

COURSE DESCRIPTION, 2013 FALL
Central European University / Departments of History and Medieval Studies

**THE RENAISSANCE:
Culture, Institutions, Representations**

MA course in Medieval and Historical Studies
(Tuesdays, 11:00–12:40)

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Renaissance Studies form a connecting link between medieval studies and modern history, just as the Renaissance is often referred to as the "early modern" period between the Middle Ages and modernity. The familiar labels attached to the Renaissance since its first historical construction by Jacob Burckhardt, such as "the birth of the individual," "the rise of rationalism and the scientific revolution," "the human-centered universe," etc. all indicate that the Renaissance was not only one of the historical periods but a specific epoch which bears direct importance for the self-definition of our present age, too. It is not by chance that some important post-structuralist trends of cultural theory (New Historicism, e.g.) evolved from a theoretical-methodological revolution in Renaissance Studies in the 1980s and have become paradigmatic modes of critical discourse.

After having looked at the medieval antecedents (the Carolingian Renaissance, the rise of medieval Italy and the important role of medieval urbanization), this survey course introduces the Renaissance as an important transitory period of great epistemological (from an organic to a mechanistic world view), ideological (individualism, "man-centeredness"), social-psychological (the Reformation) and artistic (from emblematic to a representational style with perspective) paradigm shifts. Special attention is given to new or radically reformed socio-cultural institutions (courts, universities, academies, art collections, patronage, etc.).

The **goal of the course** is to make students aware of the continuity of European cultural and institutional trends from the time of the Renaissance through the Enlightenment up to the 19th and 20th centuries, even our own present. While looking at Europe in a wide geographical context, it will also be emphasized that the Renaissance and early modern Europe was forged through vital extra- and intra-European encounters, such as the colonization of the Americas, the interactions with the Ottomans, the Reformation and the role of the Jews.

The **learning outcome** should consist of 1/ an accumulation of historical knowledge about the connections of political and social history and premodern/early modern ideology, education, and art in Europe; 2/ A better understanding of the complexity of Europe in the given period; 3/ And a better understanding of the complexity and interconnectedness of culture, representations and institutions in general. 4/ Based on the readings and assignments, students should develop their ability of processing scholarly ideas and argumentation and expressing themselves in an argumentative and scholarly way.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

1. [SEP10 – Zero Week lecture]

The Renaissance – Introduction.

Reference: Loys le Roy, "The Excellence of this Age" (Ross 91-109, **Reader**); Giorgio Vasari, "Barbarism, Antiquity, Rebirth" (Hay 11-13, **Reader**); Burke, *The European Renaissance*; Voegelin, *Renaissance and Reformation*.

2. [SEP17]

The Renaissance – Dimensions (Chronology, Geography, Basic Trends). *Discussion:* 15–16th century self-awareness – "An age of gold".

Text: Giorgio Vasari, "Barbarism, Antiquity, Rebirth" (Hay 11-13, **Reader**); Loys le Roy, "The Excellence of this Age" (Ross 91-109, **Reader**).

Reference: Burke, *The European Renaissance*; Voegelin, *Renaissance and Reformation*.

3. [SEP24]

The Renaissance – Medieval or Modern? *Discussion:* From the historiography of the Renaissance.

Text: Burckhardt, "Italy in the Renaissance: A Synthesis" (Hay 35-57, **Reader**); Szönyi, "The World of the Italian Renaissance" (**Reader**).

Reference: Dannenfeldt, *Basic Interpretations*.

4. [OCT01]

From the Fall of the Roman Empire to the Expansion of the Medieval Cities in Italy.

Discussion: Life, economy and politics in the Italian Renaissance cities.

Text: Benedetto Dei, "The prosperity of Florence" (Ross 165-67, **Reader**); Arnold von Harff, "Venice, Mistress of the Seas" (Ross 168-74, **Reader**).

Reference: Braudel, *Capitalism*; Braudel, *Civilization*; Burckhardt, *The Civilization....*, Martines, *Power and Imagination*.

5. [OCT08]

The Renaissance Outside Italy. *Discussion:* City versus court.

Text: "The Habsburgs and the Fuggers" (Ross 175-80, **Reader**); Maximilian I, *Weiskunig* (**Reader**); Marino Cavalli, "Charles V and Philip, His Son" (Ross 294-305, **Reader**).

Reference: Busse, *Berg und Scholss*; Voegelin, *Renaissance and Reformation*.

6. [OCT15]

Discoveries – Antiquity And the New World. *Discussion:* Humanism – Profession or a world view?

Text: Marsilio Ficino, "The Golden Age in Florence" (Ross 79-80, **Reader**); Erasmus of Rotterdam, "An Age of Gold" (Ross 80-84, **Reader**); Paul Oskar Kristeller, "Classical Antiquity and Renaissance Humanism" (Hay 98-111, **Reader**).

Reference: Hans Baron, *Crisis...: Civic Humanism*; Kristeller, *Renaissance Thought*; Black, "Humanism".

7. [OCT22]

Literature – Latin and Vernacular. *Discussion:* Sonnets and the Petrarchan paradox of love.

Text: Petrarch, *Rime 140* as translated by Sir Thomas Wyatt and Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey (**Reader**); Castiglione, "A Theatrical Performance" (**Reader**).

Reference: Hale, *The Civilization of Europe*; Mazzotta, *The Worlds of Petrarch*; Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations*.

8. [OCT29]

A New Perspective On the World – Revival of the Arts. *Discussion:* The Italian and the Northern Artistic Renaissance: Leonardo and Dürer.

Text: Alberti, "The Art of Building" (Ross 527-31, **Reader**); Leonardo, "Nature, Art and Science" (Ross 531-40, **Reader**).

Reference: Burckhardt, *The Renaissance*; Burke, *The European Renaissance*; DaCosta Kaufmann, *The Mastery of Nature*; Gombrich, *New Light*.

9. [NOV05]

A New Perspective On the World – the Geographical Expansion. *Discussion:* From Discovery to Colonialism.

Text: Christopher Columbus, *Diary* (**Reader**); Bartolomew de las Casas, A Brief Account Of The Destruction Of The Indies (**Reader**); Michel de Montaigne, "The Old World and the New" (Ross 157-61, **Reader**).

Reference: Boorstin, *The Discoverers*; Field and James, *Renaissance*; Todorov, *The Conquest*. Jardin, *Global Interests*.

10. [NOV12]

A New Perspective On the World – Scientific Paradigm Shifts. *Discussion:* Cosmology and medicine, the cases of Copernicus, Vesalius and Paracelsus.

Text: "The Revolution of the Celestial Spheres" (Ross 589-93, **Reader**); "The Art of Paracelsus" (Ross 552-58, **Reader**); Vesalius, "Anatomy and the Art of Medicine" (Ross 563-72, **Reader**).

Reference: Boorstin, *The Discoverers*; DaCosta Kaufmann, *The Mastery of Nature*; Field and James, *Renaissance and Revolution*; Koestler, *The Sleepwalkers*.

11. [NOV19]

The Kingdom of God – Renaissance and Reformation. *Discussion:* Reformation and Counter-Reformation, Savonarola, Luther, Calvin.

Text: Francesco Guicciardini, "Savonarola, A Portrait" (Ross 647-52, **Reader**); Reginald Pole, "An Appeal to the Council of Trent" (Ross 665-72, **Reader**); Luther, "The Faith of a Christian" (Ross 721-27, **Reader**); Calvin, "Good Christian Discipline" (Ross 738-42, **Reader**).

Reference: Green, *The European Reformation*; MacCulloch, *Reformation*; Spitz, *Basic Interpretations*; Spitz, *The Protestant Reformation*.

12. [NOV26]

The Sociology of the Renaissance. *Discussion:* Women in the Renaissance.

Text: A mini anthology of women writings (Louis Labé, Queen Elizabeth I, etc., **Reader**).

Reference: Birnbaum, *The Long Journey*; Braudel, *Capitalism*; Burke, *The European Renaissance*; Garin, *Science and Civic Life*; MacCulloch, *Reformation*; Voegelin, *Renaissance*.

13. [DEC03]

Renaissance Institutions – Court, Church, City, State. Round-up discussion.

Text: Machiavelli, "The Circle of Governments" (Ross 263-67, **Reader**); Aldus Manutius, "The Life of a Scholar-Printer" (Ross 396-401, **Reader**).

ASSIGNMENTS

–Participation in classes and in discussions. (25%)

–Journal. Choose 7 out of the twelve topics of the seminar and write 3 double spaced pages about those topics in the following way: summarize the contents of that class, recall the train of thought followed there, add to this some reflections about the readings for the accompanying seminar and indicate also your personal opinion (if you liked that topic/those texts, in what way that theme would relate to your research topic at CEU, etc.). (75%)

REFERENCES

Primary Texts

Erasmus, Desiderius. *The Education of a Christian Prince; with the Panegyric for Archduke Philip of Austria*. Ed. Lisa Jardine. Cambridge University Press, 1997. (CEULib)

--. *The Praise of Folly and Letter to Maarten van Dorp, 1515*. Tr. Betty Radice. London: Penguin, 1993. (CEULib)

Guicciardini, Francesco. *Dialogue on the government of Florence*. Ed. and tr. Alison Brown. Cambridge University Press, 1994. (CEULib)

--. *History of Italy and History of Florence*. Tr. Cecil Grayson, ed. and introd. John R. Hale. New York: Washington Square Press, 1964. (CEULib)

Cassirer, Ernst; P. O. Kristeller; J. H. Randall ed. *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man: Selections in Translation*. University of Chicago Press, 1948. (CEULib)

Machiavelli, Niccolo. *History of Florence and of the Affairs of Italy, from the Earliest Times to the Death of Lorenzo the Magnificent*. New York: Haper, 1960. (CEULib)

--. *The Letters of Machiavelli: A Selection*. Tr. and ed. Allan Gilbert. New York: Capricorn Books, 1961.

--. *Machiavelli and His Friends: Their Personal Correspondence*. Tr. and ed. James B. Atkinson and David Sices. Dekalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois University Press, 1996. (CEULib)

Watkins, Renée Neu tr. and ed. *Humanism and Liberty: Writings on Freedom from Fifteenth-century Florence*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1978. (CEULib)

Secondary Sources

Baron, Hans. *Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance: Civic Humanism and Republican Liberty in an Age of Classicism and Tyranny*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1955. (CEULib)

Birnbaum, Marianna D. *The Orb and the Pen. Janus Pannonius and Matthias Corvinus and the Buda Court*. Budapest: Balassi, 1996. (CEULib)

Birnbaum, Marianna D. *The Long Journey of Gracia Mendes*. Budapest: CEU Press, 2003. (CEULib)

Black, Robert. "Humanism." In Christopher Allmand, ed. *The New Cambridge Medieval History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, 7: 243-77.

Boorstin, Daniel J. *The Discoverers*. New York: Vintage Books, 1983. (CEULib)

- Braudel, Fernand. *Capitalism and material life, 1400-1800*. New York: Harper & Row, 1975. (CEULib)
- Braudel, Fernand. *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th-18th Century*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992. (CEULib)
- Burckhardt, Jacob. *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (1860). London: Penguin Books, 1990. (CEULib)
- Burke, Peter. *The European Renaissance – Centres and Peripheries*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1998. (CEULib)
- Busse, Wilhelm G. ed. *Burg und Schloss als Lebensorte in Mittelalter und Renaissance*. Düsseldorf: Droste, 1995. (CEULib)
- DaCosta Kaufmann, Thomas. *The Mastery of Nature: Aspects of Art, Science, and Humanism in the Renaissance*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993. (CEULib)
- Dannenfeldt, Karl H. *The Renaissance: Basic Interpretations*. Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath, 1974. (CEULib)
- Field, J. V. and Frank A. J. L. James. *Renaissance and Revolution: Humanists, Scholars, Craftsmen, and Natural Philosophers in Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993. (CEULib)
- Fučiková, Elizka; James Bradburn et al. ed. *Rudolf II and Prague. The Court and the City*. London / Prague: Thames & Hudson / Skira, 1997, 223-31. (CEULib)
- Garin, Eugenio. *Science and Civic Life in the Italian Renaissance*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1969. (CEULib)
- Gombrich, Ernst H. *New Light on Old Masters*. Oxford: Phaidon, 1986. (CEULib)
- Green, V. H. H. *The European Reformation*. Stroud: Sutton, 1998. (CEULib)
- Greenblatt, Stephen. *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation Of Social Energy In Renaissance England*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1992. (CEULib)
- Hale, John Digby. *The Civilization of Europe in the Renaissance*. London: Fontana, 1994.
- Hauser, Arnold. *Social History of Art* (1954). London: Routledge, 1989. (4 vols, CEULib)
- Hay, Denys ed. *The Renaissance Debate*. NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965.
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- . *Global Interests: Renaissance Art Between East and West*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000. (CEULib)
- Klaniczay Tibor ed. *Matthias Corvinus and the Humanism in Central Europe*. Budapest: Balassi, 1994. (CEULib)
- Koestler, Arthur. *The Sleepwalkers: a History of Man's Changing Vision of the Universe*. London: Penguin, 1989. (CEULib)
- Kristeller, Paul Oskar. *Renaissance Thought: the Classic, Scholastic and Humanic Strains*. New York: Harper & Row, 1955. (CEULib)
- MacCulloch, Diarmaid. *Reformation. Europe's House Divided, 1490-1700*. London: Penguin, 2004. (CEULib)
- Martines, Lauro. *Power and Imagination: City-states in Renaissance Italy*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988. (CEULib)
- Mazzotta, Giuseppe. *The Worlds of Petrarch*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1993. (CEULib)
- Ross, James Bruce, Mary Martin McLaughlin ed. *The Portable Renaissance Reader*. London: Penguin, 1968.
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- Voegelin, Eric. *Renaissance and Reformation*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1998. (CEULib)

The Renaissance was a cultural and scholarly movement which stressed the rediscovery and application of texts and thought from classical antiquity, occurring in Europe c. 1400 – c. 1600. The Renaissance can also refer to the period of European history spanning roughly the same dates. It's increasingly important to stress that the Renaissance had a long history of developments that included the twelfth-century renaissance and more. What Was the Renaissance? There remains debate about what exactly constituted the Renaissance. Essentially, it was a cultural and intellectual movement, intimately tied to society and politics, of the late 14th to early 17th centuries, although it is commonly restricted to just the 15th and 16th centuries. It is considered to have originated in Italy. Renaissance Europe: Culture, Institutions, Representations 2019/20 Winter. Renaissance Studies form a connecting link between medieval studies and modern history, just as the Renaissance is often referred to as the "early modern" period between the Middle Ages and modernity. The familiar labels attached to the Renaissance since its first historical construction by Jacob Burckhardt, such as "the birth of the individual," "the rise of rationalism and the scientific revolution," "the human-centered universe," etc. all indicate that the Renaissance was not only one of the historical periods but a specific epoch which bears direct importance for the self-definition of our present. age, too. The Renaissance [2] is one of the most interesting and disputed periods of European history. Many scholars see it as a unique time with characteristics all its own. Humanism also included a sharply critical attitude toward received values, individuals, and institutions, especially those that did not live up to their own principles. The humanists' study of ancient Rome and Greece gave them the chronological perspective and intellectual tools to analyze, criticize, and change their own world. Humanists especially questioned the institutions and values inherited from the Middle Ages. They found fault with medieval art, government, philosophy, and approaches to religion. Once the humanist habit of critical appraisal developed, many turned sharp eyes on their own times. The Renaissance affected culture in innumerable ways. In painting, sculpture and architecture, Italian artists such as Leonardo, Michelangelo and Raphael experimented with naturalism and perspective, and pushed visual form to more expressive heights than had ever been witnessed. Writers such as Boccaccio, Petrarch and Montaigne used insights gleaned from Latin and Greek texts to develop literature that had the polish and elegance of classical authors, yet was more intensely personal than ever before. The Renaissance was a period of "rebirth" in arts, science and European society. It was a time of transition from the ancient world to the modern. Renaissance thinkers considered the Middle Ages to have been a period of cultural decline. They sought to revitalize their culture through re-emphasizing classical texts and philosophies. They expanded and interpreted them, creating their own style of art, philosophy and scientific inquiry. Some major developments of the Renaissance include astronomy, humanist philosophy, the printing press, vernacular language in writing, painting and sculpture technique, world exploration and, in the late Renaissance, Shakespeare's works.