

History 593A: Renaissance Humanism (writing seminar)

University of Massachusetts Amherst
Spring Semester 2002 (schedule #341975)
Wed. 9:05–12:05, Herter 208

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Website: <http://www-unix.oit.umass.edu/~ogilvie/593A/index.html>
(Linked from the UMass History Department page,
<http://www.umass.edu/history/undergrad.html>, and from the UMass Web Enhanced
Courses page.)

I will try to answer e-mail within 24 hours during the week and within 48 hours over the weekend. If you need a response more quickly, please telephone.

Brief course description

Renaissance humanists fought a valiant battle to restore ancient learning, reform education, and reorient philosophy and religion. Humanists were above all professional rhetoricians and writers, and they prized eloquence. In this seminar we will explore Renaissance humanism through the writings of the humanists themselves, focusing on their commitment to eloquent, persuasive argument and reactions against the cult of rhetoric. We will emphasize careful reading of their texts to understand both the substance and the style of humanism. At the same time, by writing about humanism you will improve your own expressive power.

The course is a seminar. It meets once a week, for three hours. Each week we will have three main tasks. First, we will discuss common readings on Renaissance humanism and rhetoric. Second, we will work on effective writing at every level, from individual sentences to an entire essay. Third, we will discuss your written work, with the specific goal of improving your understanding of Renaissance humanism, rhetoric, and effective written communication in history.

You will do a lot of writing in this course: four short essays (3-4 pages), one long essay (10 pages), and weekly journal entries. The weekly readings will be kept short to allow you enough time to write and rewrite.

Because we meet only once a week, we will use e-mail and other electronic resources to communicate between meetings and to exchange drafts of papers. Details are at the end of the syllabus.

Course goals

At the end of the semester, you should be able to:

- Explain the debates about the meaning and importance of rhetoric in the Renaissance.
- Explain the political, philosophical, and social implications of rhetoric in the Renaissance and today.
- Summarize succinctly and accurately the main point of a historical source.
- Analyze the arguments made by a historical source in terms of the claim, evidence, warrant, and qualifications of each argument.
- Use primary sources as evidence for your own historical arguments.
- Write a clear, persuasive historical essay.
- Format an essay according to the standards of the historical profession.
- Criticize other writers' essays and provide concrete suggestions for improving them.

Your goals for the course

You have just read my goals for the course. You should now take the time to reflect on those goals and think about any others you might have. You're probably taking this course to meet the Junior Writing requirement, but you must have some reason for choosing this particular seminar over the others. In the space below, you can write the reasons *you* are in this course and any goals on which you wish to concentrate during it. Refer back to your goals frequently, to assess your progress and re-evaluate your goals.

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Books for course

The boldfaced names indicate the way the book is referred to in the assignments. All books are **required paperbacks**. If you get your books used, make sure they are the right editions. We will start using them all right away except Queneau. The books have been ordered through Atticus Books (8 Main Street, Amherst, tel. 256-1547).

Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. *The craft of research*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995. ISBN 0-226-06584-7. \$13.

Queneau, Raymond. *Exercises in style*. Trans. Barbara Wright. 2nd ed. New York: New Directions, 1981. ISBN 0-8112-0789-7. \$11.

Rebhorn, Wayne A., ed. *Renaissance debates on rhetoric*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999. ISBN 0-801-48206-2. \$20.

Turabian, Kate. *A manual for writers of term papers, theses, and dissertations*. 6th ed. Revised by John Grossman and Alice Bennett. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996. ISBN 0-226-81627-3. \$13.

Williams, Joseph M. *Style: Toward clarity and grace*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990. ISBN 0-226-89915-2. \$12. Note: there are several editions of this book out there. All the others are published by Longman. Make sure you get this one, from the University of Chicago Press. It's the cheapest! I will supplement it with exercises taken from the more expensive, and out-of-stock, textbook edition.

I presume you have and will use the writing manual from your First-Year Writing Program course (ENGLWP 112 or 113) or the equivalent course if you are a transfer student. (For many of you, that book will be *The Everyday Writer* by Andrea Lunsford.) You should also have a good dictionary. I recommend the *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 4th ed. (ISBN 0-395-82517-2, about \$60), or the *American Heritage College Dictionary* (ISBN 0-395-67161-2, about \$24), but there are less expensive dictionaries. The readings for this course will occasionally have unfamiliar words, and you need to know what they mean. The course website links to the online version of the *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, which is very useful if you have a fast internet connection. If you need to know the detailed history of a word, the *Oxford English Dictionary* is the place to go. The library has a print copy in the reference department, and the course website links to the online version.

Requirements and assignments

There are four basic requirements for this course. Due dates are listed below and in the course schedule.

1. Four short essays (3-4 pages). For each of these essays you will produce three drafts: a first draft and an intermediate draft that will be discussed in your workshop group, and a final draft that will receive a grade.

2. One long essay (10 pages). For this essay, you will also produce three drafts. The first two will be discussed in your workshop group; the final draft will receive a grade.

3. Weekly journal entries. Every week you will write down responses to the assigned reading and questions for discussion in a loose-leaf journal. I will inspect your journal three times during the semester.

4. Attendance and participation. Because this course is a seminar with a workshop component, your participation is crucial not just for yourself but also for your classmates. I expect you to attend class and to participate in discussion. (See the policy on attendance on p. 9.)

Due dates for essays

Essay	First draft	Intermediate draft	Final draft
#1 (3-4 pp.)	Mon. 2/4	Mon. 2/11	Fri. 2/15
#2 (3-4 pp.)	Mon. 2/18	Mon. 2/25	Mon. 3/4
#3 (3-4 pp.)	Mon. 3/11	Mon. 3/25	Mon. 4/1
#4 (3-4 pp.)	Mon. 4/8	Mon. 4/22	Mon. 4/29
#5 (10 pp.)	Mon. 5/6	Mon. 5/13	Mon. 5/20

Due dates for journals

You will need to turn in your journal at the end of class on the three following days: **February 20, March 13, and May 1**. I will hand it back the following class meeting with brief comments.

Grading

Except as mentioned below, the course grade will be determined as follows:

4 short essays	60% (15% each)
1 long essay	30%
Journal entries	10%

Only final drafts and journal entries will be graded. They will receive whole-letter grades only (A, B, C, D, or F), except in the case of late final drafts, which will be penalized one-half letter grade for each working day they are late. You may hand in one revised final draft of each paper if you are not satisfied with the grade.

Improvement over the course of the semester will be taken into account: if your writing gets better, your later papers will be weighted more heavily. Poor attendance will also be taken into account. You can miss up to three classes with no penalty. For each absence after that, the *maximum* course grade possible will be reduced by one letter grade. (For example, if you miss six classes, the best grade you can get is a D. If you miss seven classes—half the semester—you will fail.)

Please keep in mind that you need to pass this course with a CD or better to have it count toward the junior-year writing requirement in the History Department.

Course structure

Three hours is a long time to meet. I have problems staying focused that long, and so will most of you. Hence we will divide the meeting into three segments, with 15-minute breaks between them. Here is the basic pattern we will follow:

9:05-9:55: Rhetoric in the Renaissance

10:10-11:00: Principles of style, argument, and presentation

11:15-12:05: Discussion of your essays

When necessary we will deviate from this pattern, but I expect it to be a norm. Because the three segments correspond to the three normal one-hour class periods, you won't be distracted by the sounds of other students milling about in the halls.

A note on readings

There is a lot of writing in this course, and I have chosen the readings with that fact in mind. You should approach them as follows:

Williams, *Style*: read quickly to get the main points; note any questions that you have. Do a few of the exercises that will be distributed ahead of time.

Booth, et al., *The craft of research*: read quickly to get the main points; note any questions that you have.

Rebhorn, *Renaissance debates on rhetoric*: read assignments carefully. Note the main points, analyze the arguments, consider the probable audience and how effectively the writer communicates.

Queneau, *Exercises in style*: Have fun!

Turabian, *Manual*: use this as a reference. I will make specific references to anything that seems to be a problem.

Bring the assigned reading to class! We will be discussing specific passages and exercises.

Course schedule, with assignments and readings

Wed. 1/30: CLASS – Introduction to the course

In-class writing assignment (if you missed the first class, you must make up this assignment).

Mon. 2/4: First draft of essay 1 due by 5 PM

E-mail it to ogilvie@history.umass.edu.

Wed. 2/6: CLASS

Reading assignment:

Rebhorn, i-26 (introduction, §§1-2).

Williams, i-14 (Preface, Causes).

Booth, i-27 (Starting a Research Project, Thinking in Print, Connecting with Your Reader).

Familiarize yourself with the contents of Turabian. You will be expected to format your final drafts according to its rules.

Print and read your workshop group's drafts and be prepared to discuss them.

Mon. 2/11: Intermediate draft of essay 1 due by 5 PM

E-mail it to ogilvie@history.umass.edu.

Wed. 2/13: CLASS

Reading assignment:

Rebhorn, 27-56 (§§3-5).

Williams, 16-43 (Clarity).

Booth, 29-63 (Planning Your Project; From Topics to Questions; From Questions to Problems).

Print and read your workshop group's drafts and be prepared to discuss them.

Fri. 2/15: Final draft of essay 1 due by 5 PM

E-mail it to ogilvie@history.umass.edu.

Mon. 2/18: First draft of essay 2 due by 5 PM

E-mail it to ogilvie@history.umass.edu.

Wed. 2/20: CLASS

Turn in your journal today at the end of class.

Reading assignment:

Rebhorn, 57-96 (§§6-9).

Williams, 44-65 (Cohesion).

Booth, 64-84 (From Questions to Sources; Using Sources).

Print and read your workshop group's drafts and be prepared to discuss them.

Mon. 2/25: Intermediate draft of essay 2 due by 5 PM

E-mail it to ogilvie@history.umass.edu.

Wed. 2/27: CLASS

Reading assignment:

Rebhorn, 97-127 (§§10-11).

Williams, 66-79 (Emphasis).

Booth, 85-110 (Arguments, Drafting, and Conversation; Making Good Arguments; Claims and Evidence).

Print and read your workshop group's drafts and be prepared to discuss them.

Mon. 3/4: Final draft of essay 2 due

E-mail it to ogilvie@history.umass.edu.

Wed. 3/6: CLASS

Reading assignment:

Rebhorn, 128-160 (§§12-14).

Williams, 80-95 (Coherence I).

Booth, 111-148 (Warrants and Qualifications).

Mon. 3/11: First draft of essay 3 due by 5 PM

E-mail it to ogilvie@history.umass.edu.

Wed. 3/13: CLASS

Turn in your journal today at the end of class.

Reading assignment:

Rebhorn, 161-182 (§§15-16).

Williams, 96-112 (Coherence II).

Booth, 149-174 (Planning Again; Pre-Drafting and Drafting).

Print and read your workshop group's drafts and be prepared to discuss them.

Mon. 3/25: Intermediate draft of essay 3 due by 5 PM

E-mail it to ogilvie@history.umass.edu.

Wed. 3/27: CLASS

Reading assignment:

Rebhorn, Rebhorn, 183-222 (§§17-19).

Williams, 114-133 (Concision).

Booth, 199-214 (Revising Your Organization and Argument).

Print and read your workshop group's drafts and be prepared to discuss them.

Mon. 4/1: Final draft of essay 3 due by 5 PM

E-mail it to ogilvie@history.umass.edu.

Wed. 4/3: CLASS

Reading assignment:

Rebhorn, 223-260 (§§20-22).

Williams, 134-166 (Length and Elegance).

Booth, 215-254 (Revising Style; Introductions. Read chapter 14 quickly, since there shouldn't be anything new in it!).

Mon. 4/8: First draft of essay 4 due by 5 PM

E-mail it to ogilvie@history.umass.edu.

Wed. 4/10: CLASS

Reading assignment:

Rebhorn, 261-293 (§§23-25).

Williams, 168-198 (Usage).

Booth, 255-264 (Research and Ethics).

Print and read your workshop group's drafts and be prepared to discuss them.

Wed. 4/17: NO CLASS (Monday schedule in effect)

Enjoy the week off! You should start brainstorming for your essay 5 (the final 10-page essay).

Mon. 4/22: Intermediate draft of essay 4 due by 5 PM

E-mail it to ogilvie@history.umass.edu.

Wed. 4/24: CLASS

Reading assignment:

Queneau, *Exercises in style*.

Print and read your workshop group's drafts and be prepared to discuss them.

Mon. 4/29: Final draft of essay 4 due by 5 PM

E-mail it to ogilvie@history.umass.edu.

Wed. 5/1: CLASS

Turn in your journal today at the end of class.

Bring your brainstorm and outline for essay 5 to class.

Mon. 5/6: First draft of essay 5 due by 5 PM

E-mail it to ogilvie@history.umass.edu.

Wed. 5/8: CLASS

Print and read your workshop group's drafts and be prepared to discuss them.

Mon. 5/13: Intermediate draft of essay 5 due by 5 PM

E-mail it to ogilvie@history.umass.edu.

Wed. 5/15: CLASS

Print and read your workshop group's drafts and be prepared to discuss them.

Mon. 5/20: Final draft of essay 5 due by 5 PM

You can e-mail your essay to ogilvie@history.umass.edu or bring hard copy to my office (Herter 624). I will be in my office from 4 to 5 to collect your papers; you can leave them earlier if you want.

Course policies

Policy on Late Assignments

Late **first** and **intermediate** drafts will not be accepted, so you will not get comments on them from me or your workshop group. Why not? Because a significant part of this course is a writing workshop, turning in assignments late affects not only you but also your classmates. You are responsible adults; you should plan ahead. Late **final drafts** will be accepted with a penalty of half a letter grade for each working day they are late. Exceptions to this policy will be made only in the case of a bona fide emergency with appropriate documentation.

Policy on Attendance

Following University policy, attendance is required. For the fourth and each subsequent absence, the maximum grade you can earn in the course will be reduced by one letter grade. There are two reasons for this. One of the goals of the course is to get you accustomed to presenting and explaining your judgments about the course material in seminar; you can't do that if you're not in class. Another goal is to give and receive feedback in workshops; that too requires regular attendance.

Policy on Classroom Conduct

Our classroom demeanor should facilitate the goals of this course. Please arrive on time, because it distracts everyone in a discussion if someone arrives late. Turn off your cell phone or beeper. University rules prohibit eating and drinking in classrooms; if it becomes a problem, I will have to enforce the rule. If someone in the class does something that distracts or offends you, please talk to them or me and try to resolve it.

Policy on Academic Honesty

I expect that the written work you hand in for this course will be your own. You will, of course, get feedback from your workshop group on your drafts; professional historians get such feedback all the time. I do expect that you will acknowledge any feedback you get in a footnote on the first page (after all, it's only fair to recognize the people who helped you). I also expect that the original draft that you submit for critique will be your own work. If you are uncertain where collaboration shades into plagiarism, ask me!

Plagiarism is grounds for failure in the course. Please refer to the *Undergraduate Rights and Responsibilities* booklet for clear definitions and the University's full policy on academic honesty; see also Booth, 166-170, and Turabian, 5.2. I don't enjoy enforcing this policy, but I have done so in the past and will do so again if necessary.

Why is plagiarism so bad? In a writing course, plagiarism subverts the whole purpose of the course: to improve your and your fellow students' writing. If you submit plagiarized work, you are trying to take credit for someone else's hard work, and you are wasting your workshop group's time.

Electronic communications in the seminar

Because we will be discussing your written work almost every week, we need an efficient way to distribute it to everyone in the seminar. This semester we will use e-mail and the course website as means of distribution. You will need to have and use the following electronic resources:

E-mail account. If you don't have one already, and you don't want to pay the \$30 fee for an OIT account, you can set up a free web-based e-mail account at hotmail.com, yahoo.com, or many other sites; see me if you need help. You must be able to send attachments by e-mail, because you will use e-mail to send your drafts to me for distribution and comment.

Web browser. Internet Explorer, Netscape, or any other browser will do, preferably one that can work with frames. You will need to visit the course website to download copies of your workshop group's papers and to view announcements for the course.

Adobe Acrobat Reader. Free software from Adobe that allows you to read PDF files and print them on your printer. I will use PDF to distribute papers on the website. Acrobat Reader comes with plug-ins for Internet Explorer and Netscape. You should have Version 4.0 or later.

Word processor. Any word processor will do, as long as it allows you to (1) format your papers according to Turabian, (2) use footnotes, and (3) save your papers in Microsoft Word or RTF formats. (Those are the formats that my word processor can read.)

The PCCO computing labs on campus have the required software installed; if you pay the OIT computing fee for the semester, you will also have an e-mail account that you can access from PCCO labs as well as any other computer with Netscape or Internet Explorer.

You will need to print out and bring to class the first and intermediate drafts of each paper from your workshop. Including your own first and intermediate drafts, that will be a total of 140-160 pages over the course of the semester. If you don't have a printer at home, you can print the papers at PCCO computer labs and from the networked computers at DuBois Library. (Printing at the library costs 10¢/page; if you print there, you will spend about \$14-16 over the course of the semester.)

Tips for success

This writing seminar is not an easy course, but if you keep a few simple points in mind, it will be a lot easier. Here are some tips for doing well in the course. They all are really aspects of one overarching principle: TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR OWN EDUCATION!

- Read the syllabus carefully, and write down in your organizer the dates on which assignments are due. This will help you budget your time, especially during the midterm period in other courses.
- Complete all the assigned readings every week in a timely fashion, preferably in one or two study sessions, and jot down important points in your journal after finishing the readings. This should take about three hours every week, or possibly more. As you read each assignment, think about how it relates to earlier readings and lectures, and jot down some of those thoughts in your journal. Don't use a highlighter for note-taking: it substitutes moving your hand for using your brain.
- Allow plenty of time for writing. Brainstorm and organize your facts before you start drafting. Keep in mind that each draft you turn in for class should be complete, even if it is not polished or perfect.
- Look up unfamiliar words in a good dictionary. Look up unfamiliar names or concepts in an encyclopedia. The *Columbia Encyclopedia* (online at bartleby.com) is a good one-volume encyclopedia; the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (online at britannica.com) is a good multi-volume encyclopedia.
- If your apartment or dorm room aren't quiet places to study, go to the library or somewhere else quiet. Study a lot during the day, then you can relax in the evening without feeling stressed out or guilty.
- Ask questions about what you don't understand, but only after you have tried to answer them yourself. Part of your college education is learning to be self-reliant. Who should you ask? Me, of course; if your question is factual, you can also ask a reference librarian.
- Take advantage of my office hours. I am there to help you in the course! I can give you more help, though, if you come with specific questions or issues to discuss.
- Come to each class prepared to discuss at least two or three of the issues raised by the readings, and to write a five-minute theme on them. Your journal will help.
- Arrive for class on time, and pay attention to discussions and lectures. Take good notes. If you need guidance on note-taking, Learning Support Services (DuBois Library, 10th floor) offers a Note Taking Workshop several times each semester. They also offer workshops in time management and test taking should you feel in need of help in those areas. Take notes on discussion, not just the occasional lectures.
- Consider forming a study group. Research shows that students who participate in study groups learn more and enjoy their courses more.
- Talk to me if you feel overwhelmed or if you are falling behind in the course. I am here to help you learn.

Additional reference works and resources

You may find these books useful in writing your final essay and in answering questions you might have about the context of Renaissance humanism or specific individuals and ideas. They are available either in the Reference Department or the Reserve Department at DuBois Library.

Reference (DuBois Library, Main Floor)

- Encyclopedia of the Renaissance*. Edited by Paul F. Grendler. 6 vols. New York: Scribner's, in association with the Renaissance Society of America, 1999. UM/Ref.: CB361.E52 1999 + v.1-6. Comprehensive encyclopedia, written for the intelligent general reader. If an alphabetical search doesn't turn up what you are looking for, try the list of articles in vol. 1.
- Hale, J. R., ed. *A concise encyclopaedia of the Italian Renaissance*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1981. UM/Ref.: DG445.C66. Short entry encyclopedia, handier but more concise than the previous encyclopedia, and limited to Italy.
- Kohl, Benjamin G. *Renaissance humanism, 1300-1550: A bibliography of materials in English*. New York: Garland, 1985. UM/Ref.: Z7128.H9K64 1985. A very useful bibliography, especially of primary sources and classic studies.

Reserve (DuBois Library, Third Floor)

- Bietenholz, Peter G., and Thomas B. Deutscher, eds. *Contemporaries of Erasmus: A biographical register of the Renaissance and Reformation*. 3 vols. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985-87. Reserve: PA8500 1974 Suppl. Handy source for biographical information.
- Burke, Peter. *The European Renaissance: Centres and peripheries*. Oxford and Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1998. Reserve: CB361.B79 1998. Good recent survey of the Renaissance as a cultural movement, focusing on the reception and transformation of ancient and Italian culture.
- Kraye, Jill, ed. *The Cambridge companion to Renaissance humanism*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996. Reserve: CB361.C26 1996. Collection of articles by specialists, written for general academic readers.
- Kraye, Jill, ed. *Cambridge translations of Renaissance philosophical texts*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997. Reserve: BJ161.C36 1997 v. 1-2. Important ethical and political texts, many available in English for the first time.
- Rabil, Albert, Jr., ed. *Renaissance humanism: Foundations, forms, and legacy*. 3 vols. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988. Reserve: B778.R43 1988 v.1-3. Collection of articles by specialists, written for general academic readers. Vol. 1 is on Italy, vol. 2 on other countries, and vol. 3 on humanism and the academic disciplines.
- Schmitt, Charles B., Quentin Skinner, Eckhard Kessler, and Jill Kraye, eds. *The Cambridge history of Renaissance philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988. Reserve: B775.C25 1988. Collection of articles by specialists, written for general academic readers. Some are heavy going.

HISTORY 593A COURSE CONTRACT

I have read the syllabus for this course carefully. I am aware of the requirements and agree to do my best to meet them. I am aware of the policies regarding late assignments, classroom conduct, and academic honesty and agree to abide by them.

SIGNATURE

DATE

NAME (PRINTED)