

**HISTORY 3121**  
**THE RENAISSANCE**  
**SPRING 2005 / DR. PAUL WRIGHT**

***General information***

Class meetings: Monday and Wednesday from 1:30-2:45

My Office: SAC 271

Office hours: Monday and Wednesday 3:00-4:00, or by appointment.

Email: paul.wright@villanova.edu

Office phone: 9-6943 (but email is generally a better way to contact me than voicemail)

***Course Description***

Our course takes as its concern the tension between views of the Renaissance as the re-invigoration of something ancient and as the inauguration of something decidedly new—or still more problematic—something decidedly *modern*. In the process of investigating what precisely we mean by early modernity, we will spend time imaginatively in the world of fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century Italy, with some detours into Renaissance Europe at large and into China as it encountered the Christian world anew. Focusing on the cultural and political transformations of the European landscape, we will examine some of the defining phenomena of the period, including: the re-casting of the medieval world; the relationship between Christendom and the concept of Europe; humanism and new trends in education; the changes in political mythology and civic identity; the crisis of the Papacy and the seeds of Reformation; magic and the sciences; the rationalization of the household economy and the emergence of capitalism; changes in warfare and the monopolization of violence by the state; the transformation of art and iconography; the epistemological impact of the “discovered” Americas and a “recovered” Asia; the shifting status of early modern women; and the popular culture of an increasingly vocal and literate middle-class. The guiding method of our inquiry will be an attentive, critical reading of primary texts in translation. While some lecturing will take place, the course will in spirit and in practice be a collaborative seminar. Requirements of the course include: attendance & active participation, a mid-term, a 10-page research paper, and a final exam.

***Required texts***

Note: While we do have texts to be purchased at the university bookstore, *many* of our readings this semester will be electronic reserves. For those of you new to this system, these readings can be found by going to the “My Classroom” webpage for our course and following the link called “E-learning tools,” which will in turn take you to other links, including “Electronic Reserves.” Please look there for any readings marked with an asterisk such as this—\*. *Be sure to print out the appropriate .pdf file, read it before class, and bring it with you to class—This is standard procedure for all electronic reserves this term.* In addition, what follows below are the required texts available for purchase at the university bookstore. *Please acquire the edition listed here (make sure the ISBN matches, particularly if you choose to order texts online, etc.).*

1. Grafton, *Foundations of Early Modern Europe, 1460-1559* (Second edition) (ISBN 0393963047, Norton 1994)
2. Alberti, *The Family in Renaissance Florence* (ISBN 0881338214, Waveland Press 1994)

3. Machiavelli, *The Prince* (Second edition) (ISBN 0393962202, Norton 1992)
4. Cellini, *The Autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini* (ISBN 0140447180, Penguin 1999)
5. Guicciardini, *The Sack of Rome* (ISBN 0934977321, Italica Press 1993)
6. Baldassarri & Saiber (eds.), *Images of Quattrocento Florence* (ISBN 0300080522, Yale 2000)
7. Spence, *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci* (ISBN 0140080988, Penguin 1994)

### **Schedule**

Please note: this schedule may be modified over the course of the semester as needed.

### **Introductions**

- 1/17 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day  
 1/19 Renaissance vs. Early Modernity?  
 \*Raymond Williams, "Culture"

### **Relationships to the Past: Origins & Institutions**

- 1/24 Straddling Worlds?—Dante, Petrarca, & the Ancients  
 \*Dante, *Inferno* 4 & 34  
 \*Petrarca, "Ascent of Mt. Ventoux"  
 \*Petrarca, *Canzoniere* 128
- 1/26 Origins—Florence in Search of Founding Myths  
 Salutati, "A Defense of the Roman Origins of Florence," *Images of Quattrocento Florence (IQF)*, pp. 3-11  
 Bruni, "The Republican Legacy," *IQF*, pp. 12-17  
 Gherardi, "Inquiry into the Origins of Florence," *IQF*, pp. 18-24  
 Cavalcanti, "So Depraved a Man as Julius Caesar ...," *IQF*, pp. 25-28  
 Landino, "The Original Site of Florence Contrasted with Its Present Splendor," *IQF*, pp. 29-31  
 Poliziano, "The Only City Founded by Three Roman Generals," *IQF*, pp. 32-36  
 Biondo, "A Sketch of Florence and Its Domain," *IQF*, pp. 316-21
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- 1/31 Originality—The Self-Mythification of Florence  
 \*Bruni, "Panegyric to the City of Florence" (in two parts on reserve)  
 \*Machiavelli, *Florentine Histories*, Book 2 (excerpts)
- 2/2 The Church in the Early Quattrocento—From the Crisis of the Papacy to the Council of Florence  
 Gherardi, "Tuscany as the Cradle of Christianity," *IQF*, pp. 229-31  
 Domenico da Corella, "A Guide to Florence's Holy Sites," *IQF*, pp. 246-51  
 Anonymous, "Metropolitane Isidore's Journey to the Council of Florence," *IQF*, pp. 287-91  
 Antonio da Rieti, "Vision of the Future of Italy," *IQF*, pp. 232-35  
 Anonymous, "A Prophecy of a New Age," *IQF*, pp. 236-37  
 \*Thomas à Kempis, *Imitation of Christ* (excerpts)

### **The New Learning**

- 2/7 Humanism & The Past—Vernacular Literature & the Relics of the Classical World  
 Grafton, *Foundations of Early Modern Europe*, Chapter 3  
 Poliziano, "The First Anthology of Vernacular Poetry," *IQF*, pp. 169-74  
 \*Bracciolini, "The Ruins of Rome"

- 2/9 Humanism & the Future of Education—Greece, Rome, Jerusalem, & Paris  
\*Salutati, "A Letter in Defense of Liberal Studies"  
\*Valla, "The Forgery of the Donation of Constantine"  
\*Manutius, "The Life of a Scholar-Printer"  
\*Alberti, "Self-Portrait of a Universal Man"
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- 2/14 Renaissance Philosophy & The New Learning  
\*Ficino, "The Golden Age in Florence"  
\*Pico della Mirandola, *Oration on the Dignity of Man* (excerpts)  
\*Vives, *A Fable About Man*
- 2/16 Renaissance Magic  
\*Brucker, *Society of Renaissance Florence: "Sorcerers"*
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- 2/21 Early Modern Science  
Grafton, *Foundations*, Chapter 1  
\*Vesalius, "Anatomy and the Art of Medicine"  
\*Fracastoro, "The Health of the Mind"  
\*Nicholas of Cusa, "The Nature of the Universe"

### **Renaissance Commerce**

- 2/23 Early Modern Commerce—Markets & Capitalism  
Grafton, *Foundations*, Chapter 2  
Caccini, "A Letter to Cederni on Gambling," *IQF*, pp. 61-63  
Dei, "The City's Unparalleled Economic Prosperity," *IQF*, pp. 83-87  
\*Brucker, *Society of Renaissance Florence: "Attitudes Toward Wealth"*
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- 2/28 Oikos & Economy—Daily Life in the Urban Palazzi & Suburban Estates  
Alberti, *The Family in Renaissance Florence*
- 3/2 Alberti, *The Family in Renaissance Florence*  
**MID-TERM EXAMINATION**
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### **Spring Break**

### **Politics & Warfare**

- 3/14 Ambition—The Medici & Their Allies  
Dati, "The Structure of the Florentine Government," *IQF*, pp. 44-54  
Vespasiano da Bisticci, "A New Rome," *IQF*, pp. 64-68  
Pulci, "Lorenzo the Magnificent's Utopian State," *IQF*, pp. 88-91  
Collenuccio, "Praise of the City Before Its Authorities," *IQF*, pp. 309-15  
\*F. Guicciardini, *History of Italy*, Book 1 (excerpts)  
Sforza, "The Delights of the Medici Villa in Careggi," *IQF*, pp. 322-24
- 3/16 Anxiety—The Medici & Their Enemies  
Parenti, "A Critique of Cosimo's Florence," *IQF*, pp. 69-71  
Pope Pius II, "Bittersweet Praise of Florence," *IQF*, pp. 299-305  
Rinuccini, "A Condemnation of Lorenzo's Regime," *IQF*, pp. 103-14  
\*Poliziano, "The Pazzi Conspiracy"  
\*Machiavelli, *Florentine Histories*, Book 8 (excerpts)
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- 3/21 Theoretical & Political Upheaval—The Medieval Context  
\*St. Thomas Aquinas, "On Kingship" (excerpts)  
\*Dante, *De Monarchia* (excerpts)  
\*Bartolus of Sassoferrato, "On the Tyrant" (excerpts)

- 3/23 Theoretical & Political Upheaval—The Peace of Lodi to Savonarola  
Porcari, "The Heir to Roman Justice," *IQF*, pp. 292-98  
\*Machiavelli, *Florentine Histories*, Book 6 (excerpts)  
\*F. Guicciardini, *History of Italy*, Book 3 (excerpts)  
Savonarola, "A Treatise on the Florentine Government," *IQF*, pp. 252-65  
Bernardo, "An Epistle to the *Fanciulli*," *IQF*, pp. 266-70  
Landucci, "The Rise and Fall of the Self-Made Prophet Girolamo Savonarola," *IQF*, pp. 276-86
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### **Easter Break**

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- 3/28 No Class—Easter Break  
3/30 The Republican Era & Its Ruin, 1498-1512  
\*Dante, *Inferno* 10  
Grafton, *Foundations*, Chapter 4  
Machiavelli, "Letter of 10 December 1513" (in your edition of *The Prince*)  
Machiavelli, *The Prince*
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- 4/4 Warfare, Criminality, & Partisan Violence  
Machiavelli, *The Prince*  
Machiavelli, "Letter of 17 May 1521" (in your edition of *The Prince*)
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### **Women & The Underclass**

- 4/6 Early Modern Women—Revisiting Assumptions  
\*Barbaro, "On Wifely Duties" (excerpts)  
\*St. Teresa of Avila, "The Lord's Labour"  
\*Veronica Franco, *Poems & Selected Letters* (excerpts)  
\* Brucker, *Society of Renaissance Florence: "Prostitution"*  
\*Alessandra Strozzi, "Selected Letters" (excerpts)
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- 4/11 Popolo Minuto—The Urban & Rural Underclass  
\*Machiavelli, *Florentine Histories*, Book 3 (excerpts)  
\* Brucker, *Society of Renaissance Florence: "The Popolo Minuto"*  
\* Brucker, *Society of Renaissance Florence: "Anti-Semitism"*  
\* Brucker, *Society of Renaissance Florence: "Crime and Punishment"*
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### **Renaissance Art**

- 4/13 Renaissance Art & Architecture—Technique & Iconography  
\*Vasari, *Lives of the Artists* (preface)  
Ghiberti, "Giotto Brings Art out of the Dark Ages," *IQF*, pp. 188-91  
Alberti, "The Marvel of Brunelleschi's Dome for the Cathedral of Florence," *IQF*, pp. 192-94  
Manetti, "Brunelleschi and Donatello Discover Ancient Roman Treasures," *IQF*, pp. 195-99  
Anonymous, "Eminent Florentine Artists of the Quattrocento," *IQF*, pp. 200-203  
Verino, "The Beauty of Florence Surpasses that of Ancient Athens," *IQF*, pp. 207-12  
Belcari, "The Consecration of the Cathedral of Florence," *IQF*, pp. 238-40
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- 4/18 Renaissance Art & Architecture—Politics & Patronage  
Cellini, *The Autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini*  
4/20 Cellini, *The Autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini*

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## The Crisis of the Early Sixteenth Century—The Waning of the Renaissance

4/25 Crossroads at 1527—The Sack of Rome

L. Guicciardini, *The Sack of Rome*

## New Worlds & Old—The Americas & Asia

4/27 Epistemological Trauma, Moral Failure—Empire & the Americas

\*Montaigne, *Essays*: “Of Cannibals”

\*Vitoria, “On the American Indians” (excerpts)

**Friday 4/29: RESEARCH PAPER DUE**

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5/2 The Christian Encounter with Asia

Spence, *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci*

Recommended: Grafton, *Foundations*, Chapters 5-6

5/4 Spence, *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci*

**Reading Day: Friday, May 6**

**Final Examination: Tuesday, May 10, 4:15-6:45**

**Important Note:** According to strict university policy, final examinations cannot be re-scheduled; please make all travel plans accordingly. The only exception occurs when a student has three or more exams scheduled for one day; if this is the case for you, please let me know.

### Additional (and more intangible) Requirements

- Our keywords: *toleration, patience, intellectual flexibility, responsibility, accountability.*
- Although some lecturing will provide necessary background for you, this is a course in which reading, writing, and discussion are continually integrated. We can't think of these processes as operating in a vacuum. They are fundamentally communal events that go well beyond a limited understanding of instruction. Let's suspend the idea that learning is transmitted from one who has knowledge to those who do not. Instead, let's consider ourselves fellow-travelers at various stages of preparation and development in our critical faculties. In that way, the class becomes less about expertise and authority, and far more about dialogue and exchange.
- Risk-taking is an essential approach to learning: in that spirit, let's jettison the notion that criticism and critical thinking are purely negative activities, or that they should ever be “safe.”
- Acknowledging limits is important, representing a willingness to rethink and restate our opinions in the light of stronger or more compelling evidence (this by necessity is an obligation of mine as well as yours). In other words, develop strong opinions, but continually put them to the test and verify them in light of the historical evidence at hand.

### Plagiarism, Cheating, and Miscellaneous Nastiness

- **An academic integrity violation will result in failure for the course, without exception.**
- There is a profound difference between learning and copying from others, whether they are your classmates, internet entrepreneurs, or long-dead scholars. Learning involves hard work, even when following in others' footsteps. It includes giving credit where credit is due, and it goes a long way towards my earlier advice about acknowledging limitations. By

acknowledging the sources of our ideas, we both put them in their proper context and intellectually raise the bar for ourselves. Cutting and pasting from the net, lifting from books, forging, having others take tests, etc.—these are all unnecessary, self-defeating, and subject to severe measures from me and any other self-respecting instructor. Lastly, you only do yourself a disservice when you disregard the conventions by which we recognize the hard work of others—cheating only shows that you do not belong in a community wherein we appreciate rather than exploit one another.

- Believe it or not, ethics is at heart pragmatic. You can accomplish much more through integrity, propriety, and the admission of intellectual indebtedness than you can cutting corners and kidnapping the expressions and ideas of others. In fact, I insist that cheating wastes more time than doing the work oneself.
- Having said all this, I understand that in many cases, especially with plagiarism, things get rather ambiguous. Many students stumble into plagiarism rather than will it; we can discuss how to avoid these more innocent (but no less harmful) errors. And of course, when in doubt, talk to me. I will gladly help out.

#### Additional Resources, Clarifications, and Advice

In order for all of us to get the most possible out of our time together, the following resources will prove indispensable:

- The *Villanova Writing Center*, located in Dalton Room, Old Falvey 202 (Ph. 519-4604). Writing consultations are available by appointment or on a walk-in basis, but it is best to make appointments, particularly at peak times. Make an appointment now in anticipation of your term paper; if you wait too long, I assure you that no appointments will be available come April. Don't hesitate to go—no one's writing is too polished to benefit from a consultation, nor is anyone's writing too irredeemable. Naturally, you will also be consulting closely with me in the process of writing the paper.
- It is the policy of Villanova to make reasonable academic accommodations for qualified individuals with disabilities. If you are a person with a disability and wish to request accommodations to complete your course requirements, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible to discuss the request. If you would like further information or are uncertain whether you are eligible for such accommodations, contact the *Office of Learning Support Services* at 519-5636, or visit the office in Geraghty Hall. Note that disabilities can include learning impediments as well as physical limitations.
- *Take advantage of my office hours.* In terms of the readings and understanding our subject, it is invariably the case that an office visit clarifies misunderstandings that would otherwise go uncorrected. Let me know right away if anything is impeding you in dealing with the demands or reaping the rewards of the course. I will keep an open mind if you will likewise keep me up-to-date on matters of importance to you, stressful or otherwise. I am thrilled to hear your good news as well as any problems or complaints.
- *Take note of your classmates at all levels of experience.* You will likely learn as much from one another ultimately as from me. Don't let unhealthy forms of competitiveness or preconceptions about one another muddy the waters—consider and treat one another with the respect and toleration merited by colleagues.

#### Breakdown of Grading Policy

Mandatory Requirement—**Regular attendance** (Excessive absences will affect

your grade.)

Mandatory Requirement—**Being on time** (If you are inordinately late, you will be marked as absent from the class.)

Mandatory Requirement—**Bringing texts to class ready to discuss them**

*Unless these three basic obligations are met, passing the course is **not** possible. Given good attendance, punctuality, and reading, the grading breaks down as follows:*

**Mid-term Exam** (25%)

**10-12 page Term Paper** (25%)

**Final Exam** (25%)

**Participation & Attendance** (25%)