Program: CET Florence
Course Title: The Medici: History and Legend of an Italian Dynasty
Course Code: FL/ITLS 274
Total Hours: 45
Recommended Credits: 3
Primary Discipline / Suggested Cross Listings: Italian Studies / History
Language of Instruction: English
Prerequisites/Requirements: None

Description
This course delves into the full story of the extraordinary Medici family, whose fortunes are traced over three hundred years (late-14th century to early-18th century)–from the rise of the bank under Cosimo the Elder, to the final collapse of the house of the Medici with the death of the Grand Duke of Tuscany in 1737. Since the power of the Medici family enabled family members to rule Florence, control the Papacy, “act as the needle of the Italian compass” and, sometimes, influence the policies of an entire continent, a study of this family provides students a thorough understanding of the history, politics and civic life of this period. The Medici were statesmen, scholars and patrons of art; collectors; entrepreneurs and impresarios. Some of them were poets; others were popes. This class attempts to explain a pattern of political control that led Florence from a republicanism uniquely energetic in its cult of liberty to the drowsy acceptance of near-absolute rule.

The class also introduces students to relevant philosophies and artistic movements by discussing the most important achievements of artists and architects who worked for the Medici, such as Brunelleschi, Donatello, Michelozzo, Michelangelo, Botticelli, San Gallo, Bronzino, Vasari, Buontalenti, Cellini and different musicians who worked in the Medici court during the 16th and 17th centuries.

Slides and site visits supplement in-class lectures.

Objectives
During this course, students:

- Acquire a deep understanding of the lifestyle and historical artistic and cultural aspects of the Medicean period.
- Learn to ask, study and discuss larger questions about Medicean power: How was it acquired? In what way did it function? Why was it accepted?
- Gain a complete understanding of the historical factors at stake during the rise, flourishing and fall of the Medici family.
- Gain an preliminary understanding of the philosophies and artistic movements of the time.
- Learn to recognize the artistic works of many artists and architects who worked in the Medici court.
- Participate in numerous on-site lectures in order to enhance and validate their study of this topic.
CET Syllabus of Record

Course Requirements
Students are expected come to class having read all assigned readings and prepared to actively discuss that day’s topics. Classes typically comprise lectures, discussions and on-site teaching. Alternative teaching media such as slides, videos, etc. are often used. Guided visits to churches, palaces, museums and galleries are as important as in-class lectures. Therefore, all site visits are mandatory.

Students complete several written papers, as well as a midterm and final exam.

Methods of Evaluation
- Participation: 20%
- Written Assignments: 30%
- Midterm Exam: 20%
- Final Exam: 30%

Primary Texts:
M. Hollingsworth, *The Medici*, Head of Zeus, 2017

Secondary Texts:

Outline of Course Content
Note: Fall/Spring students cover approximately 1 topic every 2 weeks. During the summer, when class periods are longer, students cover approximately 1 topic per week.

TOPIC 1 - The Social and Political Framework of Florence--The Founding of a Dynasty
CET Syllabus of Record

The early days of the Medici family up until Giovanni di Bicci. The foundation of the Medici Bank in 1389. The relation of the Medici bankers with the Catholic Church. Early Medicean Art Patronage.

TOPIC 2 - Exile and Triumph
The Medici party. Cosimo the Elder: character and interests.
Cosimo: Father of the Fatherland or Godfather of the Fatherland?
The Council of Florence (1439) “East meets West”.

TOPIC 3 - Lorenzo the Magnificent
Poet, politician and Maecenas.
His position in Florence and in Italy.
Botticelli, his painter.
The “Adoption” of Michelangelo.
“April Blood”: Florence and the plot against the Medici (the Pazzi Conspiracy).
Frà Girolamo Savonarola: “Scourge and fire” (1490-1498).

TOPIC 4 – Political Literary Production under the Medici
Analysis of the two works by Nicolò Machiavelli most closely connected to the Medici family: The Prince and The Mandrake.
Giovanni dei Medici as Pope Leone X, - the first Florentine Pope.
The clash with Martin Luther and Protestantism.

TOPIC 5 - From Republic to Duchy
The Medici popes. The Medicean restoration.
Pope Clement VII (1523-1534) (Giulio Dei Medici). The last Florentine Republic (1527-1530).

TOPIC 6 – The Last Republic and the First Medici Duke
The creation of a territorial Tuscan state.
Study of the works by Giorgio Vasari aimed at the glorification of the Medici Dynasty.

TOPIC 7 - The Decline of a Dynasty
Cosimo II, Ferdinando II, Cosimo III and his heirs.