

CET Syllabus of Record



Program: CET Siena

Course Title: Topics in Renaissance Art History: Imagery and Public Space in Early Modern Europe

Course Code: ARTH3525

Total Hours: 45

Recommended Credits: 3

Primary Discipline: Art History

Language of Instruction: English

Prerequisites/Requirements: None

Description

This course explores selected chapters in Italian art history from the Early Christian to Late Renaissance periods, focusing on important decorative complexes and concepts in Renaissance architecture. Special emphasis is placed on the works of art with which students can have direct visual experience. While some classes comprise classroom lectures with slide presentations, many class sessions occur *in situ* at various monuments and museums in Siena and Florence.

Objectives

During this course, students learn to approach visual arts from the Early Christian to late Renaissance periods both comprehensively and critically, mastering basic concepts from the Renaissance system of symbols and allegories and gaining thorough knowledge of some of the most important painted and sculpted complexes of decoration in Italian art and architecture.

Topics and artworks covered include:

- Early Christian mosaic decorations in Ravenna, Giotto in Florence
- The concept of Universal Harmony in 15th century architecture
- Progressive and regressive trends in Early Renaissance painted decoration
- Fra Angelico's painted decoration in the monastery of S.Marco in Florence
- Piero della Francesca's frescoes in the church of S.Francesco in Arezzo
- Michelangelo's painted decorations in the Sistine chapel in the Vatican
- Frescoes in Raphael's Rooms in the Vatican
- Michelangelo's sculpted funeral monuments in the New Sacristy in the church of S.Lorenzo in Florence.

Course Requirements

Students must complete all reading assignments before coming to class, participate actively in class discussions, and take thorough notes during lectures. Readings average 15 pages per class session.

Students take comprehensive midterm and final examinations, each consisting of three sections: slide identification, short answer questions, and an extended essay question.

During each site visit, students complete a worksheet that answers basic questions about the artworks viewed.

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Students prepare one on-site presentation wherein they present a work of art among those included on that day's sit visit schedule. Presentations should be thorough and well-prepared, and include a question and answer session with other members of the class.

Methods of Evaluation

The final grade is determined as follows:

Attendance and Participation	10%
On-site worksheets	20%
On-site presentation	20%
Midterm Exam	20%
Final Exam	30%

Primary Texts

Schneider Adams, L., *Italian Renaissance Art*, Oxford, 2001.

John Paoletti & Gary Radke, *Art in Renaissance Italy*, London, 2001.

Hartt, F., *History of Italian Renaissance Art: Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, revised ed.*, New York, 1994.

G.Brucker, *Renaissance Florence*, New York, 1983 and updated editions.

A.R.Turner, *Renaissance Florence: The Invention of a New Art*. New York, 1997.

E.Welch, *Art in Renaissance Italy*, Oxford, 2000.

Hall's *Dictionary of Signs and Symbols*, R. Irwine, 1985.

G.Vasari, *Lives of the Artists*, different editions.

M.Levey, *Florence*, Harvard University Press, 1998.

Supplementary Texts

NA

Outline of Course Content

Note: Fall/spring students cover approximately one topic every one to two weeks. During the summer term, when class periods are longer, students cover approximately one topic per week.

TOPIC 1 - Course introduction.

Words and Images. Knowledge, immediacy and directness in visual arts. Symbols and allegories. "Reading" works of art requires knowledge of basic symbols and allegories in both religious and profane traditions.

TOPIC 2 - Early Christian mosaic decoration in Ravenna.

Mosaics in the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, the Baptistery of Orthodox, the church of San Apollinare Nuovo, Baptistery of Arians, the church of San Vitale.

TOPIC 3 - Concept of Universal Harmony in the 15th century architecture in Florence.

Filippo Brunelleschi and L.B.Alberti as architects. Brunelleschi's proportional planning and his sources of inspiration (the Baptistery, the church of SS.Apostoli and the church of S.Miniato al Monte in Florence). Brunelleschi's architecture in Florence: Foundling hospital, the Dome of S.Maria del Fiore, S.Lorenzo, S.Maria degli Angeli, Cappella Pazzi, S.Spirito. Music and architecture: Alberti and his facades of the Palazzo Rucellai and of the church of S.Maria Novella.

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TOPIC 4 - Two trends in the Early Renaissance Italian painting: Progressive and Regressive. Painted decoration in the Brancacci chapel in the church of S.Maria del Carmine in Florence (Masaccio, Masolino, Filippino Lippi). Representation of space in sculpture and painting in the 15th century. Donatello's "crushed relief" from 1417 and its "equivalent" in the art of painting. Frescoes in the Medici chapel in the Medici palace in Florence (B.Gozzoli).

TOPIC 5 - Sculptural decoration in pre-Renaissance and Renaissance periods in Florence. The three bronze door of the Baptistery in Florence (Pisano, Ghiberti, Ghiberti) and their iconography. Sculptureal decoration of Or San Michele in Florence (Ghiberti, Nanni di Banco, Donatello).

TOPIC 6 - Mysticism and the visual arts. Fra Beato Angelico and his "research" of non-verbal communication in the frescoes in the monastery of San Marco in Florence. Domenico Veneziano. Piero della Francesca. Giovanni Bellini.

TOPIC 7 - Michelangelo's paintings in the Sistine chapel in the Vatican. The ceiling of the Sistine chapel (1508 – 1512) and the Last Judgment (1534 – 1541).

TOPIC 8 - Michelangelo's sculpted decoration in the New Sacristy in the church of San Lorenzo in Florence. Iconography of the chapel.

TOPIC 9 - Raphael's frescoes in the Vatican. "Le Stanze" and their iconography.

TOPIC 10 - Michelangelo's sculpture in the Museo Nazionale Bargello and in the Galleria dell'Accademia in Florence. Problems in Michelangelo's "finished – unfinished" works. Michelangelo's David and the so-called "Prisoners".