** University of Texas Honor Code

The core values of the University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect towards peers and community.

*Any form of cheating, including plagiarism, violates the Honor Code.* Infringements will result, at a minimum, in a zero for the assignment, and may be extended to include failure of the course and University disciplinary action. See: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs>

**Academic inclusivity.** Any student who requires academic accommodations should contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 471-6259 (voice) or I-866-329-3986 (video phone). Students seeking accommodation must provide a letter to the professor from SSD. See: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/ssd/>

**Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL).** If you are worried about someone who is acting differently, you may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone your concerns about another individual's behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal>

**Emergency Evacuation Policy.** Occupants of buildings on the UT Austin campus are required to evacuate and assemble outside when a fire alarm is activated or an announcement is made. Please be aware of the following policies regarding evacuation: Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when you entered the building.