

CET Syllabus of Record

Program: CET Florence

Course Title: Passion, Power & Pestilence: Art in Italy 1500-1650

Course Code: FL/ARTH 250

Total Hours: 45

Recommended Credits: 3

Suggested Cross Listings: History of Art, Italian Studies

Language of Instruction: English

Prerequisites/Requirements: None



Description

Death, passion, power and religion are some of the big topics we will consider in our wide-ranging exploration of the art and architecture of Renaissance and Baroque Italy. Designed to make the most of your unique opportunity to engage extensively with Italian art in-situ, this thematic course entails two site visits to major Italian centers, Venice and Rome, as well as on-site seminars in Florence. The course aims to recapture original contexts of artistic production and provide you with approaches to interpretation: going beyond formal analysis of the productions of figures such as Michelangelo, Raphael, Titian, Caravaggio and Bernini, you will gain an understanding as to how and why particular paintings, sculptures or buildings were created, learn to interpret the messages they conveyed and consider the ways they were received and enjoyed by contemporary audiences.

In our examination of centers of power and religion, you will learn to 'read' the propagandistic messages embedded in the structure and decoration of some of Italy's most famous buildings. You will gain an insight into the prime movers in their creation, rich and powerful rulers, guilds or governments, as well as the artists and architects who realized these superlative projects. By contrast, during our visits to major art collections, we will consider art made to delight the senses and we will examine the role erotic and mythological images played in the decoration of private homes and sumptuous palaces. We will take advantage of these visits to see how privileged men and women employed artists to fashion their public image through painted and sculpted portraits.

We will also discuss how people prepared for death and beyond through the creation of funerary chapels. You will learn how this deeply religious society experienced and responded to the catastrophe of plague, and why this crisis prompted the creation art and architecture, and you will begin to identify and interpret messages embedded in plague imagery. You will discover how the Roman Catholic Church and its artists and architects responded to the Protestant Reformation which caused the dramatic rupture of Christian Europe.

In our study of the figure of the artist, we will examine artists' working arrangements, careers and changing status. We will assess how Giorgio Vasari's biographies of artists influenced art appreciation in his own time and informed the taste of future generations, and we will critically examine some of Vasari's paradigms and traditional art historical methodologies.

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Although superlative Renaissance and Baroque artworks can be enjoyed in museums throughout the world, these have been divested of their original contexts; your time in Florence presents your opportunity to appreciate the importance of original settings. Through set assignments and class discussions, you will begin to evaluate and 'read' the original settings, as well as critique museum displays and interpretations of Renaissance and Baroque art.

Objectives

Through viewing works of art in situ, classroom discussion and reading published primary and secondary sources, you will gain a broad knowledge of the art and architecture in Renaissance and Baroque Italy. The course will also provide you with the critical skills and methodologies to analyse forms, programs and functions so that you will gain confidence in interpreting individual works of art independently. Finally, through your examination of patronage, historic and social contexts, you will appreciate how formal qualities and programs in Italian art resulted from a complex nexus of historic circumstances, as well as the creative abilities of individual artists and the desires of patrons.

Specifically you will:

- Engage with some of the major artistic productions of Italian Renaissance and Baroque art and become familiar with the work of major and lesser-known artists and architects of the period 1500-1650.
- Describe and appraise the formal qualities of works of art of the period.
- Gain an understanding of the purposes of artistic patronage and the motives and intentions of individual art patrons.
- Evaluate the ways in which works of art were informed by the architectonic features, illumination and space of the original physical setting.
- Discover ways in which social, cultural, religious and historic circumstances informed visual culture in Renaissance and Baroque Italy.
- Learn to interpret the roles, meanings and messages of imagery of the period.
- Gain an understanding of the methods and organisation of artistic production.
- Critically assess historic and modern readings of individual artworks.
- Evaluate the display and interpretation of artworks of the period in modern museums.

Course Requirements

All students are required to participate in class sessions and site visits. To complete your comprehension and experience of Baroque and Renaissance Italian art, you are also expected to visit museums and monuments in Florence independently and, for this reason, research papers should focus on artworks found in Florence.

Assignments and exams include:

- Two questionnaires. These are assigned at the end of the site visits and comprise short- answer questions (1 or 2 paragraphs / bullet points) about the major topics addressed during the site visits.

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- Two research papers:
 - Looking and Research Paper I: A short research paper, about 6 pages, double-spaced, excluding bibliography and footnotes. Students should discuss an artwork or decorative scheme still to be found in situ, dating from the period c. 1500- c.1650 which they have seen independently in Florence; topics are subject to approval by the professor and papers should not replicate material discussed in depth in other courses.
 - Looking and Research Paper II: A longer research paper, about 10 pages, double spaced, excluding bibliography and footnotes. Students are required to view artworks independently in Florence's museums and write an account of a single work (or pair / group of artworks, if relevant) of Italian art of their choice to be found in a museum which dates from the period c. 1500-1650; topics are subject to approval by the professor and papers should not replicate material discussed in depth in Looking and Research Paper I or other courses.
- Exam. The exam is taken at the end of the course. It comprises:
 - short-answer questions (one or two paragraphs / bullet points per question) related to identified images (5 slides or pairs of slides) on topics covered in classes and / or during the site visits.
 - an essay question on a topic covered in classes and/or during the site visits.

Finally, students are expected to read the pages and/or material listed for each class and be prepared to answer questions and engage in active discussions on relevant issues. Readings average 30 pages per class session.

Methods of Evaluation

The final grade is determined as follows:

Attendance and participation	10%
Questionnaire I	10%
Questionnaire II	10%
Looking and Research paper I	20%
Looking and Research paper II	30%
Exam	20%

Primary Texts

A course-pack, including art historical articles and excerpts from key texts.

J. Paoletti, & G. Radke, *Art in Renaissance Italy*, London, 2001 (or other editions).

Supplementary Texts

Period surveys

F. Hartt & D. Wilkins, *History of Italian Renaissance Art*, Prentice Hall, 2003.

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A. Sutherland Harris *Seventeenth-Century Art and Architecture*, Laurence King, 2005.

L. Schneider – Adams, *Italian Renaissance Art*, Boulder, Colorado, 2001.

R. Wittkower, *Art and Architecture in Italy, 1600-1750*, (6th ed. revised by J. Connors and J. Montagu), Yale University Press, 1999.

Workshops, social and intellectual contexts of artistic production

B. Cole, *The Renaissance Artist at Work*, New York, 1983 (incl. artists' training, status, workshops, products, patrons).

F. Ames-Lewis, *The Intellectual Life of the Early Renaissance Artist*, Yale, 2000.

Patronage and commissioning

M. Hollingsworth *Patronage in Sixteenth-Century Italy*, London, 1996

M. Hollingsworth *Patronage in Renaissance Italy: 1400 to the Early Sixteenth Century*, London & Baltimore, 1994 (British Institute Library 709.45HOL)

M. O'Malley, *The Business of Art: Contracts and the Commissioning Process in Renaissance Italy*, Yale, 2005.

Potraiture

L. Campbell, *Renaissance Faces*, London, 2008.

Theory and historiography

G. Vasari, *Lives of the Artists*, translated by Julia and Peter Bondanella, Oxford, 1991.

E. Fernie, *Art History and its Methods: A Critical Anthology*, London, 1995.

Museums / Museology (for preparation of Research Papers)

P. Vergo (ed.), *The New Museology*, London, 1989, see especially chp. 1 'Museums, Artefacts and Meanings'; chp. 3 'The Reticent Object'; chp. 7 'The Quality of Visitors' Experiences in Art Museums'.

Venice

P. Fortini Brown, *The Renaissance in Venice*, London, 1997. (Also published as *Art and Life in Renaissance Venice*).

Chambers and Pullan, *Venice, A Documentary History*, Toronto and London, 2001.

D. Rosand, *Myths of Venice: The Figuration of a State*, University of N. Carolina, 2001.

C. Hope et al *Titian*, (exhibition catalogue) Yale, 2003.

P. Humfrey, *The Altarpiece in Renaissance Venice*, Yale, 1993

D. Rosand *Painting in Sixteenth-Century Venice*, Cambridge, 1997. (Also published as *Painting in Cinquecento Venice*).

T. Nicholls *Tintoretto: Tradition and Identity*, London, 1998.

S. Hale, *Titian: His Life*, Harper, 2012

Rome

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- L. Partridge, *The Art of Renaissance Rome 1400-1600*, Prentice Hall, 1996.
A. Hughes, *Michelangelo*, Phaidon, 1997.
M. Hall, *After Raphael: Painting in Central Italy in the Sixteenth Century*, Cambridge, 1999.
G. Hersey, *High Renaissance Art in St. Peter's and the Vatican*, Chicago, 1993.
- H. Hibbard, *Michelangelo*, London, 1985.
C. Jr. Seymour, *Michelangelo: The Sistine Chapel Ceiling*, New York, 1972.
C. Stinger, *The Renaissance in Rome*, Bloomington, 1998.

Outline of Course Content

Note: Fall/Spring students cover approximately 1 topic every 1 to 2 weeks. During the summer, when class periods are longer, students cover just over 1 topic per week.

TOPIC 1 – Artists and the Business of Making Art

Training and workshop organisation. Object range; replicas and variants. Business strategies. Artists' guilds.

TOPIC 2 – Popes, Princes and Plebs: Buyers and Patrons of Art

Artistic patronage – definitions. Types of patrons and their motivations. Patrons' role; their influence on forms and contents. Contracts.

TOPIC 3 – Power: Venice, Art & Architecture

Historic background. Forma urbis and principal buildings. Venice and her myths. Imagery for Imperial propaganda.

TOPIC 4 – Power: Rome, Art & Architecture

Historic contexts. Treasures in Heaven and on Earth: papal patronage. Principal sites – civic spaces and papal places.

TOPIC 5 – Pestilence: The Plague and its 'Remedies'

Experiencing the plague - eyewitness accounts. Public health measures. The recourse to the Virgin and saints. Relics, votive altars and churches, processions and feste.

TOPIC 6 – Passion: Erotic and Mythological Imagery

Literary sources. Problematic interpretations – 'reading' works where literary sources are uncertain. Pleasure domes - palaces, villas and their luxury decorations. Artistic techniques and the use of models. The female nude: eroticism or erudite humanism?

TOPIC 7 - Fashioning an Image: Portraiture

Definitions and functions – what is portraiture? Development and proliferation of the independent painted portrait in Italy. Influence and significance of antique models (medals, busts, equestrian monuments). Age, rank, class and gender.

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TOPIC 8 - Art in Ecclesiastical Space: Religious Imagery and Catholic Reform

Abuses” in “the Church and calls for reform; Luther and the Protestant Reformation in Northern Europe; the rejection of religious imagery and iconoclasm. The “Counter-Reformation” and visual affirmations of the cult of saints and the Virgin, the rite of the Eucharist, Transubstantiation. The

Council of Trent and its effects on religious imagery and the arrangement of high altars. Pictorial correctness and transgressive images.

TOPIC 9 - Vasari and the History of Art(ists)

The changing role and status of the artist in Renaissance and Baroque Italy. Vasari and the Florence Academy. Vasari and the invention of the History of Art. Invenzione, disegno, colorito.