

ARTH 340 Fall 2012
Early Renaissance Art in Italy, 1300-1500
 MW 3:00-4:15 pm, Innovation 132

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 Office Hours: Wednesday, Thursday, 11-12 or by appointment
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Giotto, Brunelleschi, Donatello, Masaccio, and Botticelli have come to be regarded as major figures at a pivotal juncture of the history of western art. Even within their own lifetimes, their art was seen as embodying a “rebirth” of painting and sculpture. This course explores early Renaissance art in the context of the culture of Italian city-states in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. We will reflect on how art was deployed by individuals and communities to project social and spiritual authority. We will examine how different genres of visual representation—fresco cycles, altarpieces, monumental sculpture, intimate panels and bronze statuettes—were used to construct, affirm or challenge power relations. We will study the spaces in which art was displayed—civic buildings, cathedrals, monasteries, public squares, private palaces—and how artists and viewers responded to various viewing experiences in different physical contexts. This was also the period when a changing concept of creativity and the notion of the rebirth of antiquity defined a new role for the artist. We will consider how the various cultural currents and social transformations informed, and were in turn informed by, the visual arts.

Course Objectives

This course is designed to help you not only to gain a familiarity with major monuments and artists of the early Renaissance, but also to encourage you to consider topics of broader significance, such as the value and functions of art in society. During the course of this semester, you will:

- Acquire and develop the skills of visual analysis and interpretation;
- Learn to situate the works of art in their social and cultural contexts;
- Learn to read primary and secondary sources critically;
- Develop the skills to present observations and arguments in academic writing.

Lectures, discussions, and reading and paper assignments are designed to help you achieve these learning objectives.

Course Requirements

Attendance and Participation	5%
Test 1	10%
Test 2	20%
Exhibition project stage 1	15%
Exhibition project stage 2	20%
Final exam	30%

PLEASE NOTE: Students must complete *all* graded assignments and other requirements listed on the syllabus. Even if your overall average without one of these elements is sufficient for a passing grade, you cannot pass the course without completing all requirements.

Textbook and readings

1. The textbook for this course is:

John T. Paoletti and Gary M. Radke, *Art in Renaissance Italy*, 4th ed. (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall/Abrams, 2011.)

Please note that this is the fourth edition. The textbook provides a good overview, as well as color reproductions of many of the art works discussed in this course.

2. I have also selected a number of short texts that go into greater detail on particular artists or provide examples of particular methods and viewpoints in art history. These include both primary and secondary sources. We will discuss these texts in class, so please complete the readings assigned for the specific day before coming to class.

Attendance and participation

It is important that you attend class regularly and on time. Reading the textbook is NOT a substitute for coming to lectures, because in lectures I will synthesize and present information from various sources, and I will often use monuments to explore specific themes. Your starting attendance/participation grade (i.e., you attend all lectures) will be a B. Active, informed participation in discussion will improve that grade. Conversely, more than two unexcused absences, chronic late attendance, or disruptive behavior will negatively affect your grade. If you are unable to attend class because of medical or family emergency, please provide me with documentation as soon as possible.

Tests and Final exam

There will be 2 tests and a final exam. You will be evaluated on your ability to identify and discuss major monuments, as well as your grasp on the themes introduced in lectures and readings. The first 2 tests involve identification of slides and short essays in response to guiding questions. There are two parts to the final exam. (1) Take-home essays: you will choose from questions that cover major themes for the entire semester. To be submitted when you come to (2) in-class slide exam in the same format as the first 2 tests, to take place on December 17.

NB: THERE WILL BE NO MAKE-UP TESTS OR EXAMS WITHOUT WRITTEN DOCUMENTATION OF ILLNESS, FAMILY EMERGENCIES, ETC. Please notify me as soon as possible if you have problems.

Project: Mock Exhibition

You will design and propose a mock exhibition using the works of art from the early Renaissance at the National Gallery of Art, DC. There are two stages to the project:

1. An initial proposal, explaining your choice of artworks and the rationale for the exhibition (3-4 pages), and a bibliography of authoritative sources on the artists and historical context. Due in class on October 10.
2. A final proposal explaining how your exhibition illuminates certain aspects of early Renaissance culture and art; a description of the installation; wall text and labels (6-7 pages in total). Due in class on November 19.

More detailed and specific instructions will be provided later in the semester.

NB: In the interest of fairness, written assignments **MUST** be submitted on time to receive full credit. Hard copies are due in class on the specified dates. Students will incur a 3% penalty per day for late papers. In cases of medical or other serious problems, please document them and let me know as soon as possible.

Grading scale

A+	98-100	C+	77-79.5
A	93-97.5	C	73-76.5
A-	90-92.5	C-	70-72.5
B+	87-89.5	D	60-69.5
B	83-86.5	F	< 60
B-	80-82.5		

Add-drop deadlines

Please note the following add-drop deadlines:

September 4, 2012	Last day to add a class
	Last day to drop a class with no tuition penalty
September 18, 2012	Last day to drop a class with 33% tuition penalty
September 28, 2012	Final drop deadline with 67% tuition penalty
October 1 to 26	Selective withdrawal (undergraduates only)

It is your responsibility to observe the add-drop deadlines to ensure that you are properly registered for specific courses.

Tech requirements and policy

All students must activate their e-mail accounts on campus. I will **ONLY** use your GMU email addresses. If you prefer to use a commercial account, you must activate the forwarder on your GMU account. Readings, course updates, information on assignments and examinations will be available on Blackboard.

Please be respectful of your peers and your instructor when using electronic devices.

- Use of cell phones is not permitted.
- Please do not engage in activities that are unrelated to class. Such disruptions show a lack of professionalism and may affect your participation grade.

English as a second language

If English is not your first language, feel free to discuss with me any concerns you have about the writing assignments. Please, however, give me plenty of notice (at least a week) before the paper is due. You may also consider consulting the Writing Center.

Standards of Academic integrity

Strict adherence to the Honor Code as defined in the undergraduate catalogue is expected. Plagiarism, cheating on examinations, and all other instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Honor Committee, and may result in a failing grade for the course. Please consult the Office for Academic Integrity for a full description of the code and the honor committee process.

SCHEDULE

Additional readings to be announced in class.

Week 1

Aug 27 Introduction: What is the Renaissance?

Aug 29 Making a Work of Art in the Renaissance: Patrons and Artists

Readings:

Paoletti and Radke, 12-45.

Week 2

Sep 3 *Labor Day; class does not meet*

Sep 5 Naturalism: Telling Stories with Images

Readings:

Paoletti and Radke, 67-77.

Week 3

Sep 10 Florence and Siena: Religious and Civic Spaces

Sep 12 Florence and Siena: Religious and Civic Spaces (cont'd)

Readings:

Paoletti and Radke, 55, 78-82, 95-98, 99-118.

Week 4

Sep 17 Mendicant Churches: Giotto's Naturalism and Alternative Traditions

Sep 19 Black Death; review for test 1

Readings:

Paoletti and Radke, 83-94; 153-168.

Week 5

Sep 24 ***Test 1**; Black Death, cont'd

Sep 26 Rome: Revival of an Ancient Capital

Readings:

Paoletti and Radke, 56-66.

Week 6

Oct 1 Court Culture in the 14th Century: Naples and Milan

Oct 3 Corporate Commissions and Competition in early 15th-Century Florence

Readings:

Paoletti and Radke, 122-132, 174-184, 202-215.

Week 7

Oct 9 Emulating the Ancients: Brunelleschi's *all'antica* architecture

Oct 10 Elevating the Status of Art: Alberti's *historia*

***Exhibition project stage 1 due**

Readings:

Paoletti and Radke, 215-218, 250-252; 228-232.

Week 8

Oct 15 Elevating the Status of Art: Perspective

Oct 17 Rise of the Medici

Readings:

Paoletti and Radke, 232-237, 245-248; 249-261.

Week 9

Oct 22 The Medici and Political Propaganda

Oct 24 Circle of the Medici; review for test 2

Readings:

Paoletti and Radke, review 249-261.

Week 10

Oct 29 ***Test 2**

Oct 31 Donatello

Readings:

Paoletti and Radke, 262-268.

Week 11

Nov 5 The Image of the Prince: Rimini and Urbino

Nov 7 Court Culture in the 15th Century: Ferrara and Mantua

Readings:

Paoletti and Radke, 333-340; 344-361.

Week 12

Nov 12 Rome: Re-Establishing Papal Power in the 15th Century

Nov 14 Venice: Heir of East and West

Readings:

Paoletti and Radke, 286-295, 299-306; 136-145, 148-149.

Week 13

Nov 19 Venice: Patronage and Display

***Exhibition project stage 2 due**

Nov 21 *Thanksgiving*

Week 14

Nov 26 Venice: The Bellini Family of Painters

Nov 28 Florence under Lorenzo the Magnificent

Readings:

Paoletti and Radke, 311-319, 322-332; 268-269, 273-275, 279-283.

Week 15

Dec 3 Leonardo and the Young Michelangelo at the End of the 15th Century

Dec 5 Conclusions and Review

Readings:

Paoletti and Radke, 270-273, 276-277, 283-285.

Dec 17 *Final exam, 1:30 pm