

THE BIRTH OF THE RENAISSANCE
Art History 309
Fall 2017

Prof. Sarah Blake McHam

Office: 60 College Ave., #103

Hours: TBD and by appointment; tel. 732-616-1709 or email mcham@rci.rutgers.edu

For further information: <http://arthistory.rutgers.edu/faculty-menu/full-time-faculty/70-blake-mcham>

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course introduces students to the study of the visual culture of Renaissance Italy. We'll explore the development of Italian Renaissance art during the fifteenth century, an era of radical change in which were introduced new secular subjects like portraiture, contemporary events, birth scenes, and pagan mythology, and new artistic techniques like linear perspective and engraving (as a result of the invention of the printing press). At the same time, longstanding cultural and religious traditions continued to be honored in interpretations increasingly centered on the human world. We'll examine diverse media, including painting, sculpture, architecture, decorative arts and works on paper. Using various art historical methods, as well as social, political and religious history, we'll discuss various issues, including: how antiquity inspired artists and patrons to redefine modes of representation, how competition and the public display of art fostered innovation, how the role of the artist was transformed in this period, and how mercantile connections with the Muslim world and the Americas influenced Italian artistic culture.

REQUIREMENTS: There will be a 2- page visual analysis on a work of art of the student's choice from the Metropolitan Museum, an hourly exam, a 5-page research paper on the chosen object (developed from a revision and expansion of the essay), and a final. Grading will be based on these assignments and on contributions to class discussion (hourly @25 points; essay@ 10 points each; research paper @25 points; class participation@10 points, and final @30 points). Attendance is required. If you expect to miss one or two classes, please use the University absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/> to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me. There will be a double period class at the Metropolitan Museum of Art to review earlier Italian art, to study in person objects relevant to the class, and to choose objects for analysis and research. Make-ups for the hourly exam and the final are granted only with a doctor's excuse. Late assignments will be lowered a grade for each day they are late.

Current Academic Integrity Policy: Any questions about cheating or plagiarism, which are strictly prohibited, are found here: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/>

Disabilities: Full disability policies and procedures are at <http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/> Students with disabilities requesting accommodations must follow the procedures outlined at <http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/request.html>

GOALS OF THE COURSE: The primary goal of the course is to teach how to analyze visual information so that students can read and interpret works of art and differentiate among them. A

secondary objective is to demonstrate how the visual language of painting, sculpture, prints, and architecture conveys religious, social, and political messages about the society in which it was created and to learn how to decipher them. Thirdly, this course aims to teach how to express these perceptions in discussions and in papers.

TEXT: Loren Partridge, *Art of Renaissance Florence, 1400-1600*, Berkeley: U. of CA Press, 2009, paperback (ISBN 9780520257740) is available at the Rutgers University (Barnes and Noble) Bookstore, Ferren Mall, and at online sites like Amazon, ABE, and Half. Follow along in Partridge the material covered in each class.

RESERVE: Recent books dealing with issues relevant to Italian 15th-century art are available for further reading on Art 309's reserve behind the desk in the Art Library. They will be useful for the essays and research paper. The syllabus and assigned readings are on electronic reserve on the SAKAI site. You are expected to read the assigned readings before each class and to come to class prepared to discuss them.

SAKAI SITE: An outline and illustrations of the works of art for every class, directions for all assignments, and copies of the syllabus and readings can be found on the class SAKAI site <https://sakai.rutgers.edu/portal>.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES (All in ZIMMERLI ART MUSEUM, Multi-Purpose Room, T and Th from 1:10-2:30, except for the class at the Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Note: you are expected to do the readings listed under each week before the classes that week.

Week I :

Setting the Stage – A Brief Introduction to the Course and History of 15th-century Italy, particularly Florence

Week II :

Building Blocks – Innovations in Florentine Architecture

Readings:

Turner, Ch. 4 “In the Shadow of the Dome,” (pp. 69-89)

Questions on which to focus: Organization of artistic practice? How did patronage system work? Why important?

Week III:

Speaking Statues

Readings:

Giorgio Vasari, *Life of Donatello*, translation of Italian 1568 edition);

<http://members.efn.org/~acd/vite/VasariDon.html>

Turner, Ch. 3 “Speaking Statues,” pp. 51-67

Welch, Ch. 2 “Materials and Methods,” pp. 37-77

Questions on which to focus: What are speaking statues? How does the artist make stone or bronze seem alive? What does Vasari emphasize in

his biography of Donatello?

Week IV:

Window into the World: Innovations in Painting

Readings:

“Cardinal Dominici on Painters and Paintings” in *Gilbert, Italian Art, 1400-1500*, pp. 145-6

Baxandall, Michael, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy*, pp. 40-49

Welch, Ch. 2 “Materials and Methods,” pp. 37-77

Alberti, *On Painting*, Bks. 2 and 3

Eckstein, *Painted Glories, The Brancacci Chapel*, Ch. 3, pp. 109-49

Questions on which to focus: What is fresco? How would 15th-c.

Florentines have understood the Brancacci Chapel cycle?

Whom is Alberti addressing in his treatise? Why? What are his goals?

VISIT TO THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART -- TBD

Week V:

Innovations Reworked in the Second Generation in Florentine Painting

Readings:

Hood, *Fra Angelico at San Marco*, 1990, ch. 10 (pp. 209-38)

Questions on which to focus: How did Fra Angelico tailor his program of paintings at San Marco to the different audiences who would see them there? Consider the different needs and motivations of the three parties involved in the renovation of San Marco: 1. the Dominican friars who lived there, including Fra Angelico, painter of the *San Marco* altarpiece and the convent’s fresco decorations; 2. Michelozzo (the architect), and 3. Cosimo (the patron). What did each group want to accomplish in the project and how did their priorities differ?

Week VI

Innovations Reworked in the Second Generation in Florentine Sculpture

Readings:

Renaissance Portrait,

Irving Lavin, “On the Sources and Meaning of the Renaissance Portrait Bust,” in *Looking at Italian Renaissance Sculpture*, Sarah Blake McHam, ed., Cambridge, 1998, 60-78

Questions on which to focus: how did wealthy Renaissance Italians ensure their fame after death?

HOURLY EXAM: 6 short essays about individual works of art in which the works of art are

identified and their historical and art historical importance discussed (10 minutes each)

Week VII:

The Age of Cosimo de' Medici

Readings:

“Leonardo Bruni’s Rejected Program” [for the Gates of Paradise]

Kent, Dale V. *Cosimo de' Medici and the Florentine Renaissance: the patron's oeuvre*, pp. 3-8

Patricia Rubin, “Magnificence and the Medici” in *The Early Medici and their Artists*. ed. Francis Ames-Lewis, London, 1995, pp. 37-50

Questions on which to focus: how does the patron get his say?

Visual Analysis Paper due on March 9

Week VIII:

The Age of Lorenzo (the Magnificent) de' Medici

(Botticelli, Verrocchio, Leonardo, Pollaiuolo, Ghirlandaio, and Michelangelo)

Bibliography of 8 items, of which 4 must be recent books, articles, or essays, and the outline of your paper are due on March 23

Week IX:

The Age of Lorenzo (the Magnificent) de' Medici (cont.)

(Botticelli, Verrocchio, Leonardo, Pollaiuolo, Ghirlandaio, and Michelangelo)

Readings:

Hughes, *Michelangelo*, chs. 1 and 2, pp. 4-62

Question on which to focus: was Michelangelo’s training unconventional?

Week X:

Rome and the Courts of Italy: Ferrara and Rimini

Readings:

Partridge, *The Art of Renaissance Rome*, pp. 9-25; 79-85; 109-20

Cole, *Virtue and Magnificence*, “Introduction,” pp. 7-14; Ch. 5: Este Ferrara

Question on which to focus: how did the Renaissance popes negotiate between this world and the next in terms of art?

Week XI:

The Courts of Northern Italy, Urbino and Mantua

Readings:

Cole, *Virtue and Magnificence*, “Ch. 3: Urbino under Federico da Montefeltro” (pp. 7-14; 67-90); Ch. 6: Mantua and the Gonzaga”

Dana Katz, “Contours of Tolerance: Jews and the Corpus Domini Altarpiece, Urbino,” *Art Bulletin*, vol. 85 (December 2003), pp. 646-61

Question on which to focus: how were Jews regarded in Renaissance Italy?

Week XII:**Naples and Sforza Milan (Leonardo da Vinci)**

Readings:

Cole, *Virtue and Magnificence*, “Ch. 2: Piety and Propaganda: Naples under Arnolfo of Aragon,” pp. 45-65

Cole, *Virtue and Magnificence*, “Ch. 4: Milan and Pavia under Ludovico ‘il Moro’,” pp. 93-116

Zöllner, *Leonardo da Vinci*, pp. 120-39

Questions on which to focus: Why did Leonardo prefer to live in Milan rather than his native Florence? What was it like to be a court artist?

Week XIII:**The Republic of Venice and its Empire; Venice as a conduit to the Muslim World**

Readings:

“Mantegna’s Field Trip to Collect Classical Inscriptions”

Brown, *Art and Life in Renaissance Venice*, Ch. 1

Question on which to focus: How was Venice different from other Italian states?

Research Paper due on April 27

Week XIV: Review**FINAL EXAMINATION: (for the latest information about the exam schedule:**

<http://finalexams.rutgers.edu/>)

Exam Directions:

Part I will consist of 10-minute essays about individual works of art, including at least one 20-minute comparison. The works of art will all be from the 2nd part of the semester and chosen from those covered in the review session. You are asked to identify them fully and to explain their historical and art historical importance. (60 minutes)

Part 2 will consist of a choice of 2/6 essays (30 minutes each) based on the text, readings and class lectures and discussions throughout the semester. A list of 5 possible questions will be passed out on April 25.

The exam will be geared to 2 hours so you’ll have plenty of time.

Student-Wellness Services:**Just In Case Web App**

<http://codu.co/cee05e>

Access helpful mental health information and resources for yourself or a friend in a mental health crisis on your smartphone or tablet and easily contact CAPS or RUPD.

Counseling, ADAP & Psychiatric Services (CAPS)

(848) 932-7884 / 17 Senior Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901/ www.rhscaps.rutgers.edu/

CAPS is a University mental health support service that includes counseling, alcohol and other drug assistance, and psychiatric services staffed by a team of professional within Rutgers Health

RUSA – The Rutgers University Student Assembly urges that this information be included at the end of

services to support students' efforts to succeed at Rutgers University. CAPS offers a variety of services that include: individual therapy, group therapy and workshops, crisis intervention, referral to specialists in the community and consultation and collaboration with campus partners.

Violence Prevention & Victim Assistance (VPVA)

(848) 932-1181 / 3 Bartlett Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901 / www.vpva.rutgers.edu/

The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance provides confidential crisis intervention, counseling and advocacy for victims of sexual and relationship violence and stalking to students, staff and faculty. To reach staff during office hours when the university is open or to reach an advocate after hours, call 848-932-1181.

Disability Services

(848) 445-6800 / Lucy Stone Hall, Suite A145, Livingston Campus, 54 Joyce Kilmer Avenue, Piscataway, NJ 08854 / <https://ods.rutgers.edu/>

The Office of Disability Services works with students with a documented disability to determine the eligibility of reasonable accommodations, facilitates and coordinates those accommodations when applicable, and lastly engages with the Rutgers community at large to provide and connect students to appropriate resources.

Scarlet Listeners

(732) 247-5555 / <http://www.scarletlisteners.com/>

Free and confidential peer counseling and referral hotline, providing a comforting and supportive safe space.

every
syllabus.

UPDATED 2016-01-07