Welcome to EUH 4434: Italy during the Renaissance! This semester we will examine the period between roughly 1300-155, encompassing the Italian Renaissance, as it unfolded in the Italian Peninsula.

Why study Italy during the Renaissance?
Products of the Italian Renaissance are widely present and recognized in our society, in advertisements, movies, memes, T-shirts etc. When we encounter images of the Renaissance in these diverse settings, they are divorced from both the society that produced them and the cultural meaning that they carried in that society. In this course, we will study that society in order to understand it on its own terms and, through that understanding, to explore the meaning of those monuments.

We will approach the subject on three levels. First, we will explore the culture, politics, religion, and economy of the region that is considered the birthplace of the Renaissance. Second, we will explore the intellectual and artistic movements that made the Renaissance. Third, we will reconsider the idea of the Renaissance in the broader historical narrative.

We will also look for the connections between these three levels. Why did Italian society, as a whole, decide to invest so heavily into the production and innovation of art and scholarly material? What members of society were and were not included in the Renaissance? And why has 15th and 16th c. Italian art and scholarly activity, as opposed to that of other times and places, loomed so large in history, particularly in the narrative of “Western Civ.”?

How will this course help you succeed?
This is a discipline-specific Global Learning course that counts toward your Global Learning graduation requirement.

Studying the relationship between artistic and intellectual production, on the one hand, and the society in which it took place, on the other, helps us to see the broader value of art and scholarship. Specifically, what was the economic cost, what was the meaning, and what were the intended goals of the production for that society? As such, this course teaches us to explore the role of art and scholarship in the societies that produced and preserved it.

But the meaning of art—or anything else—is not static across the society. And the society of Renaissance Italy was no more homogenous than any society. We will consider the issues facing various social groups—elites and the poor, men and women, lay people and clergy, among others—and how they responded to these issues.
Finally, this class will help you sharpen your ability to analyze and critically engage with sources and refine your abilities to communicate complex ideas in writing and in person

Course Outcomes. By the end of this class, students will be able to:

- Understand and describe the politics, economy, religion, and culture of Italy from approximately 1300-1550; how and why the unique cultural situation in Italy gave rise to artistic and intellectual production; what that production meant for different members of the culture that produced it; and the role of the Renaissance in the historical narrative of Europe and the West.
- Read critically and analytically primary and secondary sources to understand the arguments presented and the position of the authors.
- Compare and contrast information and arguments you encounter in this course. This includes but is not limited to comparing and contrasting the conclusions of different scholars, different historical approaches, and scholarly approaches with popular understanding of the period.
- Demonstrate your ability to do historical research. This involves reading primary sources carefully, formulating questions from them, identifying relevant scholarly secondary sources, identifying and reading the relevant passages, and assembling what you have read.
- Articulate clear, original arguments based in evidence. You will be asked to do this in a variety of different formats.

Global Learning Outcomes. By the end of this class, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of the interrelatedness of local, regional, inter-regional, and intercultural issues, trends, and systems with regard to the economies and intellectual movements of 15th and 16th c. Italy. (Global Awareness)
- Understand and analyze a variety of scholarly perspectives on an issue related to Italy during the Renaissance. (Global Perspective)
- Demonstrate willingness to engage in contemporary local, global, international, and intercultural problem solving related to the writing of history. (Global Engagement)

Instructor Information:
Dr. Tovah Bender  Office: DM 391C
tbender@fiu.edu  Office Hours: Tuesday 12-2 on Slack; by appointment on Zoom

Normally I would invite you to come to my office but because of <waves hands in the air> I will be working mostly remotely this semester. That should not at all deter you from reaching out to me. I am just as available to you as always. The best way to get in touch with me is by DM on Slack. You can also contact me through Canvas Message or by email, or request a one-on-one Zoom session.
I will reply to all emails and DMs within 24 hours unless there are extenuating circumstances. If I don’t reply in that window, please send a polite nudge: “Hey Dr B, Did you see my question yesterday?”

**Required Texts:**
There are no books that you need to purchase for this course. All required texts are available through Canvas or the library website.

For the Research Project, you will choose one primary source text from a list provided. Depending on which you pick, you might consider purchasing the text. Most are available quite widely and are quite inexpensive.

You are responsible for reading each assignment before the assigned class and being prepared to discuss the reading listed for that day. The Questions for Considerations can help guide you on how to approach the text, as will the discussion in the previous class. Each student MUST have access to a copy of the day’s readings when we meet.

**Prerequisites:**
Although there are no official prerequisites to this course, this is an upper-level history course. That means that you will be expected to:

- read large quantities of material quickly and analytically (this is something we will discuss and actively work on through the course)
- produce thesis-driven, evidence-based writing
- make comparisons, categorize information, and create arguments from materials that you read and learn.
- read the syllabus carefully to understand assignments, the grading structure, due dates, and assignments.
- Keep on top of the material and devote 8-12 hours per week to this class.
- be willing to get help as necessary; “I can’t find it” “I didn’t understand” or “I didn’t know how” are not valid excuses.

In addition, this is a remote course. That means that we will meet twice per week online in real time. That means that you will be expected to:

- be available to participate in live class elements on TTH 11-12:15, with appropriate technology and a distraction free environment, or as much so as you can manage.
- have access to a computer (not just a phone or tablet) that you can use for this course.
- have access to and know how to use Canvas, Slack, word processing software such as Word, and the library website.
- have internet access that allows you to keep up.
- organize and manage your time, discipline and motivate yourself, and potentially work through learning new technology on your own. In this way remote courses can be more demanding than traditional courses for some students.
be willing to reach out to me when you have questions or encounter problems. This is even more important in a remote course than an in person one. (Am I repeating what I said above? Yes, but this one is really important!)

**Learning in the Time of COVID:**
We are of course living in strange times, learning to operate in new ways, and dealing with disruptions to our schedules and normal practices. I will do my best to work with each of you as these unforeseen disruptions come up. In order to do so to the best of my ability I need from you:

- Your best effort to stay on top of things, both weekly and long-term assignment, and engaging in each class session.
- Clear communications about issues as early as possible, ideally as a heads-up that something might become an issue.
- Flexibility and understanding for me as I deal with many of the same issues you are wrestling with.

These elements are especially important in a remote course, where our interactions with one another directly are limited.

For my part, I will

- Log onto the course daily (M-F), respond to all messages within 24 hours (or less), and grade all assignments within two weeks or before the next assignment is due, whichever is sooner.
- Listen and respond to your questions and concerns, and make adjustments if necessary.
- Do the best I can to stick to the syllabus and deadlines as laid out below.
- Be as transparent as possible about how things will play out (including but not limited to due dates, when to expect individual assignments back, why things might change, etc)
- Be flexible with individuals and the group in meeting your needs as best as possible, even as they evolve.

**Grade Distribution:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Writings (2 total)</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Project</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial Summary</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annotated Bibliography</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rewriting History</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Assignments**

**Engagement (20%)**
Goal: Practice, in a low-stakes way, all of the skills for the class, and build your skills and understanding for the more high-stakes assignments.
Engagement is not simply logging in, although you certainly cannot participate if you are not there! Nor is engagement only coming prepared, listening alertly or taking notes, while those are also very important. Engagement means contributing to the discussion. This can mean answering a question that I ask but it can also mean asking a question about something that confused you, responding to a comment made by a classmate, actively participating in activities, or bringing up something that particularly interested you. Your comments, questions, and responses to others make all of us better scholars.

This semester, there will be several forms of engagement:

- **Engagement in Zoom sessions.** Every Tuesday, we will meet in Zoom. These meetings will consist of lecture, Q&A with the whole class, and group activities. Each week you can earn up to 4 points in this element.
- **Engagement in Slack group discussion channels.** Every Thursday, we will have discussion on Slack. In your groups, we will work through complex questions related to the readings. Each week you can earn up to 4 points in this element.

**Short Writing Assignments:**

**Goal:** Demonstrate your skills in articulating clear arguments based in evidence and your ability to accomplish this relies on understanding, reading critically, and comparing and contrasting. Demonstrate knowledge of the interrelatedness of local, regional, inter-regional, and intercultural issues, trends, and systems with regard to the economies and intellectual movements of 15th and 16th c. Italy. (Global Learning - Global Awareness Objective)

Over the course of the semester, you will have 4 opportunities to turn in a required 2 short writing assignments. Each will be 800-1000 words, with a thesis statement and evidence from the texts for that section (and past sections, as appropriate). The thesis may respond to the prompt or (with permission) you may come up with an argument of your own. Cite all evidence using Chicago-style citation with footnotes and a bibliography (which can include both works you cite directly and works that influence your thinking but that you do not cite directly). I expect no outside research for these papers and, in fact, highly discourage such research.

I will grade these assignments based on the coherence and execution of your argument (how well you use writing and the text—all of it—to create a persuasive argument) and the creativity of your use of the materials (critical thinking and analysis).

No late assignments accepted without use of a token or prior permission. If you miss one, move on to the next. You may not do more than 2 short writings but you may rewrite 1 short writing (only, and in exchange for a token) for a higher grade. The rewrite will be due to Canvas within 7 day of getting your grade and comments on the original submission. The rewrite should address ALL of the comments on the original submission AND go beyond that, addressing other areas that need to change as a result of edits you make and otherwise improving the overall quality.

**Research Project:**
Normally, this is a stepped assignment and the final step is actually writing a research paper. This has been a rough academic year and it’s going to be a long semester (with no spring break), so I’ve scaled this back to include only the steps leading to the research paper. These step are important to learn and practice because they are the steps to any historical research paper (and to most research papers in the humanities, really), and the more you practice them, the better you get at them. You will be able to bring these skills with you to other courses.

Primary Source Report:
Goal: Read critically and analytically primary sources to understand the arguments presented and the position of the authors, formulating questions from them and identifying scholarly secondary sources relevant to that question.

On Canvas, you will find a list of texts written during the Italian Renaissance by prominent individuals, but representing a diversity of perspectives, opinions, and topics. I selected texts that are accessible to you (inexpensive and easy to read) but also surprising in that they go against what we have been taught to believe of the Renaissance in one way or another. Choose one of interest to you.

Read your text. Write up a short (800-1000 word) report with two parts.
First: a summary of the text. In this, address what the text says in general; identify the author in terms of social background, occupation, time period; identify the context in terms of the city and political situation.
Second: identify the theme you will deal with in your paper and how you will use the text. Point to specific passages or instances in the text that will be helpful and propose a working thesis. Consider what question (research question) this text will help you to answer. NOTE: coming up with a good questions is really hard but really important. This is a very important part of the assignment.
Third: include a bibliography of five scholarly secondary sources that are relevant to your research question. You do not have to have read any of them.
**Due Feb 21 at 11:59pm on Canvas.**

Annotated Bibliography:
Goal: Demonstrate your ability to do historical research, including locating, reading critically understanding, and analyzing a variety of scholarly perspectives on an issue related to Italy during the Renaissance. (Global Learning-Global Perspective Objective)

Put together a group of five scholarly secondary sources that will help you towards your (imaginary) paper. I expect you to use a mix of secondary scholarly sources including monographs, articles in edited volumes, and journal articles from peer edited scholarly journals (like those on JSTOR). At least a few should be written after 2000. As you read, look for arguments, changes in the scholarship, scholarly debates, what sorts of evidence people are using etc., just as we have done all semester.
Ultimately, you will present this as:
• a paragraph detailing your topic and question, as well as your answer to that question (if you were writing a paper from this research, that answer would be your thesis). Include a few sentences on why you decided on your thesis. You might consider:
  o Did the secondary readings (or a majority of them) seem to support your thesis?
  o Did a minority of the secondary readings support your thesis, but you think there is a reason to side with them (for example, those readings are more recent or use different sources or take a different perspective)?
  o Is your position an intermediary one between different groups of scholars you read (as in, some argue X, some argue Y and you think the answer lies in the middle or both are true in different cases)?
  o Do you think scholars are missing something and your thesis attempts to address that gap?
• a five-item annotated bibliography. Include a detailed annotation for each of five texts that you have read, including the way that you see that piece fitting into your overall argument.
For more, see Canvas.

NOTE 1: For more on writing an annotated bibliography and examples, see the handout on Canvas.
NOTE 2: You will be unlikely to find secondary sources (or at least more than one source) specifically on [your theme] in [your text]. Instead, you will need to read a few secondary sources on your text and a few on [your theme] at [the time and place that your text was written].
NOTE 3: Careful scholarly reading of the sources is what will get you to your paragraph, but the paragraph is in some ways where you pull together your work!

In this assignment, each annotation should include:
• Bibliographic information, in Chicago Style
• A good description of the readings, including the reading’s topic, argument, evidence.
• In order to help you understand the piece in the context of the project you are working on, it should also indicate how the piece relates to others that you have read for this topic. Does the author argue against or support another scholar’s conclusions? How do the works differ? NOTE: This is where many people lose points! It’s the tricky element!
• Your evaluation of the work. Do you think the author presents good evidence for the argument? Do you agree with his or her conclusions? How might this work be useful to your project (or not)? NOTE: This is where many people lose points! It’s the tricky element!

In addition, I will be looking at the whole assignment for the following:
• The paragraph
• Five Scholarly Secondary Source.
  o These should be varied in terms of journals, books, and chapters in edited volume.
  o At least some should be newer scholarship (pieces written after 2000).
Sources that are appropriate in terms of time and place. If you are working on family in Renaissance-era Florence, a book called Marriage and the Renaissance in Italy would be great. One called Marriage through History is not relevant.

Due March 7 at 11:59pm on Canvas

Rewriting History:
Goal: Understand and describe the politics, economy, religion, and culture of Italy from approximately 1300-1550; the artistic and intellectual movement of the Renaissance; and the role of the Renaissance in the historical narrative of Europe and the West. Understand and describe how and why the unique cultural situation in Italy gave rise to artistic and intellectual production, and what that production meant for different members of the culture that produced it. Demonstrate willingness to engage in contemporary local, global, international, and intercultural problem solving related to the writing of history. (Global Learning - Global Engagement Objective)

One of the major themes of this class is the Italian Renaissance in the narrative of Western Civilization/ European History. Imagine you are the author of a Western Civ textbook, intended for students taking their first (and maybe only) college level Western Civ class or even advanced high school history students. Write an entry on The Italian Renaissance of approximately 800-1000 words. I will look for:

- A good understanding of the Renaissance, both the history of Italy during the period and the intellectual and artistic developments of the time.
- A critical understanding of Western Civilization/ European History.
- This should be clearly written for students at the survey level.

Due April 18 at 11:59 on Canvas.

Tokens:
Over the course of the semester, you will have MANY opportunities to earn tokens through:

- exceptional work on a short writing assignment, in terms of overall quality or in terms of improvement.
- Taking advantage of one of the other “token opportunities” that will pop up over the course of the semester. These will be posted via Canvas announcements.

Tokens can be exchanged for the following:

- a 24-hour extension on written assignments, including Short Writings, Annotated Bibliography, Research Summary, and Tudor in Fact and Film. No questions asked; no need to let me know in advance. Just submit within 24 hours of the deadline, I subtract a token, and the assignment is on time. Use as often as you like
- the chance to rewrite and resubmit a Short Writing. You must resubmit within one week of me posting grades. There must be substantial improvement in order to reach acceptable; you cannot simply address my comments in the most minimal way. You may only use this option once during the semester and it will cost two

Do not copy without the express written consent of the instructor.
- At the end of the semester, you may convert your tokens to extra points (one token=one point) to add to your engagement.

Support:
ME! Come see me. I want to help you succeed in this class.
I am happy to talk with you about ways to approach the class, or at any stage of the paper-writing process, including brainstorming.
Once you have a draft (even a rough draft), we are also happy to offer suggestions on how to make the paper stronger. I do ask for 48 hours turn-around time to get it back to you.

The History Tutors! There are several history tutors working in the history department main office (DM 390). Their job is to tutor students in history classes. They are experienced upper-level history majors and graduate students who can help with papers, preparing for exams, or keeping on top of class in general. To set up an appointment, please visit their website:
http://history.fiu.edu/tutoring

The Center for Excellence in Writing! The Center for Excellence in Writing is freely available to you. The staff can help you with all aspects of writing, from approaching the question and brainstorming to techniques for editing. Their website is: http://writingcenter.fiu.edu/

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)! If you are looking for help for yourself or a fellow classmate, Panthers Care encourages you to express any concerns you may come across as it relates to any personal behavior concerns that worries you, for the classmate’s-being or yours; you are encourage to share your concerns with FIU’s Panthers Care website:
http://PanthersCare.fiu.edu/.
Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) offers free and confidential help for anxiety, depression, stress, and other concerns at no charge. Learn more about CAPS at caps.fiu.edu
Professional counselors are available for same-day appointments. Don’t wait to call 305-348-2277 to set up a time to talk or visit the online self-help portal.

Class Policies:
Attendance and Participation: Historians, at any level, cannot work in isolation; we depend on the insights, experience, and knowledge of colleagues to help us. In order to achieve this dialogue, you must come to class and do so prepared.
Excused absences may be granted in the event of serious medical issues, religious holiday, the death of an immediate family member, military duty, a court date, and participation in some college events. In each of these cases, it is your responsibility to contact me in a timely manner and request that the absence be excused. I reserve the right to require documentation to excuse an absence.
If you are absent for any reason, it is your responsibility to get notes from a classmate.

Classroom Behavior: FIU defines sexual harassment as any unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature which 1) makes
submission to or rejection of such conduct either an explicit or implicit basis for employment and/or academic decisions affecting the individual; or 2) unreasonably interferes with the individual's employment or academic performance by creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

In accordance with the Student Code of Standards, you have the right to agree, disagree, challenge, and question the opinions and comments of others, including the instructor. You do not have the right to be disrespectful to anyone else in the classroom or to act in a way that makes others uncomfortable or detracts from their ability to learn. Such behavior will not be tolerated.

**Late Policy:** Assignments are due via the class’s Canvas site by 11:59pm on the assigned day. The grade on any late written work is automatically reduced by one-third of a letter (C+ becomes a B) for each day the paper is late, including Saturday and Sunday, unless an extension is granted by me. No regular-semester work will be accepted beyond 5pm on the last day of finals week (4/23).

**Scholastic Dishonesty:** Please be aware that academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this class. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, plagiarizing (representing someone else’s work as your own), providing someone else with materials that will be used for academic dishonesty, cheating on assignments or examinations, or engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work. It will result in a penalty ranging from a zero on the assignment to failure in the course and reporting to the University.

To review the student conduct and honor code, visit [https://studentaffairs.fiu.edu/get-support/student-conduct-and-academic-integrity/academic-integrity/index.php](https://studentaffairs.fiu.edu/get-support/student-conduct-and-academic-integrity/academic-integrity/index.php)

If you have any questions about what constitutes academic dishonesty or plagiarism, see me.

**Note to Students with Disabilities:** The Disability Resource Center collaborates with students, faculty, staff, and community members to create diverse learning environments that are usable, equitable, inclusive and sustainable. The DRC provides FIU students with disabilities the necessary support to successfully complete their education and participate in activities available to all students. If you have a diagnosed disability and plan to utilize academic accommodations, please contact the DRC at 305-348-3532 (MMC) or at 305-919-5345 (BBC) to schedule an appointment. For more information, visit the DRC website at: [https://studentaffairs.fiu.edu/get-support/disability-resource-center/index.php](https://studentaffairs.fiu.edu/get-support/disability-resource-center/index.php)

If you have or believe you might have a disability-related need for modification or reasonable accommodations in this course, contact the Disability Resources Center. I am very happy to work with you and with them to accommodate you in the best way possible. Even if you do not need accommodation, I highly advise you to let me know if you have a disability that might affect your performance in this class.
Accommodations: If you foresee any possible problem meeting any of the requirements of this course—including attendance and prompt submission of all assignments—please see your TA or me as soon as possible. It is much easier on all of us if we address an issue before it becomes a problem.

Florida International University is a community dedicated to generating and imparting knowledge through excellent teaching and research, the rigorous and respectful exchange of ideas, and community service. All students should respect the right of others to have an equitable opportunity to learn and to honestly demonstrate the quality of their learning. Therefore, all students are expected to adhere to a standard of academic conduct, which demonstrates respect for themselves, their fellow students, and the educational mission of the University. All students are deemed by the University to understand that if they are found responsible for academic misconduct, they will be subject to the Academic Misconduct procedures and sanctions, as outlined in the Student Handbook.

Finally, I reserve the right to change the syllabus to facilitate better learning.

Course Schedule:
Week 1: Intro
Jan 11: Introduction
Jan 13: The Renaissance and Western Civ, what's the relationship?
  • Read:

Unit 1: The Structure of the Commune
This unit starts us at the beginning, chronologically, with the rise of the commune that many historians tie to the beginning of the Renaissance. But it also provides us with a fundamental base in economics and politics that will allow us to understand the social interactions, desires, and worldviews of Renaissance-era Italian people.

Week 2: Rise of the Republic
Jan 18: MLK Jr. Day – no class
Jan 20: Rise of the Communes
  • Read:
o Look through the map section and also at some online maps that include topography.

**Week 3: Fueling the Republic**

Jan 25: Funding the Renaissance

Jan 27: The Constructed City

**Sunday 1/31: SW1 Due**

**Unit 2: Social Order: Center and Periphery**

Now that we have considered the city itself, we will consider the individuals and groups that populated that city, bringing it to existence and giving it life. Since we discussed, to some extent, the elite men who controlled the city in the previous unit, we will mostly focus on the rest of the population. Those who were not elite men were, after all, the vast majority of the population of Italy in the Renaissance!

**Week 4: Inside and Outside the Family**

Feb 1: The Household and the Patriline

Feb 3: Orphans and the Illegitimate

**Week 5: Invisible Centers**

Feb 8: The Urban Poor

Feb 10: Slaves and People of Color

**Sunday 2/14 SW2 Due**

**Week 6: Reading Primary Source**
Week 7: Week of Rest

Unit 3: Renaissance Thought and its Implications
Rather than starting with the intellectual innovations of this era, we have worked up to them. Now that we know about the economy, politics, and society of Italy, we can examine what the intellectual developments were, what they meant to the people engaged in them, and how they were used by them to achieve their own, very contemporary and worldly, ends.

Week 8: Humanism and Writing
March 1: Humanism

March 3: Literacy and a Written Culture

Week 9: Art and Religion
March 8: Religious Thought and Social Criticism

March 10: Arts, Patronage, and Religion

Sunday 3/14: SW3 Due

Week 10: Annotated Biblios

Sunday 3/21 Annotated Bibliography Due

Week 11: Week of Rest

Unit 4: Privatization of Power
If republicanism and civic pride were starting points for this period in Italian history and catalysts for artistic and intellectual change, what happens when they erode? How do they erode, and how do they remain important? Who wins and who loses?

Week 12: Exclusion and Inclusion from Power
March 29: Waning of Republicanism

March 31: Bread and Circuses

Week 13: Shifting Politics
April 5: Noblewomen as Patrons

April 7: Spain, France, and the Italian Peninsula

Sunday 4/11: SW4 due

Unit 5: What is a Renaissance?
Here, we revisit the question of how we define this period in Italian history. Was it an age of individualism, secularism, and republicanism? If not, what were the hallmarks? And who enjoyed those hallmarks?

Week 14: Defining the Renaissance
April 12: Did Women Have a Renaissance?

April 14: Wrap Up

4/18 Rewriting History assignment due to Canvas