

21H.141  
Spring 2015

## **First Short Paper: Topics**

### **Requirements**

- 1) Write an essay in response to ONE of the topics below. Your paper must be 1250 words (around five pages) long, using 12-point font and one inch margins. Please hand in hard copy to me at the start of class during Session 5.
- 2) Your paper must be computer-processed. Please give your paper a title, and write your name on the back of the last page. Do not write your name elsewhere on the paper. All pages should be numbered. Refer to the editing handout for further editing suggestions. You may also consult with tutors at the [Writing Center](#) or with me about your paper.
- 3) Citations to texts read in this course should be made in parentheses in your paper. For example, if you refer to a passage on page 13 of Erasmus' *Paraclesis*, indicate this in the following manner at the end of your sentence, after the period: (*Paraclesis*, 13). Full citations to any work not assigned in class should be made in footnote or endnote form, but for this paper you do not need to consult any outside readings.

### **Topics**

1. The 1302 Papal Bull *Unam Sanctum* is an uncompromising statement of Papal authority in spiritual and temporal affairs. As we learned in class, the King of France at the time did not agree with the Pope's claims. In your essay, discuss the extent to which some of the authors we have read in class so far implicitly endorse or dispute this claim of Papal power. You must discuss at least two of the following text excerpts we have read for class: Nicole Oresme, "The Diurnal Rotation of the Earth;" Petrarch, "The Ascent of Mount Ventoux;" Lorenzo Valla "Discourse on the Forgery of the Alleged Donation of Constantine;" Nicholas Copernicus, "The Revolutions of the Celestial Spheres."
2. Petrarch lived approximately a century before the appearance of movable-type printed books in Europe, yet he is usually considered the first major Renaissance humanist. At the critical moment in his essay "The Ascent of Mount Ventoux" when he opens his copy of Saint Augustine, Petrarch portrays himself as a reader. What type of reader is he? Is he closer to the medieval reader evoked by the historian Michael Clanchy in his essay on books before the printing press? Or is he more like the humanist reader described by the historian Anthony Grafton in the essay you read?

MIT OpenCourseWare  
<http://ocw.mit.edu>

21H.141 Renaissance To Revolution: Europe, 1300-1800  
Spring 2015

For information about citing these materials or our Terms of Use, visit: <http://ocw.mit.edu/terms>.