BLHS 106: The Renaissance
Renaissance Humanism and Renaissance Art

Professor
Dr. Arnold Bradford:  email: bradfora@georgetown.edu  Cell: 703-347-2864 (voicemail)
Ms. Nan Morrison:  email: morrisom@georgetown.edu  Cell: 571-319-9010

Schedule
Tuesdays 6:00-9:10. Hybrid format. Class sessions include traditional classroom meetings, individual and group online work, and online meetings of the whole class. Two Saturday Museum visits, February 21 and April 11, 10:00-12:20.

Course Content
Deriving in part from a rediscovery of ancient writings and arts, and in part from a new interpretation of the human spirit, Renaissance humanism expressed itself in great works of literature and art. This course emphasizes key humanist writings that reassess the human condition. It also focuses on the glorious works of painting, sculpture, and architecture that express this new understanding of the human spirit.

*Humanism*
Leon Battista Alberti’s reformulation of the pre-Socratic assertion that “a man can do all things if he will” is a keynote of Renaissance humanism. It exudes the fundamental mood of the age: confidence. Over time that initial confidence is modified and qualified, as humanists turn a secular and analytical eye on the unique practices and polices of their time and place. We will consider many facets of humanistic thought, from Petrarch’s antiquarian enthusiasms to Pico’s idealism to More’s skepticism.

*Art*
The arts of the European Renaissance are one of the crowning glories of human achievement. We will consider the factors that made such an achievement possible. The lasting images and structures of this era speak to the eternal question of what it means to be human, and suggest myriad possibilities for the individual spirit, and for the eternal verities of existence. We will analyze the transformation of medieval art into the humanist style in Italy, and see how northern Europe evolved its own visual language. We will also consider how art conventions and materials influence the individual artist’s creative vision.

Learning Goals and Outcomes
After completing this course a student should be able to:
1. Recognize and state the importance of the most important historical developments in medieval Italy
2. Distinguish among Classical humanism, Christian humanism, and Renaissance humanism
3. Identify the humanistic principles in the assigned readings for the class
4. Analyze and evaluate the principal arguments in literary and philosophical prose of the Renaissance era
5. Explain the influences of Renaissance humanism on European culture
6. Recognize and define the specific ideas and values of important Renaissance humanists
7. Recognize, define, and compare the styles and major works of Renaissance artists
8. Compare and contrast the arts of the Italian Renaissance, the Northern Renaissance, and Mannerism
9. Understand and analyze the structural and decorative characteristics of Renaissance architecture
10. Recognize and define the basic media of painting, prints, and sculpture in the Renaissance
11. Define and apply the social contexts of the arts in the Renaissance, including patronage, audience, religion, and business
12. Write well-constructed short argument essays containing thesis, evidence, and reasoning
13. Write cogent Discussion Board postings and deliver constructive peer critiques
14. Demonstrate familiarity with assigned reading in clear, constructive, on-topic classroom dialogue
15. Work cooperatively with a small group of peers
16. Prepare and effectively deliver in-class reports
17. Work effectively and independently to complete hybrid online assignments

Assessment of student learning will be achieved through consideration of a number of components, as follows:

- **Classroom Participation**: Students must read the course material carefully, take notes, and participate fully in class discussion. I welcome questions as well as critical commentaries.
- **Attendance**: See full discussion below.
- **Discussion Board Postings**: For the five sessions that are labeled “Individual online work,” students must post 500-word critical analyses based on a selection of topics. They must also reply to two postings by other class members. Postings will receive an “F” grade if they are less than 500 words long. Replies must be 200 words.
- **Essays**: Three 750-word essays requiring critical analysis are assigned. Topics are based on interpretation of assigned reading and artwork. All essays are due by 6:30 p.m. on the assigned due date.
- **Group Work**: The class will be divided into study groups. Each group will present a report on the week’s assigned reading once during the semester. All groups will present during the last class meeting of the semester.

**Evaluation**

Class attendance and participation. 20%
Postings on the course Discussion Board. 30%
Three short essays. 30%
Group presentations. 20%

**Grade Computation**

All assignments will be graded using letter grades. The letter course grade will be determined by entering each letter grade into Blackboard’s Grade Center and using it to calculate a percentage for each grade and for a weighted average percentage. That percentage will then be converted back to a letter course grade according to the following ranges:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A = 100.0 to 92.5</td>
<td>B+ = 89.999 to 87.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A- = 92.499 to 90.0</td>
<td>C+ = 79.999 to 77.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B = 87.499 to 82.5</td>
<td>D+ = 69.999 to 67.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B- = 82.499 to 80.0</td>
<td>C = 77.499 to 72.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C- = 72.499 to 70.0</td>
<td>D = 67.499 to 60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F = 59.999 to 0.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Course Requirements

- **Attendance:** Students are expected to **attend all class meetings and to participate in all assigned activities.** Students not posting or posting late Discussion Board assignments will be charged with one class absence for each such incident. Any student who misses more than two class sessions **for any reason,** classroom or online/Discussion Board, may receive an “F” grade for the semester. Late arrivals and/or early departures of more than five minutes count as ½ of an absence. Excused absences will be given only in rare circumstances and only if reported and approved **in advance.**

- **Late Work:** Essay assignments submitted after 6:35 p.m. on the due date will lose one whole letter grade for each 24 hours of lateness or portion thereof. Discussion Board Postings will receive the grade of “zero” if they are posted after the due dates.

- **Excused Late:** Essays and Postings will be excused late only in rare circumstances and only if approved **prior to the deadline.**

- **Incomplete Grades:** Extension of time to finish coursework will be granted only in unusual and clear documented situations. Extensions must be mutually agreed upon between student and instructor no later than the last class meeting. Then all such agreements must be approved by the Associate Dean. In no case will the extension exceed three additional weeks. Work not received by the Incomplete deadline will result in a change of the semester grade to “F.”

- **All work must be done to pass the course.**

Course Format: Importance of Blackboard Site

This is a **hybrid** course, which means that some class assignments are online rather than in the classroom. This includes some weeks of individual work and discussion board postings, and two class online sessions when we all meet together. The course Blackboard site will be the location of these online assignments and activities and access of designated websites and other online materials. Details of written assignments will also be posted here.

Weekly Course Schedule

*(Reader = *The Italian Renaissance Reader*; Sayre = *The Humanities: Culture, Continuity, Change*)

**Jan. 13**  
Introduction to Humanism and Renaissance Art  
AB & NM  
Medieval Background: Giotto, the Limbourg Brothers, and the Visual Arts  
Reader, Introduction (ix-xviii).

**Jan. 20**  
**Individual online work:** Renaissance Humanism: Pico Della Mirandola  
AB  
See Bb Discussion Board for Posting assignment.  
Short essay #1 assigned.

**Jan. 27**  
**Online Class Meeting:** Medieval Backgrounds: Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio  
AB  
Reader: Petrarch, 14-21, and Canzoniere  
Nos. 1, 3, 16, 23, 90, 134, 189, 298;  
Boccaccio, 60-61, and Preface, Introduction, 1st day 1st story; 1st day 4th story; 3rd day 9th story; 6th day 7th story.

**Feb. 3**  
Renaissance Humanism: Pico and Machiavelli  
AB  
*Group presentation on Pico*  
Reader: Machiavelli, 258-297  
Short essay #1 due.
Feb. 10  **Individual online work:** The Florentine Renaissance  NM
Sayre, 460-493
See Bb Discussion Board for Posting assignment.

Feb. 17  Renaissance Art: Florence: Massaccio, Piero della Francesca, Botticelli  NM
*Group presentation on Florentine art*

Feb. 21  **Museum Visit:** Italian Renaissance Art  NM
Meet in the rotunda of the National Gallery of Art, 10:05 a.m.

Feb. 24  **Individual online work:** Humanism: Alberti, More, Elizabethan England  AB
Reader, Alberti, 164-177; Sayre 622-649
See Bb Discussion Board for Posting assignment.

March 3  **Online class meeting:** Humanism: More, Erasmus, Elizabethans  AB
Erasmus material posted on Blackboard.
Short essay #2 assigned

“Spring” Break

March 17  **Individual online work:** Art: Rome/Venice and Mannerism  NM
Sayre, 494-533, 651-673
See Bb Discussion Board for Posting assignment.
Short essay #2 due via email.

March 24  Renaissance Art: Rome/Venice and Mannerism  NM
*Group presentation on Rome/Venice or Mannerism*

March 31  Renaissance Humanism: High Renaissance and Mannerism  AB
Sayre, 520-524; 532-533; 558-559; 564-587; 651-673.
Renaissance Reader, 205-226, 347-354
Castiglione, Cellini, Woman humanists, Rebelais, Montaigne, Cervantes, John of the Cross.
Short essay #3 assigned.

April 7  **Individual online work:** Renaissance Art: Durer and the North  AB
Sayre, 534-559, 570-587.
See Bb Discussion Board for Posting assignment.

April 11  **Museum Visit:** Northern Renaissance Art and Renaissance influences  NM
Meet in the rotunda of the National Gallery of Art, 10:05 a.m.

April 14  Renaissance Art: Durer and the North  AB
*Group presentation on Northern Renaissance Art*
Short essay #3 due.

April 21  Reflection and synthesis: Group Presentations  AB & NM
Individual online work: Reflection and synthesis AB & NM
See Bb Discussion Board for Posting assignment.

Course Continuity
When a classroom meeting is canceled for weather or other reasons, it will be taught as promptly as possible in Blackboard Collaborate online mode.

Required Textbooks

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

The Honor Pledge
Submission of written work in this class signifies assent to the Georgetown University Honors Pledge:

In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown University Honor System: to be honest in any academic endeavor, and to conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together.

In this course any violation of academic integrity will result in an “F” grade for the semester.

Religious Observance
Georgetown University promotes respect for all religions. Any student who is unable to attend classes or to participate in any examination, presentation, or assignment on a given day because of the observance of a major religious holiday or related travel shall be excused and provided with the opportunity to make up, without unreasonable burden, any work that has been missed for this reason and shall not in any other way be penalized for the absence or rescheduled work. Students will remain responsible for all assigned work. Students should notify professors in writing at the beginning of the semester of religious observances that conflict with their classes. The Office of the Provost, in consultation with Campus Ministry and the Registrar, will publish, before classes begin for a given term, a list of major religious holidays likely to affect Georgetown students. The Provost and the Main Campus Executive Faculty encourage faculty to accommodate students whose bona fide religious observances in other ways impede normal participation in a course. Students who cannot be accommodated should discuss the matter with an advising dean.

Disabilities
Students with a disability should please contact the Academic Resource Center (arc@georgetown.edu), located in the Leavey Center, Suite 335. This Center is responsible for reviewing documentation provided by students with disabilities and for determining reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and University policies. Students must present documentation to receive accommodation in the course. Accommodation will not be applied retroactively.