# History of the Renaissance

## Spring Semester, 2018

Section 1 (4:00-4:50, M, T, R)

Professor: Dr. Brian J. Hale

E-Mail Address: [bhale@uwsp.edu](mailto:bhale@uwsp.edu) Office: CCC 465

Office Hours: Monday, 5:00-6:00 p.m., Thursday, 2:00-2:45 p.m., and by prearranged appointment.

# The Renaissance, or *Rinascimento* in Italian, was a movement that produced radical changes in almost every aspect of early modern life – art, architecture, culture, economics, politics, and society. It is often represented as a repudiation of medieval values in favor of the revival of the culture of ancient Greece and Rome. There were of course major obstacles to a revival of antiquity, notably the great differences between ancient culture and society and that of early modern Europe: the place of Christianity and its clergy; the use of firearms in warfare and the press in the dissemination of ideas; the awareness of Islam; the discovery of the “New World” and so on. For Jacob Burckhardt, the nineteenth-century Swiss historian and art critic who marked the starting point of all modern interpretations of the movement, the Renaissance was the spirit of self-discovery and fulfillment, of recognition of human worth, and a dynamic outpouring of artistic activity. Renaissance artists, patrons, thinkers, writers, and rulers such as Filippo Brunelleschi, Leon Battista Alberti, Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo Buonarroti, Isabella d’Este, Lorenzo “il Magnifico” de’ Medici, Vittoria Colonna, Caterina Sforza, Niccolò Machiavelli, Catherine de’ Medici, and Galileo Galilei continue to excite our imaginations and inspire creative work. This course will delve into the historical context of the Renaissance movement in Italy and northern Europe, including discussions of Renaissance ideals, Renaissance art, the commercial revolution, urbanization, the palazzo, the theater, ceremonial, the Columbian Exchange, and the New Science. We will consider how the Renaissance movement throughout Europe reshaped society and whether the Renaissance

# truly invented “modernity”.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

# Required Texts:

John Aberth, *The Black Death. The Great Mortality of 1348-1350*, 2nd ed. (Boston, 2016).

Julia Conaway Bondanella & Mark Musa, eds., *The Italian Renaissance Reader* (New York, 1987).

Gene Brucker, *Giovanni and Lusanna. Love and Marriage in Renaissance Florence* (Berkeley, 2005).

Benjamin Kohl, ed., *Major Problems in the History of the Italian Renaissance* (Lexington, MA, 1995).

James Bruce Ross, ed., *The Portable Renaissance Reader* (New York, 1977).

E-Reserve readings.

Suggested Reading:

Mary L. Kelley, *Understanding and Answering Essay Questions* (Englewood Cliffs, 1994).

Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, 3rd ed. (1989; Boston and New York, 2001).

Reading Assignments:

Each weekend, the reading assignment for the following week from the “Required Texts” will be posted in *Desire to Learn* under our course title. You can purchase the books by Aberth, Bondanella/Musa, Brucker, and Ross in the Dreyfus University Center bookstore or from various on-line vendors. Please be sure to get the correct edition of the texts. Copies of each book are also on reserve in the library. You can rent Kohl’s work in the textbook section of the Dreyfus University Center bookstore. A link to Kelley’s short pamphlet can be found in *Desire to Learn*. Various editions of Rampolla’s book can be found in the library.

Exams, Essays, Discussion Guides, and Oral Presentations:

You will take two in-class exams during the semester. The first test will be around mid-semester. It will consist of three parts: one essay based on the assigned readings, and two essays based on the lectures delivered by me in class. The second test will be the final exam. It will also consist of one essay based on the assigned readings and two essays based on the lectures. Each exam is worth 150.0 points. A study guide for each exam will be placed in *Desire to Learn* approximately a week before the exam.

You will write a 5-7-page essay about a topic dealing with the Renaissance. Information about the essay can be found in *Desire to Learn* under the heading “Essay Guidelines.” A copy of the guidelines will also be given to you on the first day of class. The essay is worth 150.0 points. You will be asked to give a rough draft of your essay for editing to another student in the class. You will also edit a classmate’s rough draft. Your rough draft and editing work will be worth 75.0 points.

Each week, a “Discussion Guide” containing a number of questions will be placed in *Desire to Learn*. The questions are based on the reading assignment for the week. Each Discussion Guide will differ in the number of points it is worth. The Discussion Guides will form the core of “workshops” designed to encourage one-to-one, group, and whole-class interaction and discussion. Information about them can be found in *Desire to Learn* under the heading “Discussion Guidelines.” A copy will also be given to you on the first day of class.

You will present a brief, informative talk on an assigned day about an artist you choose on the first day of class. Information about the oral presentation can be found in the handout entitled “Oral Presentation Guidelines,” which is also available in *Desire to Learn* under our course title. The talk is worth 50.0 points

If you need help with the assigned reading and writing, visit the Tutor and Learning Center in the basement of the library. The staff will help you, and their services are free!! You can call to make an appointment at (715-346-3568) or visit them on their webpage: <http://www.uwsp.edu/tlc/Pages/writingReadingTutorials.aspx>.

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Important Dates:

Exam I on Monday, March 12.

Rough draft of essay due in class on Thursday, April 26.

Essay due in D2L Dropbox on Thursday, May 10.

Final Exam on Tuesday, May 15, from 5:00-7:00 p.m. in CCC 114.

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# Grades:

Exams: 300.0 points 90 - 100% = A

Essay Edit 75.0 points 80 - 89% = B

Discussion Guides 500.0 points 70 - 79% = C

Essay: 150.0 points 60 - 69% = D

Oral Presentation: 50.0 points 0 - 59% = F

Total: 1, 075.0 points

Grading Criteria:

A: Demonstrates mastery of historical information (ideas, names, places, dates) and provides a

knowledgeable interpretation of that information.

B: Demonstrates a command of historical information but provides an ineffective interpretation.

C: Demonstrates a command of historical information but lacks any kind of interpretation.

D: Demonstrates a brittle command of historical information and lacks completely any kind of

interpretation.

F: Demonstrates inaccurate historical knowledge and lacks completely any kind of interpretation.

Intended Learning Outcomes:

As a result of this course, students will improve their ability to:

* Articulate standard and alternative historiographical narratives about the European Renaissance.
* Demonstrate advanced level skills for evidence-based writing in the discipline of History.
* Analyze primary sources and scholarly arguments in secondary sources.
* Apply appropriate note-taking, test-taking, and time-management strategies to academic study.
* Demonstrate oral communication skills in a classroom setting.

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UWSP Rights and Responsibilities:

UWSP values a safe, honest, respectful, and inviting learning environment. In order to ensure that each student has an opportunity to succeed, a set of expectations have been developed for all students and instructors. This set of expectations is known as the Rights and Responsibilities document, and it is intended to help establish a positive living and learning environment at UWSP. For more information, go to:

<http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Pages/departments/rightsResponsibilities.aspx>.

The Rights and Responsibilities document also includes the policies regarding academic misconduct:

<http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/SRR-2010/rightsChap14.pdf>.

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Americans with Disabilities Act:

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal law regarding educational institutions to provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. For more information about UWSP’s policies, check here:

<http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documens/RightsRespons/ADA/rightsADAPolicyinfo.pdf>

If you have a disability or require classroom and/or exam accommodations, please register with the Disability Services Office and then contact me at the beginning of the course. For more information, please visit the Disability and Assistive Technology Center, located on the sixth floor of the Learning Resource Center (the library). You can also find more information here:

<http://www4.uwsp.edu/special/disability/>.

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Important Regulations:

* All societies have norms, and it is therefore important for you to abide by the rules of conduct in this class.
* Value inclusivity at all times.
* You must take all of the exams and complete each section of the exams to pass the course.
* Please maintain respect in the classroom. Talking to classmates during lecture, reading newspapers or books, working on materials for other classes, sleeping, and packing up before the end of class are examples of disrespectful behavior.
* Do not leave the room in the middle of class, because it is disruptive to the instructor and other students. You are expected to spend the entire 50 minutes in class. Any exceptions to this rule must be approved by the instructor prior to the class period. Appointments are not a valid excuse to leave class early.
* Please remember to turn off cell phones, pagers, tape recorders, and other technology during class. Taping lectures and using smart pens is prohibited!!!
* **Attendance is part of your grade**! If you miss **5 or more** classes (11%) during the semester, your grade will drop by 10 percent. If you miss **8 or more** classes (18%) during the semester, your grade will drop by 20%. If you miss **10 or more** classes (22%), you will fail the course. The only excused absences are your personal hospitalizations, deaths in your immediate family, and university-related functions. Appropriate documentation must be provided to me in each case.
* You are responsible for signing the attendance sheet each day. If you do not sign the attendance sheet, you will be listed as absent.
* No instance of academic misconduct, such as plagiarism or cheating, will be tolerated. They are serious offenses against honest students and the university community.
* Posting instructor-created course materials onto course-sharing websites directly violates the instructor’s copyright of his academic materials. These materials are provided for your convenience and as an aid to learning. Permission to post instructor-created materials on any such sites is unequivocally denied.

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* Extra credit is available upon request. No extra credit will be granted during the last two weeks of the semester. Extra credit will not be offered if you have missed 5 or more classes.
* If you require special accommodations in order to meet the requirements of this course, please contact me during the first week of the semester.
* This syllabus is subject to change throughout the semester.

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