COURSE DESCRIPTION

In our era many European countries have united to form a single state in terms of their monetary systems and many of their regulations. That alliance is showing serious signs of fraying (note Brexit), because in part it is running counter to more than 1500 years of independence and cultural and linguistic differences. Nowhere is that diversity more apparent than during the Renaissance, defined for our purposes here as the fourteenth through sixteenth centuries, which represents a universally recognized high point in artistic achievement all over Europe. This class will examine a series of masterpieces from the European tradition that reveal artistic forms that were intrinsic to culture north and south of the Alps, with the goal of pointing out their different features as well as their commonalities. It will consider these features against the backdrop of the first wide European exposure to cultures outside its boundaries. Most of the objects that we will study were not considered works of art in their day, but instead visual aids to religious practice, a means of commemorating an individual or event, or objects to decorate or to
promote pleasure. The course’s broader objective is to create a background that leads to a better understanding of the European contribution in the epoch of the development of early modern culture, and consequently, of the modern world.

GOALS OF THE COURSE

By the end of the course you will have increased your abilities to analyze visual information so that you can read and interpret works of art and differentiate among them. You will also have become skilled in understanding how the visual language of painting, works on paper, sculpture and architecture conveys religious, social, and political messages about the society in which it was created, and you will have learned how to decipher them. You will also have gained experience in expressing these perceptions in discussions and in papers.

REQUIREMENTS: There will be six one-page page essays on a choice of designated topics mostly during the first 8 weeks of the course, all due on Thursday of the following week, a 5-page research paper on the subject of your choice (developed from a revision and expansion of one of your essays), and a final. Grading will be based on these assignments and on contributions to class discussion (essays @40% total; research paper outline @ 5%, research paper @15%; class participation @ 20%, and final @20%). Attendance is required unless you are forced to take the class asynchronously, in which case, speak to me for special assignments. Without a valid excuse, late assignments will be lowered a grade for each day they are late.

TEXTS: There is no textbook in print that covers just this course’s material. Instead scans of materials from a range of books and articles will be available under “To do” in each week’s module on CANVAS. Tom Nichols, *A Beginner’s Guide to Renaissance Art*, London, Oneworld, 2010, ISBN 978-1-85168-724-4, an inexpensive paperback, is an optional text to turn to for additional information. See [Renaissance Art: A Beginners Guide - Nichols, Tom](https://www.amazon.com.au/9781851687244) on Amazon.com.au | Books. It is also available in the RU Bookstore at Ferren Mall. You are expected to read the readings before each class, come to class prepared to discuss them, and ready to answer the issues raised for each class on the syllabus.

WEBSITE: The class syllabus is found under “Syllabus” on Canvas. The readings, directions for assignments, and a brief outline of each lecture, a slide list of the works of art discussed, and the recorded lecture can be found in the relevant week’s module.

ASSESSMENT

This course aims to fulfill the following core requirements:

• To learn the appropriate vocabulary and critical tools for discussing and writing about works of art.

• To gain awareness of the major stylistic developments in the world of European art and architecture between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries and how they reflect trends and concerns in the societies in which they were made.
• To be able to communicate easily and logically what the student has learned in both written and oral form.
• To evaluate different ways of studying an object as presented in the readings and to synthesize information from multiple sources in order to generate new insights.

This course meets the following Core Curriculum learning goals:

13
HST h, AH k+ p:

Historical Reasoning

(h) Employ historical reasoning to study human endeavors.

Arts and Humanities

(k) Explain the development of some aspect of a society or culture over time, including the history of ideas or history of science.
Social and Historical Analysis

(p) Analyze arts and/or literatures in themselves and in relation to specific histories, values, languages, cultures, and technologies.
Historical Analysis

These learning goals will be assessed through class discussions with a focus on the assigned readings, six short papers, and a research paper on the subject of your choice (developed from a revision and expansion of one of your essays).
There will as well be a final focused on knowledge of the different artists, monuments, and concepts covered in the class.

Plagiarism and Academic Honesty

Please familiarize yourself with the definition of plagiarism in Rutgers’s official policy statement on academy integrity: http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml. As a student in this
course. You are responsible for understanding and thus avoiding the varieties of plagiarism in college writing outlined in this statement. Any student who plagiarizes will receive a zero for the given assignment and, in some cases, a failing grade for the course.

**Special Needs**
Please notify me if you have any documented disabilities or special circumstances that require attention, and I will be happy to accommodate you. Students with disabilities may also contact the Kreeger Learning Center directly: Kreeger Learning Center, 151 College Avenue. Suite 123. New Brunswick. NJ 08901, 732/932-2848. Hours: Monday - Friday. 8:30am - 5:00pm.

**Study Tips**
You will be able to understand and process the information better if you keep up with the schedule laid out in the syllabus. Do not hesitate to ask any questions that may help your study process.
Read the sections of the books and articles listed in advance of the pertinent class.

Grading Scale:
A = 90 - 100
B+ = 87-89
B = 80-86
C+ = 77-79
C = 70 - 76
D = 65 - 69
F= 64 and Below

**Exam:** Five possible essay questions will be circulated three weeks prior to the exam. In the exam I will choose two of them for you to answer in a well-substantiated essay bolstered by specific examples. The exam will begin in the time slot allotted by RU. You will have a 27-hour interval in which to take three hours to answer it. You must turn the finished exam in at the end of the allotted time slot on the following day. Each essay counts 50 points.

The lectures and powerpoints in the course will be available for consultation on Canvas. Each student should be prepared to discuss the cultural framework and visual impact of every major work of art included.

**Required and Optional Readings**
Each lecture will have specific readings, either sections of books or articles. It is your responsibility to read these materials so that you can participate in the class discussion.
Remember this is a class for students without experience in Renaissance art so speak up without fear of not knowing enough.
Schedule of Classes

The following syllabus is arranged according to classes:

**Module 1. January 21-** Introduction to the various political entities north and south of the Alps and their histories and cultural traditions

- Both north and south of Alps together; exposure to non-European cultures; maps; different histories and languages; issues like patronage; religious devotion or personal commemoration, not art; social position of the Artist

Issues: How does the Renaissance artist’s social position differ from that today? What led to the production of art in the Renaissance? In the context of today’s lecture, why is meant by calling art not art? Choose one of these issues for a 500-word essay due on January 28.

**Module 2. January 25 and 28 -** Various commission formats; Fifteenth-Century Altarpieces north of the Alps

- Patronage
- Role in stimulating religious devotion
- Technical examination
- Iconographic and stylistic overview
  - Tom Nichols, *Renaissance Art*, 1-4; 19-28; 110-16
  - Robert Campin, *Merode Altarpiece*
  - Jan van Eyck, *Ghent Altarpiece*
  - Hugo van der Goes, *Portinari Altarpiece*
  - Bosch, *Hay Wain*
Issues: Discuss one of the means of technical examination of paintings and its revelations. Choose one of these issues for a 500-word essay due on February 4.

Module 3. February 1 and 4 - Various commission formats: Fourteenth and Fifteenth-Century Altarpieces south of the Alps; technical examination
- Duccio, Maestà Altarpiece
- Giovanni Bellini, San Giobbe Altarpiece
- Botticelli, Adoration of the Magi
- Leonardo, Adoration of the Magi
- Michelangelo, St. Peter’s Pietà

Issues: What is an altarpiece? What functions does it serve? What different problems do writers and artists face? Choose one of these issues for a 500-word essay due on February 11.

Module 4. February 8 and 11 - Storytelling in Italian Renaissance Art
- Giotto, Arena Chapel
- Donatello, David
- Leonardo Last Supper
- Ghiberti, Gates of Paradise
- Michelangelo, Sistine Ceiling
- Nichols, Renaissance Art, 42-7

Issues: What are the advantages of presenting a narrative in many scenes? What are the advantages of a single narrative focus? How can an artist use a single narrative focus with details to allude to the future or past? Choose one of these issues for a 500-word essay due on February 18.

Module 5. February 15 and 18 - Challenge of Nature, Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries
- Leonardo’s anatomies
- Leonardo’s studies of landscapes, storms, flowing water
Dürer, bird, animal and plant studies  
Nichols, *Renaissance Art*, 130-6  

Issues: What are the implications of artistic attention to natural details? What is the difference between previous illustration of nature and those by Leonardo and Dürer? Choose one of these issues for a 500-word essay due on February 25.

Module 6. February 22 and 25 - Challenge of Nature, Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries  
Bruegel, *Seasons* Cycle  

Issues: For what purpose were these paintings commissioned? Are they the first representations of the seasons? Choose one of these issues for a 500-word essay due on March 4.

Module 7. March 1 and 4- Challenge of Ancient Art  
Botticelli, *Birth of Venus*  
Antico, *Apollo Belvedere*  
Michelangelo, *David*  
Botticelli, Primavera  
Dürer, Adam and Eve  
Nichols, *Renaissance Art*, 48-51  

Module 8. March 8 and 11- Portraiture and the Rise of Renaissance Man and Woman  
Jan van Eyck, *Self-Portrait (?)*  
Jan van Eyck, *Arnolfini Portrait*  
Leonardo, *Mona Lisa*  
Holbein, *Ambassadors*  
Parmigianino, *Self-Portrait in a Mirror*  
Dürer, *Self-Portrait*  
Nichols, *Renaissance Art*, 1-11

**Module 9. March 22 and 25 - Mythology**
- Pollaiuolo, *Hercules and Antaeus*
- Correggio, *Jupiter and Io*
- Titian, *Diana and Actaeon*
  - Nichols, *Renaissance Art*, 152-7
- Titian *Venus of Urbino*, 1538
- Brueghel, attrib., *Fall of Icarus*
  - Nichols, *Renaissance Art*, 141-8

**Thesis Statement, Outline, and Annotated Bibliography Due March 25**

**Module 10. March 29 - Women Artists**
- Illuminations from manuscripts of Boccaccio, *Famous Women*
- Properzia de’ Rossi, Carved Peach pit
- Sophonisba Anguissola, *Self-Portrait with Master Bernardino Campi*

**Module 10 cont. April 1- New technologies**
- Woodcuts
  - Jacopo de’ Barbari, Woodcut of Venice
- Engraving
  - Dürer, *Hercules at the Cross-Roads*
    - Nichols, *Renaissance Art*, 94-100
  - Mantegna, *Battle of the Sea-Gods*
  - Mantegna, *Christ Entering Limbo*
- Production of books
  - Gutenberg Bible
  - Pliny, *Natural History*
  - Francesco Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*
Module 11. April 5- Sixteenth-Century Altarpieces North and South of the Alps; effects of the Reformation
   Raphael, Sistine Madonna
   Pontormo, Deposition
   Cranach, Christ Blessing the Children
   Nichols, Renaissance Art, 122-4; 157-9
   Council of Trent
   Nichols, Renaissance Art, 139-40; 168-9
   Iconoclasm
   Nichols, Renaissance Art, 119-22

Module 11 cont. April 8- Architecture in the Urban and Rural Contexts: urban design
   Florence
   Pienza
   Adams, Nicholas, “The Construction of Pienza (1459-64) and the Consequences of Renovatio,” Urban Life in the Renaissance, ed. Susan Zimmermann and Ronald F. E. Weissman (Newark, 1989). 50-80

Module 12. April 12- Churches and Public Buildings
   Florence Duomo
   Rebuilding of St. Peter’s, Rome
   Palazzo Ducale, Venice
   Palladio, Redentore

Module 12 cont. April 15 -Private Residences
   House of Jacques Coeur, Bourges
   Alberti, Palazzo Rucellai
   Villa Medici, Poggio a Caiano
   Palladio, Villa Suburbana
   Château de Fontainebleau

Module 13. April 19 -Domestic Objects
   Birth-tray of Lorenzo de’ Medici
   Pair of Cassoni, Nerli Family, Courtauld Institute of Art, 1470s
Visual Analysis/Research Paper Due April 19

**Module 13 and Module 14. April 22, 26 and 29** - Exposure to non-European cultures (Americas, Islamic world and Eastern Asia) -- and its effects
   - Deborah Howard, *Venice and the East*, xi-13
   - Lia Markey, *Imagining the Americas in Medici Florence*, 7-15
   - Teresa Canepa, *Silk, Porcelain, and Lacquer: China and Japan and their Trade with Western Europe and the New World*, 24-45

**Module 15. May 3** - Review