

HIEU120: THE RENAISSANCE GOES TO HOLLYWOOD: UNDERSTANDING THE
ITALIAN RENAISSANCE THROUGH TELEVISION & FILM
SUMMER SESSION I – M&W 11:00 – 1:50

Instructor	Email	Office Location & Hours
Alessandra Brivio	abrivio@ucsd.edu	Mandeville Coffee Cart – By appointment. M & W 10-10:45

GENERAL INFORMATION

DESCRIPTION

Names like Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Machiavelli, Cesare Borgia, and Lorenzo the Magnificent excite our imagination and continue to inspire our culture. Hollywood has picked up and elaborated images of the period with both television and movie productions. BUT... can we trust their historical accuracy? During the next five weeks, our 'guide' will be Caterina Riario Sforza de' Medici. Caterina and her circle of friends, allies, and enemies are depicted in recent cinematographic productions such as the Showtime series "*The Borgias*" and older productions such as the 1949 movie "*The Prince of Foxes*" (and I can't forget to mention the popular game series *Assassin Creed*!). Recognized and admired for her strength and courage in battle against the fiercest armies, Caterina lived during the period known as the 'High Renaissance'. Her extraordinary story is intertwined with the stories of the greatest names of the Italian Renaissance and offers a good source of discussions on important themes such as the power struggle in the formation of the state, humanist ideals and art patronage as a representation of political power. Through a combination of lectures, movie screenings, and class discussions we will have the opportunity to contrast reality and fiction. We will compare the stories and themes proposed by primary sources to those told by cinematographic productions and discuss what cultural, social, and political factors influence the way we imagine the Italian Renaissance today.

EXPECTATIONS AND EVALUATION

Your attendance to lecture is **fundamental** to succeed in this class. Lectures will integrate presentation of historical context, reading of primary sources, screening of movies, and discussion. Consequently, the core of the course will be introduced in class and not on the textbooks.

Please note: all assignments must be completed. Failure to do so will result in an automatic F.

- Attendance & Participation: 20%. This grade depends on your consistence attendance, lack of tardiness, and demonstrated engagement with course material and class discussions and response to posted Journal questions.
- Midterm paper: 35% (Week 3-4)
- Final Exam: 45%

COURSE MATERIALS

REQUIRED TEXTS

- Elizabeth Lev, *The Tigress of Forlì*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (2011)
- Machiavelli, *The Prince*
- Kenneth R. Bartlett. *The Civilization of the Italian Renaissance*, (D.C. Heath and Company)
- Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*. Penguin edition.

NOTE ON THE TEXTS

The required texts are all available on amazon.com at a very small price (except for the Bartlett). Some of them are also available in electronic format. You can also find Lev's and Bartlett's books at the bookstore.

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Readings will also be posted on the course website (TritonED) to be used for Journal responses. Optional readings might be distributed in class in the form of photocopies to complement the understanding of certain topics

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week Topic

One The Renaissance Dream

1. Dreaming the Renaissance: Class Introduction.
2. The Rebirth of Antiquity: The Humanist Tradition

Readings:

Bartlett: Cicero: *On Duties*. Petrarch: *Letter to Posterity*,
Salutati: *Letter to Peregrino Zambecari*; Ficino: *On Law
and Justice* and *On the Duty of a Citizen*. Pico della
Mirandola: *Oration on the Dignity of Man*.

Lev: 1-4

Two The State as a Work of Art

1. Duchies, Republics, and Kingdoms: Milan & Florence
2. Rome and Naples

Special screening: *The Borgias*.

Readings:

Lev: Ch.5-11

Three The State as a Work of Art – Part 2

1. Macchiavelli and Cesare Borgia.
2. Special Screening: *The Price of Foxes* followed Class discussion.

Readings:

Machiavelli: *The Prince* (can skip book IV, V)

Lev: Chap. 16-17

Four The Splendor of the Italian Courts

1. The Ideal Court and the Ideal Courtier: The Art of Appearance.
 2. Renaissance Women: Wives & Courtesans
- Special Screening: *Dangerous Beauty* followed by class discussion.

Readings:

By Tuesday: Castiglione. *The Book of the Courtier*. Book I -pp.65-70 & Book IV pp. 284-322

By Thursday: Bartlett: Francesco Barbaro. Selection from *On Wifely duties* (**skip** On the Education of Children), Laura Cereta, *Letter to Augustinus Aemilius*, *Curse against the Ornament of Women* & Castiglione (selection from *The Book of the Courtier*)

Suggested reading:

Leon Battista Alberti, *The Family in Renaissance Florence*

Five The Splendor of the Italian Courts: Part II

1. Art & Patronage. The representation of Power.
2. Special Screening: *The Agony and the Ecstasy*.

Class discussion and wrap up of the course theme: “*The highest problem of every art is, by means of appearances, to produce the illusion of a loftier reality*” Johan Wolfgang von Goethe.

Reading:

Castiglione: *The Book of the Courtier*. pp 92-101

Bartlett: Pietro Vanucci Perugino (read the exchange of letters with Isabella d’Este) & Leon Battista Alberti, *On Painting and on Sculpture*.

Final Exam: Friday 08/04 11:30 – 2:30

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

“NOTHING IS AT LAST SACRED BUT THE INTEGRITY OF YOUR MIND” RALPH WALDO EMERSON

UCSD takes academic integrity very seriously and it is your responsibility to familiarize with UCSD's academic integrity policy (<http://academicintegrity.ucsd.edu/>). I will not tolerate violations of academic integrity and they could result in an automatic F as well as a subsequent university sanction. DON'T CHEAT! It is not worth it!!!