

Georgetown University
Liberal Studies Graduate Program
Spring, 2019

LSHV-475-01: *What Is the Italian Renaissance? The Confluence of History, Art, Literature and Music*

Ori Z Soltes

ICC 305Q solteso@georgetown.edu

The word “renaissance” means “rebirth” and thus the use of the term inevitably yields the question: rebirth of what? While it becomes clear, as one follows the period that has received that label, that much of classical, Greek and Roman, culture is re-achieving the center of the stage, this realization causes two further questions inevitably to present themselves: how is classical cultural redux similar to and how different from its original model? Does the re-engagement of the classics and their ideas, which are pagan, mean that the centuries’-long evolution of Christian culture and Christian ideas has dissipated? How so and how not? Further, what does the term “humanism” mean as it is used to refer to this era?

While addressing these fundamental questions from the beginning, this course will also necessarily explore other questions, as well, such as what “Italy” was and is and how and why it is associated with the beginning of the Renaissance; and how and exactly when the period that goes by that name began—and ended. We will consider the interface among the Italian city-states and between Italy and the larger world during those centuries. We will ask where not only mainstream Christians but those considered heretical together with non-Christians (specifically, Jews and Muslims) fit into this reshaped world. We will address the legacy of the Italian Renaissance toward our own era.

These questions, issues and ideas will be explored in a multi-valent manner, using historical events as a bone structure onto which we shall add very fleshy layers of the visual arts, literature (both prose and poetry) and music.

The main texts for the course, to simplify matters, are the paperbacks *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, by Jakob Burckhardt (Penguin Classics), (although for art I highly recommend the much more substantial work by Frederick Hartt on Italian Renaissance art), and Dante’s *Inferno* (the first of his three-volume poem, *The Divine Comedy*). I will provide written material on the history of Italy in photocopied form, and will also suggest books along the way as well as providing substantial numbers of handouts either on blackboard or through photocopies of the original materials that we will examine, from Boccaccio, Petrarch, Ficino, Pico della Mirandola’s *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, Michelangelo’s sonnets, Macchiavelli, and Castiglione—although you are encouraged to acquire full versions of any of these works..

Grades will be based primarily on midterm and final written take-home assignments, the precise content of which will be discussed as the semester moves forward.

Syllabus (precise dates of topics subject to some variation):

Jan 17

Introduction: What is the Renaissance? What is humanism? How do we arrive at it? From pagan Greek and Roman literature and art to the birth of Christianity. The triumphs and traumas of the medieval

church. Barbarians and the place of conquest and culture in the shaping of Italian city-states beyond the Roman period. Romanesque and Gothic art. When do we arrive at a new era?

Jan 24

The beginnings of the Renaissance in literature and art: Dante's *Divine Comedy* (with an emphasis on the *Inferno*) and early Siennese and Florentine art, from Duccio and the Lorenzetti to Giotto.

Jan 31

The fourteenth century unrolls: the "Babylonian Captivity" of the Papacy, The Black Plague, St Catherine of Siena, the rise toward dominance of Florence. Petrarch's philosophy and poetry, Boccaccio's *Decameron* (The "Human Comedy").

Feb 7

Into the fifteenth century. Jews as "Other" and Jewish poets. The Medici, banking, money-lending and art patronage. "Scientific" art, from Masaccio and Donatello to Alberti and Brunelleschi to Piero della Francesca to Verrocchio.

Feb 14

The later fifteenth century. The last "Crusade" and the founding of the *Accademia*. Ficino, Pico della Mirandola, philosophy and the positive interest in the "Other." Poetically inclined art from Fra Angelico and Botticelli to Pinturicchio and Perugino.

Feb 21

The ongoing complications of religion: from Savonarola to the world of the ghetto, from Venice to Rome, to the Ottoman Turkish Muslim engagement.

Feb 28

Into the sixteenth century. Art and Poetry from Venice to Florence and Rome. From the Bellinis to Giorgione, the marriage of poetry and science in the work of Leonardo. Early Michelangelo.

MIDTERM PAPERS DUE FEB 28

SPRING BREAK Mar 1-11

Mar 14

Michelangelo and Raphael. Politics and politesse: Machiavelli's *The Prince* and Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier*.

Mar 21

Women poets: Turnabuono de' Medici and Vittoria Collona. The crisis of the Reformation and the Mannerist crisis. Parmigianino and his visual sblings; the late Michelangelo in painting and sculpture

Mar 28

The Counter-Reformation and the birth of the Baroque. Toward the final shaping of the Basilica of St Peter in Rome. The beginning of the age of Religious Wars. From the Satires of Pietro Aretino to the Romantic Epics of Ariosto and Tasso. More women poets and Jews...

April 4

The cultural culmination of Venice: From Titian to Tintoretto and Veronese. The shaping of the seventeenth century: continuing the Renaissance or marking its conclusion? The music of Claudio Monteverdi and Salomone Rossi. The New Science of Galileo.

April 11

The end and continuation of an era. Art from Caravaggio to Bernini and Borromini. The music of Alessandro and Domenico Scarlatti.

EASTER BREAK APRIL 18-22**April 25**

Epilogues and the Legacy of the Italian Renaissance: from the Age of Religious Wars to the *Risorgimento*; from El Greco and Ribeiro to Canova to Modigliani; from Verdi to Puccini; from Fermi to Ferrari

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING:**Disabilities**

If you are a student with a documented disability who requires accommodations or if you think you may have a disability and want to inquire about accommodations, please contact the Academic Resource Center at 202-687-8354 or arc@georgetown.edu.

Turnitin.com

Students acknowledge that by taking this course all required papers can be submitted for a Textual Similarity Review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the terms of use agreement posted on the Turnitin.com site.

Extreme weather, Emergencies, and Instructional Continuity

During inclement weather or other emergencies on a day when we are scheduled to meet face-to-face, check the university's Web site or call (202) 687-7669 for information on whether the university is open. If the university is open, this class will meet. If the university is closed, this class will meet through distance means such as online videoconferencing; check your e-mail for a message from me on how we will proceed in that situation. Due dates for written assignments submitted through Blackboard will not be changed due to campus closings.

The university recently has acquired the capability to send text messages and recorded messages about emergencies to cell phones and other mobile devices. Sign up on MyAccess.

Georgetown Honor System

All students are expected to follow Georgetown's honor code unconditionally. We assume you have read the honor code material located at <http://scs.georgetown.edu/academic-affairs/honor-code>, and in particular have read the following documents: Honor Council Pamphlet, What is

Plagiarism, Sanctioning Guidelines, and Expedited Sanctioning Process. Papers in this course will all be submitted to [turnitin.com](https://www.turnitin.com) for checking.

Submitting material in fulfillment of the requirements of this course means that you have abided by the Georgetown honor pledge:

In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown 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.

Plagiarism

In accord with university policy, all incidents of suspected plagiarism or other Honor Code violations will be reported to the Honor Council without fail.

If the Honor Council finds that a student has plagiarized or has violated the Honor Code in any other way, the student may receive a grade of F for the course.

Policy Accommodating Students' Religious Observances

The following is university policy:

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.

Library Reserves: access through GU email.

Want to place an item on reserve? Physical or electronic? Book or streaming media? Check to see if Georgetown University Library owns the item(s) . Secondly, complete the [appropriate reserve request form](#).

TURNITIN Directions for Profs

Georgetown has a full license to use [Turnitin.com](https://www.turnitin.com) and other iParadigm products, such as Grademark, etc. Go to www.turnitin.com and click on the "Create Account" button at the top of the Turnitin homepage.

If you haven't already signed up, the information you will need is as follows: account code: **81031**; "join" password: **classreg2**. With that information you can establish your own profile, register your classes(s), and instruct students to submit their papers to Turnitin. Signing up is really very easy, and Turnitin has good "help" features, including a step-by-step tutorial about the process.

2 - Former users:

Many faculty used Turnitin regularly before there was a hiatus year due to budget constraints. Consequently, these former users may experience difficulty accessing their old accounts. Please reply to this email if this happens to you.

We'd like to provide the best help to you. If you would like the Honor Council to submit a paper for you, we can do that, and send the Originality Report back right away.

On using Turnitin, this page is very helpful. http://turnitin.com/en_us/support/help-center

Turnitin available via Blackboard:

There also is a [portal in Blackboard \(Bb\)](#) if you like to have your students submit papers to Turnitin via Bb. Although it is preferable to use Turnitin for all students in a class, it also is possible to do single submissions if you have cause to do so.

Even if you are an experienced student paper reader, here also are a few features the Honor Council has noticed in cases reported which may cause faculty to be uncertain about the authenticity of student work:

- a - the quality of a student's previous written work is just too inconsistent with the paper at issue
- b - the final paper submitted is very different from previous drafts
- c - the student uses references or sources not recommended or used in class
- d - the paper is off the topic assigned.

Please understand that no one of these observations is proof of any wrong-doing but have been cited by faculty as to why a paper required further analysis, and sometimes investigation and adjudication.

Title IX at Georgetown

<https://titleix.georgetown.edu/>

Sexual Misconduct

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 ("Title IX") prohibits discrimination based on sex in any educational programs, which includes sexual harassment or any acts of sexual misconduct. Title IX requires the University, upon becoming aware of any incident of sexual harassment and misconduct to respond appropriately to protect and maintain the safety of the University community, including students, faculty, and staff.

Georgetown University prohibits sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic/dating violence, and stalking.

Discrimination based on sex, including sexual misconduct and discrimination based on pregnancy or parenting status, subverts the University's mission and threatens permanent damage to the educational experience, careers, and well-being of students, faculty, and staff.

Please know that as a faculty member I am committed to supporting survivors of sexual misconduct, including relationship violence and sexual assault. However, University policy also requires me to report any disclosures about sexual misconduct to the Title IX Coordinator, whose role is to coordinate the University's response to sexual misconduct.

Georgetown has a number of fully confidential professional resources who can provide support and assistance to survivors of sexual assault and other forms of sexual misconduct. These resources include:

Jen Schweer, MA, LPC

Associate Director of Health Education Services for Sexual
Assault Response and Prevention
(202) 687-0323
jls242@georgetown.edu

Erica Shirley

Trauma Specialist
Counseling and Psychiatric
Services (CAPS)
(202) 687-6985
els54@georgetown.edu

More information about campus resources and reporting sexual misconduct can be found at:
<https://sexualassault.georgetown.edu/get-help>.

Pregnancy Adjustments and Accommodations

Georgetown University is committed to creating an accessible and inclusive environment for pregnant and parenting students. Students may request adjustments based on general pregnancy needs or accommodations based on a pregnancy-related complication. Specific adjustments will be handled on a case by case basis and will depend on medical need and academic requirements. Students seeking a pregnancy adjustment or accommodation should follow the process laid out at: <https://titleix.georgetown.edu/student-pregnancy>.