Course Description: Application of rhetorical theories and concepts to rhetorical problems and methods; emphasis on the relationship between theory and practice.

Full Course description
The father of Italian humanism, Francesco Petrarch, once wrote that by the words of rhetorical eloquence, “the sluggish are aroused, the frigid are inflamed, the drowsy are awakened, the weak are strengthened, the prostrate are raised, and the earthbound are lifted up toward lofty thoughts and noble desires.” The art of rhetoric, for centuries either lost or buried in the monasteries after the fall of the Roman Empire, became vibrantly alive again in the northern Italian city states during the period we now call the Renaissance. Encompassing roughly the 300 years between 1300 and 1600 in Italy, the Italian Renaissance was characterized by a revival of interest in classical learning, made possible by a rising standard of living, economic growth, communication technology, secularism, and individualism. After almost a millennia in which most Europeans eked out an existence in subsistence agriculture, the Renaissance was a period of increased urbanization, trade, and political sophistication, all of which required greater education and rhetorical skill in order to navigate a complex social and political terrain. The rediscovery of rhetoric thus served a practical purpose as a tool of power for those willing to negotiate the dangerous and complicated terrain of Renaissance politics.

This course will tell the history of the Italian Renaissance while focusing on the ways in which rhetoric and art played a role in that history. It will study not only the history and culture of the period, but it will also look at the primary texts of many of the greatest intellects of the age and investigate how they understood the role of language, art, and eloquence in their new society. Studying this subject in the geographical heart of the Italian Renaissance, the city of Florence, will then allow students to actually experience the environment in which the Renaissance thrived and they will be able to visit the locations in which rhetoric was practiced in the art which captured the religious as well as the political imagination of the people who lived at that time.
Learning Outcomes

At the conclusion of this course, student should be able to:

- Identify and discuss central arguments concerning rhetoric and citizenship in the work of major Renaissance thinkers and artists.
- Narrate the relationship between rhetoric and civic humanism of the Italian renaissance;
- Analyze the relationship amongst art, science, and politics in the Renaissance.
- Demonstrate a mastery of discussion techniques about primary texts in a seminar style format.

Required Texts


Selected PDF readings

Course Policies

**Attendance Policy:** Regular class attendance is crucial. I will take roll every day excessive absences will substantially reduce your community participation grade. If you have more than **ONE** unexcused absences, your final grade will be dropped by 3 points for every absence. If you miss class, for any reason, it is YOUR responsibility to get notes and assignments from your classmates. It is also your responsibility to provide proper documentation for an absence to count as excused. Go to http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule07 for explanation of what qualifies as an excused absence.

**Late Policy:** I do not accept late work. Unless otherwise noted, all assignments are due at the beginning of class on due date.

**Electronics Policy:** Please do not use your smart phones, portable devices, or laptops in class. I find laptops to significantly decrease class participation and actually reduce comprehension. Consequently, I encourage using handwritten notes rather than laptops for note taking. It has been found that handwriting notes is far more efficient than using a laptop. Also, it is proven to be distracting for those around you. See this story in the *Washington Post*. http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2014/04/28/why-students-using-laptops-learn-less-in-class-even-when-they-really-are-taking-notes/ If you violate this policy, you will receive an unexcused absence for the day of the violation.

**Academic Honesty & Integrity:**

"An Aggie does not lie, cheat, or steal, or tolerate those who do."

I take academic honesty seriously. A violation of academic honesty and integrity includes, cheating, fabricating documents and sources, plagiarism, and submitting substantial portions of the same work for
multiple credit. Each student is required to sign a document that states that he/she understands TAMU’s academic misconduct policies and demonstrates one’s commitment to the Aggie Honor Code. For more information visit: http://aggiehonor.tamu.edu

**Public Information Act & Email Correspondence:**
As an employee of the state of Texas, any university business that is communicated to me, via email, is subject to public information requests. At any time, if requested, I have to relinquish any emails that I have sent or have been sent to me to any interested party. Please be advised that any email that you send to me is subject to public release.

**American Disabilities Act Policy Statement:**
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact Disability Services, currently located in the Disability Services building at the Student Services at White Creek complex on west campus or call 979-845-1637. For additional information, visit http://disability.tamu.edu.

**Tentative Reading & Assignment Schedule**

We will have 45 total meeting hours. This includes 3 meetings before we leave, each 2 hours long, and 9 regular meetings in Italy over two weeks, each approximately 3 hours long. We will also have 3 day trips to Siena, Venice, and Rome for 4 contact hours each. This totals $6 + 27 + 12 = 45$ meeting hours.

**Requirements**

**QUIZZES (30%)**
There will be 8 quizzes during the semester, only 7 of which will be graded (as I will drop the lowest quiz or absence). The quizzes will be at the very beginning of every class except for the intro class and the field trips, and will be on the assigned readings FOR THAT DAY. This is to encourage you to read the material beforehand and be prepared to discuss it in class. The quizzes will matching, multiple choice, and short answer and will ask you to identify significant events, people, places, and objects discussed in the chapters and also match them to direct quotes in the readings. They will also include a few short answer questions that address the general themes of the chapters. Anyone late to class will be able to take the exam, but only for half credit.

**FINAL EXAM (20%)**
On the final day of class we will have the final exam covering all of the material in the course, including lectures based on the PDFs. Unlike the quizzes, the final exam will be entirely written, short answer questions addressing more general concepts and historical trends.
FINAL PAPER (30%)
You will have a single essay assignment in this class due by Monday, January 16th. You will send me this assignment as a Word document on email. (Although I will, of course, accept this assignment at any time earlier). This essay should be at least 5 double-spaced pages long (excluding title page or citations), with standard 12pt font and margins. The essay should address the following question: “What can we learn from the Renaissance?” The first step in this assignment is to discover what “problem” in contemporary society you feel we need to address. This problem can be anything—from politics, to fashion, to gender, to education, to religion, to creativity, to writing, to art, to culture, to poetics, to rhetoric, and on and on. The first part of this essay should thus define the problem for us as you understand it and have experienced it. The second part of this essay should draw from concepts from one or more of the primary text readings (on pdf) that you think are helpful in addressing this problem by offering us a uniquely Renaissance perspective on the contemporary issue. Your last section will then tie back to the introduction and provide a conclusion. Finally, this essay should not be written in a dry, academic style, but written with a sense of Renaissance eloquence. In other words, this should be written as a passionate but erudite appeal for some kind of reform.

JOURNAL ASSIGNMENTS (20%)
Every class period, you will have some writing assignment that you will record in a handwritten journal. Please purchase this journal ahead of time and be able to carry it with you. I will not be physically collecting these journals, so you may use them for your own private use and thoughts as well. But in these journals, I want you to also write (HANDWRITE) the assignments that I will be giving you each day. Sometimes they might be a poem, sometimes a reflection, sometimes an observation, in accordance with the readings and the subject for that day. Every day you will be required to stand up and read this assignment to the class as an oral performance. Hopefully you will also find this journal a good companion on your trip.

Standard Letter Grading Scale
A = 90-100
B = 80-89
C = 70-79
D = 60-69
F = <60

Grade Breakdown
Quizzes 100 * .30 = 30
Exam 100 * .20 = 20
Essay 100 * .30 = 30
Journal 100 * .20 = 20

FINAL GRADE 100
COURSE SCHEDULE

Monday, November 20, 5:30-7:00 BOLTON 213
Chapter 1: Out of the Ashes: The Rise of the Communes and Florence in the Age of Dante
PDF: Dante

Monday, November 27, 5:30-7:00 BOLTON 213
Chapter 2: The Crises of the Fourteenth Century: Climatic, Epidemic, Demographic Disasters
PDF: Boccaccio

Thursday, December 28
Arrival

Friday, December 29
8:30 am – Apartment visits
11:00 am – Practical walking tour
12:15 am – Welcome lunch (Trattoria I Raddi, Via D’ardiglione, 47)
2:30 pm – Orientation

Saturday, December 30
Venice
Chapter 8: Le Serenissima: When Venice ruled the Seas

Sunday, December 31
Free day

Monday, January 1
HOLIDAY – Free day

Tuesday, January 2
9:00 am – 12:00 pm – Classroom time
Chapter 3: Back to the Future: Italian Humanists Recover the Classical Past
PDF: Petrarch
2:00 pm – Accademia (reservation confirmed)
4:00 pm – Palazzo Medici Riccardi (reservation confirmed)

Wednesday, January 3
9:00 am – 12:00 pm – Classroom time
Chapter 4: Caput Muni Again? Rome from Cola de Rienzo to Pius II
Chapter 5: Hearth and Home: Lay piety, women, and the family
PDF: Petrarch & Women Letters
2:00 pm – lecture at Medici Archives Project institute with Alessio Assonitis (This lecture will provide an overview of one of the largest epistolary collections of early modern Europe, which has remain practically intact after the extinction of the Medici dynasty in 1743. Particular attention will be paid to the art of letter-writing, both humanist and diplomatic; epistolary conventions and networks in the fifteenth and sixteenth century; and coded language and ciphered text). (confirmed)

Thursday, January 4
Chapter 6: Lords of the Renaissance: The Medici, Visconti, and Sforza Dynasties through 1466
PDF: Salutati & Bruni

2:30 pm – Casa Machiavelli (Albergaccio) visit (reservation confirmed), leaving with 1:30 pm bus.

Friday, January 5
9:00 am – 12:00 pm – Classroom time
Chapter 9: Magnificent Florence: Life under Lorenzo De’ Medici, 1469–1492
PDF: Valla & Mirandola
Afternoon free

Saturday, January 6
Siena

Sunday, January 7
Rome - group dinner

Monday, January 8
Rome – Vatican Museums

Tuesday, January 9
Rome – Coliseum and Imperial Forum

Wednesday, January 10
Morning – Brunelleschi’s Dome and other Duomo venues (Baptistry, Bell Tower, Cathedral) (TBC)
1:00 pm – 4:00 pm – Classroom time
Chapter 11: Paradoxes of the High Renaissance: Art in a time of Turmoil
PDF: Leonardo

Thursday, January 11
Morning: Other Duomo venues (Baptistry, Bell Tower, Cathedral) (TBC)
Morning: Palazzo Vecchio (no reservation needed)
1:00 pm – 4:00 pm – Classroom time
Chapter 10: 1494: The Beginning of the Calamities of Italy
Chapter 12: The 1527 Sack of Rome and its Aftermath: Courtiers and Courtesans
PDF: Machiavelli & Savonarola

Friday, January 12
9:45 am – Uffizi Gallery visit (reservation confirmed)
1:00 pm – 4:00 pm – Classroom time
Chapter 13: Reformations: Political, Religious, and Artistic Upheaval
PDF: Luther & Erasmus

Saturday, January 13
Free day

Sunday, January 14
Departure

FINAL EXAM will be a take home essay exam to be turned in a week later.

FINAL PAPER will require a 1st draft turned in by January 30. A final draft turned in February 15.