THE RENAISSANCE, 1300-1600

Subject Description. The “Renaissance” as a phenomenon in European history is best understood as a series of social, political, and cultural responses to an intellectual trend which began in Italy in the fourteenth century. This intellectual tendency, known as humanism, or the studia humanitatis, was at the heart of developments in literature, the arts, the sciences, religion and government for almost three hundred years. In this class, we will highlight the history of humanism, but we will also study religious reformations, high politics, the agrarian world, and European conquest and expansion abroad in the period.

Subject Requirements. Attendance and class participation is mandatory. Students will take a map quiz, write four two-page papers, one five-page paper, and one ten-page paper. I will hand out instructions for these assignments later in the term. There is no midterm or final exam in this subject. Each assignment will be weighted as follows in the calculation of the final grade, although these calculations will also take into account improved performance during the course of the semester:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>30 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Map Quiz</td>
<td>10 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two-Page Papers</td>
<td>10 points each (four papers total)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Five-Page Paper</td>
<td>40 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ten-Page Paper</td>
<td>80 points</td>
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<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>200 points</td>
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Required Reading. The following books are available for purchase at the MIT Bookstore; they should also be on reserve in the Hayden Library. Some readings, indicated by an asterisk (*), will be available on the course class web site as e-reserves. If you want more background reading on this period in European history, consult Lynn Hunt, et al. *The Challenge of the West*, on reserve in the Humanities Library.

Ross & McLaughlin, *The Portable Renaissance Reader* (RR)  
John Aberth, ed. *The Black Death: The Great Mortality of 1348-1350*  
Emmanuel Leroy-Ladurie, *Montaillou: The Promised Land of Error*  
Petrarch, *The Secret* (Bedford/St Martin’s edition, edited by Carol E. Quillen)  
Thomas More, *Utopia* (Bedford/St Martin’s edition, edited by David Harris Sacks)
Statement on Cheating and Plagiarism: The web now hosts many sites which offer college-level papers of varying quality on a variety of topics. I am well acquainted with these sites, and with others that offer detection services to professors. **Buying a paper and submitting it as your own work is cheating. Copying sections from someone else’s print or online work into your own without an acknowledgement is plagiarism.** MIT has strict policies against both activities that I will enforce. For the appropriate MIT definitions and policies, visit the following websites. If you are uncertain about what constitutes cheating or plagiarism, please contact me before submitting the work in question.

- MIT Online Writing and Communication Center: [http://web.mit.edu/writing](http://web.mit.edu/writing)
- Avoiding Plagiarism: [http://web.mit.edu/writing/Citation/plagiarism.html](http://web.mit.edu/writing/Citation/plagiarism.html) (Be sure to check out the links to sites at the University of Toronto and Texas A & M.)

**Class Meetings and Reading Assignments**

**Week One**

2/6. Introduction: The History of Renaissance History

2/8. Geography, Demography, Global Trade, 1300-1600

**Week Two**

2/13. The World of the Peasantry ca. 1300

2/15. The Black Death, ca. 1350
   **Map Quiz**

**Week Three**

2/20. NO CLASS. Monday Schedule of classes

2/22. The Discarded Image
   1) RR, 580-93
   **First Short Paper Due**

**Week Four**

2/27. The Beginnings of Humanism in Fourteenth-Century Italy
   1) RG, 1-10, 77-90
3/1. Petrarch

   **Second Short Paper Due**

3/3. Visit to Harvard’s Fogg Art Museum
   Meet at entrance at 1 PM.

**Week Five**

3/6. Civic Humanism in Early Fifteenth-Century Italy and beyond
   2) RR, 476-9

3/8. Art and Culture in Fifteenth-Century Italy
   1) RG, 90-114
   2) RR, 140-5, 527-40

   **Third Short Paper due**

3/10. Visit to the Museum of Fine Arts
   Meet at west entrance

**Week Six**

3/13. Burgundy and Late Medieval Politics in the North
   1) RR, 185-202

3/15. The New Monarchies & the Invasion of Italy
   1) RG, 110-39
   2) RR, 279-94

   **Fourth Short Paper Due**

**Week Seven**

1) RG, 140-45
2) Connell edition of *The Prince*, 1-68

   1) Connell edition of *The Prince*, 68-123
   2) RR, 263-7

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March 26-30: SPRING BREAK
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**Week Eight**

4/3. Thomas More, *Utopia*
   1) Reread RG, 140-45
   2) Sacks edition of *Utopia*, 26-51, 81-127

4/5. Thomas More, *Utopia*
   1) Sacks edition of *Utopia*, 127-212

**Week Nine**

4/10. Christian Humanism in the North
   1) RR, 80-6, 401-8, 717-21

4/12. Martin Luther and the Protestant Challenge
   1) RG, 146-77
   2) RR, 677-703.

*Five-Page Paper Due*

**Week Ten**

4/17. NO CLASS. Patriots Day.

4/19. The Age of Reformations
   1) RG, 178-202
   2) RR, 234-41
Week Eleven


4/26. Class Cancelled

Week Twelve

5/1. Portuguese Expansion  
   1) RG, 32-38

5/3. Spanish Exploration  
   1) RG, 38-44  
   2) RR 146-57  

Week Thirteen

5/8. Spanish Conquest  

5/10. The Latter Sixteenth Century: Heterodoxy and Skepticism  

Week Fourteen

5/15. Rehearsal for in-class performance of Shakespeare’s Taming of the Shrew.  
     Ten-Page Paper Due.

5/17. In-class performance of Shakespeare’s Taming of the Shrew.