

History 304: Late Middle Ages/Early Renaissance, 1300-1494

University of Massachusetts Amherst

Prof. Brian W. Ogilvie

Fall Semester 1997

MWF 9:05–9:55 AM, Machmer E-10

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Hours: MW 10:30 AM-12:00 noon, and by appointment.

This syllabus is also available online at the following URL:

<<http://www-unix.umass.edu/~ogilvie/courses/304/index.html>>.

Updates to the syllabus, handouts, and assignments will be posted to this web page.

I will have a sign-up sheet for office hours on my office door. If no one has signed up, I reserve the right to arrive somewhat late or leave somewhat early, but I will still be there.

Brief description of course

The fourteenth and fifteenth centuries are often portrayed with metaphors of decline and renewal: the end of the Middle Ages, the Renaissance. In this course we will examine fourteenth- and fifteenth-century European society, economy, politics, and culture. The geographical emphasis will be on the urbanized areas of Italy and France and Burgundy.

We will be reading classic and recent essays on the period, supplemented by selected contemporary documents. In addition to texts, we will consider visual and plastic arts, architecture, and music as sources for understanding the period.

Course grading

The course grade will be determined according to the following criteria:

Four papers @ 15% each: 60%

Final examination: 20%

Classroom participation: 20%

Description and schedule of papers and exams

There will be four short (5-7 p.) papers and a final examination for the course. Paper topics will be distributed one week before the papers are due; you will have a choice among several topics.

Paper topics will be announced 9/17, 10/8, 10/29, and 11/19. They will be due one week after they are announced (i.e. **9/24**, **10/15**, **11/5**, and **11/26**). They should be based on class lectures, discussions, and readings.

Papers will be graded on content (what you say), organization (how effectively you say it), and style (how clearly you say it). Please proofread your papers before submitting them, and keep a copy for yourself.

Policy on late papers

Late papers will be penalized one-half letter grade for each day they are late. The only exception will be in cases where the late paper has been arranged with the instructor at least two days before the deadline or when the paper is late due to circumstances

beyond the student's control. *Inability to find or use a printer will **not** be accepted as an excuse.*

Policy on absences

Because there is no textbook for this course, and classroom participation is a component of the course grade, there will be two penalties for absence: you will miss the material presented in class, and your participation grade will suffer. For each unexcused absence after the fourth, your participation grade will be reduced by one letter grade. In addition, if you are absent from class (whether excused or not), you should plan to see me in office hours and to discuss the material you missed.

Policy on academic honesty

Plagiarism is grounds for failure in the course. Plagiarism consists of either (a) copying the exact words of another work without both enclosing them in quotation marks and providing a reference, or (b) using information or ideas from another work without providing credit, in notes, to the source of the information or ideas. Submission of a paper copied from another work, or which contains fictitious or falsified notes, will result in automatic failure of the course. Please refer to the student manual for the University's full policy on academic honesty.

Books for course

The following books are available for purchase at the Textbook Annex. They are also on reserve in the DuBois Library (some of the books on reserve are in different editions; for those books, I have included brief descriptions of the topics so you can be sure you are reading the correct selections). The Montague Book Mill, Raven Books, and many other local used bookstores have copies of some of these books.

Michael Baxandall, *Painting and experience in fifteenth-century Italy*, 2nd ed. (Oxford University Press).

Gene Brucker, ed., *Two memoirs of Renaissance Florence: The diaries of Buonaccorso Pitti and Gregorio Dati*, trans. Julia Martines (Waveland Press; reprint of Harper Torchbooks edition).

Jacob Burckhardt, *The civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (Penguin).

Jean Froissart, *Chronicles* (Penguin Classics). The copy on reserve is an older abridgement; I strongly urge you to buy the Penguin edition.

David Herlihy and Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, *Tuscans and their families* (Yale University Press).

Johan Huizinga, *The autumn of the Middle Ages* (University of Chicago Press). This book is on order in the forthcoming paperback edition as a recommended text. You can find copies of the earlier English translation at many local used bookstores for significantly less money. Both editions will be on reserve.

Alessandra Strozzi, *Selected letters of Alessandra Strozzi* (University of California Press).

Lorenzo Valla, *The treatise of Lorenzo Valla on the Donation of Constantine* (University of Toronto Press/Renaissance Society of America).

Giorgio Vasari, *The lives of the artists* (Oxford University Press).

If you do not already have it, you may want to get the *Anchor Atlas of World History*, vol. 1, which is a useful reference work for important political events and dates. Its interpretations are often outdated and unreliable, however.

In addition, a good guide to practical aspects of studying history is: Norman F.

Cantor and Richard I. Schneider, *How to study history* (Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, 1967). This book is also on reserve.

A recommended reading list is appended to the syllabus. The books on this list are not on reserve; if you charge them out of the library, please be considerate to your classmates and do not keep them longer than you need them.

A note on readings

Because this course does not have any textbook, properly speaking, you will probably encounter some unfamiliar names and concepts during your reading. You should try to familiarize yourself with them. A useful reference is the *Thames & Hudson Dictionary of the Italian Renaissance*. In addition, general encyclopedias like the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* are often good sources of basic background information. Please don't hesitate to ask in class or office hours if there is something you don't know or find difficult to understand.

Course schedule, with assigned readings

Wed. 9/3: Introduction to the "Renaissance"

Defining "medieval" and "Renaissance"; ways of doing history; introduction to the course topics.

Fri. 9/5: Europe in the fourteenth century—a snapshot

Lecture on the physical, political, religious, and cultural geography of late medieval Europe.

Mon. 9/8: Italian Art in the fourteenth century

Reading

Vasari, *Lives of the Artists*, pp. 3-44 (Preface; lives of Cimabue, Giotto, Duccio, and Simone Martini).

Wed. 9/10: Italian Art in the fifteenth century; Vasari's Renaissance

Reading

Vasari, *Lives of the Artists*, pp. 47-58, 84-109, 147-162, 277-283 (Preface to part two; lives of Ghiberti, Masaccio, and Donatello; preface to part three)

Fri. 9/12: Art and society

Reading

Baxandall, *Painting and experience*, pp. 1-27.

Mon. 9/15: The period eye

Reading

Baxandall, *Painting and experience*, pp. 29-108.

Wed. 9/17: Criticism and culture

First paper assignment will be distributed.

Reading

Baxandall, *Painting and experience*, pp. 109-153.

Fri. 9/19—NO CLASS**Mon. 9/22—NO CLASS****Wed. 9/24: Petrarch and the origins of humanism**

** First paper due **

Reading

Burckhardt, *The civilization of the Renaissance*, pp. 120-139.

Fri. 9/26: Humanism in the fifteenth century**Reading**

Burckhardt, *The civilization of the Renaissance*, pp. 140-184.

Mon. 9/29: Renaissance rhetoric**Reading**

Valla, *Treatise of Lorenzo Valla*, pp. 11-61.

Wed. 10/1: Humanist philological scholarship**Reading**

Valla, *Treatise of Lorenzo Valla*, pp. 61-123.

Fri. 10/3: Humanism and politics**Reading**

Valla, *Treatise of Lorenzo Valla*, pp. 123-183.

Mon. 10/6: The Italian principalities**Reading**

Burckhardt, *Civilization of the Renaissance*, pp. 19-57.

Wed. 10/8: The republics of Florence and Venice

Second paper assignment will be distributed.

Reading

Burckhardt, *Civilization of the Renaissance*, pp. 57-97;

Brucker, ed., *Two memoirs*, pp. 64-81 (from the diary of Buonaccorso Pitti).

Fri. 10/10: The city-state and its *contado***Reading**

Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber, *Tuscans and their families*, pp. xxi-xxiv, 1-59.

Mon. 10/13—NO CLASS (Columbus Day)**Wed. 10/15: Population movements**

** Second paper due **

Reading

Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber, *Tuscans and their families*, pp. 60-92;
Boccaccio, description of the plague in Florence (handout).

Fri. 10/17: The family and the household**Reading**

Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber, *Tuscans and their families*, pp. 280-336.

Mon. 10/20: Men and women**Reading**

Burckhardt, *Civilization of the Renaissance*, pp. 250-255;
Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber, *Tuscans and their families*, pp. 131-158, 202-231;
Alessandra Strozzi, *Selected letters*, pp. 109-113, 139-163 (letters 17, 23-26).

Wed. 10/22: The extended family**Reading**

Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber, *Tuscans and their families*, pp. 337-360;
Alessandra Strozzi, *Selected letters*, pp. 29-37, 49-53, 57-61, 75-79, 99-101 (letters 1, 4, 6, 10, 15).

Fri. 10/24: Social bonds outside the family**Reading**

Alessandra Strozzi, *Selected letters*, pp. 175-203 (letters 29-32, intro. to letter 33);
Brucker, ed., *Two memoirs*, pp. 88-104 (from the diary of Buonaccorso Pitti).

Mon. 10/27 (Mid-semester date): A Renaissance mentality?**Reading**

Brucker, ed., *Two memoirs of Renaissance Florence*, pp. 107-141 (diary of Gregorio Dati).

Wed. 10/29: The “Renaissance Man”

Third paper assignment will be distributed.

Reading

Burckhardt, *Civilization of the Renaissance*, pp. 98-119;
Vasari, *Lives of the artists*, pp. 110-146, 178-184 (lives of Brunelleschi and Alberti).

Fri. 10/31: Individual and society**Reading**

Burckhardt, *Civilization of the Renaissance*, pp. 230-250, 256-270.

Mon. 11/3: Festivals, ritual, and government

No reading assignment today.

Wed. 11/5: The Church in the 14th and 15th centuries

** Third paper due **

Reading

Burckhardt, *Civilization of the Renaissance*, pp. 271-312;

Vasari, *Lives of the artists*, pp. 169-177, 191-200 (lives of Fra Angelico and Fra Filippo Lippi);

Froissart, *Chronicles*, pp. 201-210 (Reserve copy: pp. 134, 162-163).

Fri. 11/7: Popular piety and heresy**Reading**

Burckhardt, *Civilization of the Renaissance*, pp. 312-351;

Alessandra Strozzi, *Selected letters*, pp. 79-91 (letters 11 and 12).

Mon. 11/10: The papal monarchy in Italy**Reading**

Vasari, *Lives of the artists*, pp. 250-255 (life of Pinturicchio).

Wed. 11/12: The Italian economy**Reading**

Herlihy and Klapisich-Zuber, *Tuscans and their families*, pp. 93-130;

Alessandra Strozzi, *Selected letters*, pp. 61-75 (letters 7-9);

review diary of Gregorio Dati.

Fri. 11/14: Italy and the Barbarians**Reading**

Reread diary of Buonaccorso Pitti.

Mon. 11/17: Northern European courtly society**Reading**

Huizinga, *Waning*, pp. 9-67;

Froissart, *Chronicles*, pp. 351-372 (Reserve copy: pp. 460-466: Queen Isabella's entry into Paris; royal visitation).

Wed. 11/19: The theory of chivalry

Fourth paper assignment will be distributed.

Reading

Huizinga, *Waning*, pp. 67-93;

Froissart, *Chronicles*, pp. 120-145, 373-381 (Reserve copy: pp. 54-68, 465-469: Poitiers; tournament at St.-Inglevert).

Fri. 11/21: The practice of chivalry**Reading**

Huizinga, *Waning*, pp. 93-107;

Froissart, *Chronicles*, pp. 68-110, 280-294 (Reserve copy: pp. 40-51, 311-313: campaign of Crécy, siege of Calais, reminiscences of the Bascot of Mauléon).

Mon. 11/24: Free Companies and popular uprisings**Reading**

Froissart, *Chronicles*, pp. 146-166, 211-251 (Reserve copy: pp. 74-77, 207-223, 225-226, 238-254: the Jacquerie; the English peasants' revolt; the affairs of Flanders).

Wed. 11/26: Love and death in late medieval Burgundy

** Fourth paper due **

Reading

Huizinga, *Waning*, pp. 107-151.

Fri. 11/28—NO CLASS (Thanksgiving Recess)**Mon. 12/1: Religion in northern Europe****Reading**

Huizinga, *Waning*, pp. 151-214;

Froissart, *Chronicles*, pp. 111-112 (not in reserve copy: flagellants and Black Death).

Wed. 12/3: Art and life in northern Europe**Reading**

Huizinga, *Waning*, pp. 242-302.

Fri. 12/5: Europe on the eve of the Reformation**Mon. 12/8: The Renaissance in historical consciousness****Reading**

Burckhardt, *Civilization of the Renaissance*, pp. 185- 229;

Huizinga, *Waning*, pp. 323-335.

Wed. 12/10: The Renaissance today**Reading**

TBA (handout)

Fri. 12/12: Wrapup and review

** Take-home final exam distributed **

Fri. 12/19: Final exam due at noon in Herter 617!**Suggested reading**

This list is only a starting point for further reading in the history of the Renaissance.

General works and overviews

Ferguson, Wallace K. *The Renaissance in historical thought*. Cambridge, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1948.

Hale, John. *The civilization of Europe in the Renaissance*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995.

Hay, Denys. *Europe in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries*. 2nd ed. ed. London and New York: Longman, 1989.

Hay, Denys, and John Law. *Italy in the age of the Renaissance, 1380-1530*. London: Longman, 1989.

Rice, Eugene F., Jr., and Anthony Grafton. *The foundations of early modern Europe, 1460-1559*. 2nd ed. New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1994.

Renaissance art

Baxandall, Michael. *Giotto and the orators: Humanist observers of painting in Italy and the discovery of pictorial composition, 1350-1450*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971.

Hartt, Frederick. *History of Italian Renaissance art*. 3rd ed. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall; New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1987.

Meiss, Millard. *Painting in Florence and Siena after the Black Death*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951.

Panofsky, Erwin. *Renaissance and renaissances in Western art*. New York: Icon Editions, 1972.

Humanism and letters

Bentley, Jerry H. *Politics and culture in Renaissance Naples*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987.

Bolgar, R. R. *The classical heritage and its beneficiaries*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963.

Bracciolini, Poggio. *Two Renaissance book hunters: The letters of Poggius Bracciolini to Nicolaus De Niccolis*. Translated by Phyllis Walter Goodheart Gordon. New York: Columbia University Press, 1974.

Cochrane, Eric. *Historians and historiography in the Italian Renaissance*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981.

- D'Amico, John F. *Renaissance humanism in papal Rome: Humanists and churchmen on the eve of the Reformation*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983.
- Garin, Eugenio. *Italian humanism: Philosophy and civic life in the Renaissance*. New York: Harper and Row, 1965.
- Grafton, Anthony, ed. *Rome reborn: The Vatican Library and Renaissance culture*. Washington, DC, New Haven, and the Vatican City: Library of Congress, Yale University Press, and the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1993.
- King, Margaret L. *Venetian humanism in an age of patrician dominance*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986.
- Kristeller, Paul Oskar. *Medieval aspects of Renaissance learning*. Edited by Edward P. Mahoney. New York: Columbia University Press, 1992.
- . *Renaissance thought and its sources*. Edited by Michael Mooney. New York: Columbia University Press, 1979.
- Weiss, Roberto. *The Renaissance rediscovery of classical antiquity*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1969.

Political history

- Baron, Hans. *The crisis of the early Italian Renaissance*. Revised ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966.
- Brucker, Gene. *Renaissance Florence*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969. Reprinted in 1983 with a bibliographical supplement.
- Lane, Frederic C. *Venice: A maritime republic*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973.
- Martines, Lauro. *Power and imagination: City-states in Renaissance Italy*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979.
- Queller, Donald. *The Venetian patriciate*. Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1986.

Social history

- Hale, John. *War and society in Renaissance Europe, 1450-1620*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986.
- King, Margaret L. *Women of the Renaissance*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991.
- Klapisch-Zuber, Christiane. *Women, family, and ritual in Renaissance Italy*. Translated by Lydia G. Cochrane. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985.
- Muir, Edward. *Civic ritual in Renaissance Venice*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981.

Economic history

- Cipolla, Carlo M. *Before the Industrial Revolution: European society and economy, 1000-1700*. 3rd ed. New York and London: W. W. Norton & Co., 1993.
- Goldthwaite, Richard A. *The building of Renaissance Florence: An economic and social history*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980.

Religious history

- Bossy, John. *Christianity in the West, 1400-1700*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985.
- Ozment, Steven. *The age of reform, 1250-1550: An intellectual and religious history of late medieval and Reformation Europe*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980.