

BOSTON UNIVERSITY PADOVA – LI 345

Instructor: Prof. Giulio Bodon

Ideas and images of the Italian Renaissance

COURSE OVERVIEW

This course introduces the students to the complex historical phenomenon known as ‘Rinascimento’ (Renaissance). This manifold and articulated historical, cultural and artistic movement spread, from its Italian origins, all over Europe, marking an epochal moment in the development of Western Civilization. We will place particular emphasis to the historical, political, social and economic context in which the humanist thought originated. The course will also analyze the multiplex aspects of Renaissance culture: philosophy, science, re-discovery of Classical antiquity and artistic productions. We will complete this survey of the Renaissance by reading original texts, introducing some key figures of the period (Machiavelli, Castiglione, Leonardo da Vinci), and analyzing some artistic productions (images and sculptures).

METHODOLOGY

Lectures, slide projections, visits to historical sites in and around Padova.

REQUIRED READINGS

Selected chapters from: John R. Hale, *La civiltà del Rinascimento in Europa 1450-1620*, Milano, Mondadori, 1996. Xerox and other materials given by the lecturer make part of the compulsory readings. Further bibliography will be suggested during the course. A preliminary suggested reading is: *L'uomo del Rinascimento*, ed. by E. Garin, Roma, Laterza, 2000 (fourth edition).

GRADING CRITERIA

Mid-term written exam (10%)

Final written exam (10%)

Final oral exam (50%)

Essay (as assigned by the lecturer on a topic relevant to the course) (30%)

CHRONOLOGY

Week 1

1. General introduction to the course. The state of the research on the subject. Chronological references. Definition of ‘Rinascimento’. The various ‘Renaissances’ of the Middle Ages.
2. Historical framework: economy, society and politics in Europe from the ‘Renaissance’ of the 11th century to the age of the ‘Commons’. The re-discovery of antiquity. The early Humanism in Padua.

Week 2

1. The epoch of the ‘Signorie’ and the political panorama in Italy during the 14th-15th centuries.

2. Theorizing humanist principles and ideas. Esthetics and poetry canons of the Renaissance. Florence in the age of the Medici.

Week 3

1. Readings from Marsilio Ficino (neo-Platonic philosopher) and Poggio Bracciolini (humanist)
2. Readings from Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, Angelo Poliziano and Nicolò Machiavelli.

Week 4

1. The new 'conquests' in the arts in Florence during the 15th century.
2. The dimension of 'arti figurative'.

Week 5

1. Definitions of 'urban spaces' and architecture.
2. Visit to the 'Sala dei Giganti' in Padova

Week 6

1. Other major centers of the Renaissance in Italy: Ferrara, Roma, Urbino, Napoli. Reading from primary sources: Leon Battista Alberti, Baldassar Castiglione (author of a famous manual of manners) Giovanni Della Casa, Stefano Guazzo. Documents from the 'arti figurative'.
2. Main features and traits of the Renaissance in Venice and Veneto.

Week 7

1. Guided tour to the major monuments of the Renaissance in Padova
2. Sciences and techniques. The spreading of Renaissance culture in Europe.

Week 8

1. Flemish and Dutch Renaissance. Readings from Erasmus.
2. The German Renaissance

Week 9

1. Eastern Europe: Poland under Sigismond's I and Bona Sforza's reign.
2. Western Europe: France

Week 10

1. The England Kingdom
2. Final remarks and conclusion of the course

Week 11

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Students must be present in the classroom at the beginning of the lecture. Students with more than 10 minutes delay will not be admitted in the classroom. Absence must be justified with medical certificates and/or verbally announced to the lecturer before the class or immediately after. Unexcused absences will negatively affect the final mark, in a percentage decided by the lecturer and agreed by the Resident Director. Visits and tours are formally part of the course.

PLAGIARISM

All the students are responsible for having read the Boston University statement on plagiarism, which is available in the Academic Conduct Code. Students are advised that the penalty against students at Boston University program for cheating on examinations or for plagiarism may be "...expulsion from the program or the University or such other penalties as may be recommended by the Committee on Student Academic Conduct , subject by approval by the Dean.