

COURSE DESCRIPTION, 2018 WINTER  
Central European University / Departments of Medieval Studies and History

**THE RENAISSANCE:  
Culture, Institutions, Representations**

MA course in Medieval and Historical Studies  
(Tuesdays, 15:30–17:10)

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Renaissance Studies form a connecting link between medieval studies and modern history, just as the Renaissance is often referred to as the "early modern" period between the Middle Ages and modernity. The familiar labels attached to the Renaissance since its first historical construction by Jacob Burckhardt, such as "the birth of the individual," "the rise of rationalism and the scientific revolution," "the human-centered universe," etc. all indicate that the Renaissance was not only one of the historical periods but a specific epoch which bears direct importance for the self-definition of our present age, too. It is not by chance that some important post-structuralist trends of cultural theory (New Historicism, e.g.) evolved from a theoretical-methodological revolution in Renaissance Studies in the 1980s and have become paradigmatic modes of critical discourse.

After having looked at the medieval antecedents (the Carolingian Renaissance, the rise of medieval Italy and the important role of medieval urbanization), this survey course introduces the Renaissance as an important transitory period of great epistemological (from an organic to a mechanistic world view), ideological (individualism, "man-centeredness"), social-psychological (the Reformation) and artistic (from emblematic to a representational style with perspective) paradigm shifts. Special attention is given to new or radically reformed socio-cultural institutions (courts, universities, academies, art collections, patronage, etc.).

The **goal of the course** is to make students aware of the continuity of European cultural and institutional trends from the time of the Renaissance through the Enlightenment up to the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, even our own present. While looking at Europe in a wide geographical context, it will also be emphasized that the Renaissance and early modern Europe was forged through vital extra- and intra-European encounters, such as the colonization of the Americas, the interactions with the Ottomans, the Reformation and the role of the Jews.

The **learning outcome** should consist of 1/ an accumulation of historical knowledge about the connections of political and social history and premodern/early modern ideology, education, and art in Europe; 2/ A better understanding of the complexity of Europe in the given period; 3/ And a better understanding of the complexity and interconnectedness of culture, representations and institutions in general. 4/ Based on the readings and assignments, students should develop their ability of processing scholarly ideas and argumentation and expressing themselves in an argumentative and scholarly way.

## SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

1. [JAN 08]

### **The Renaissance – Introduction.**

*Reference:* Giorgio Vasari, "Barbarism, Antiquity, Rebirth" (Hay 11-13, **Reader**); Loys le Roy, "The Excellence of this Age" (Ross 91-109, **Reader**).

2. [JAN 16]

**The Renaissance – Dimensions (Chronology, Geography, Basic Trends).** *Discussion:* 15–16th century self-awareness – "An age of gold".

*Text:* Giorgio Vasari, "Barbarism, Antiquity, Rebirth" (Hay 11-13, **Reader**); Loys le Roy, "The Excellence of this Age" (Ross 91-109, **Reader**).

*Reference:* Burke, *The European Renaissance*; Voegelin, *Renaissance and Reformation*.

3. [JAN 23]

**The Renaissance – Medieval or Modern?** *Discussion:* From the historiography of the Renaissance.

*Text:* Burckhardt, "Italy in the Renaissance: A Synthesis" (Hay 35-57, **Reader**); Szönyi, "The World of the Italian Renaissance" (**Reader**).

*Reference:* Dannenfeldt, *Basic Interpretations*.

4. [JAN 30]

### **From the Fall of the Roman Empire to the Expansion of the Medieval Cities in Italy.**

*Discussion:* Life, economy and politics in the Italian Renaissance cities.

*Text:* Benedetto Dei, "The prosperity of Florence" (Ross 165-67, **Reader**); Arnold von Harff, "Venice, Mistress of the Seas" (Ross 168-74, **Reader**).

*Reference:* Braudel, *Capitalism*; Braudel, *Civilization*; Burckhardt, *The Civilization....*, Martines, *Power and Imagination*.

5. [FEB 06]

**The Renaissance Outside Italy.** *Discussion:* City versus court.

*Text:* "The Habsburgs and the Fuggers" (Ross 175-80, **Reader**); Marino Cavalli, "Charles V and Philip, His Son" (Ross 294-305, **Reader**).

*Reference:* Busse, *Berg und Scholss*; Vogelin, *Renaissance and Reformation*.

6. [FEB 13]

**Discoveries – Antiquity And the New World.** *Discussion:* Humanism – Profession or a world view?

*Text:* Marsilio Ficino, "The Golden Age in Florence" (Ross 79-80, **Reader**); Erasmus of Rotterdam, "An Age of Gold" (Ross 80-84, **Reader**); Paul Oskar Kristeller, "Classical Antiquity and Renaissance Humanism" (Hay 98-111, **Reader**).

*Reference:* Hans Baron, *Crisis...: Civic Humanism*; Kristeller, *Renaissance Thought*; Black, "Humanism".

7. [FEB 20]

**Literature – Latin and Vernacular.** *Discussion:* Sonnets and the Petrarchan paradox of love.

*Text:* Petrarch, *Rime 140* as translated by Sir Thomas Wyatt and Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey (**Reader**); Castiglione, "A Theatrical Performance" (**Reader**).

*Reference:* Hale, *The Civilization of Europe*; Mazzotta, *The Worlds of Petrarch*; Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations*.

8. [FEB 27]

**A New Perspective On the World – Revival of the Arts.** *Discussion:* The Italian and the Northern Artistic Renaissance: Leonardo and Dürer.

*Text:* Alberti, "The Art of Building" (Ross 527-31, **Reader**); Leonardo, "Nature, Art and Science" (Ross 531-40, **Reader**).

*Reference:* Burckhardt, *The Renaissance*; Burke, *The European Renaissance*; DaCosta Kaufmann, *The Mastery of Nature*; Gombrich, *New Light*.

9. [MAR 06]

**A New Perspective On the World – the Geographical Expansion.** *Discussion:* From Discovery to Colonialism.

*Text:* Christopher Columbus, *Diary* (**Reader**); Bartolomew de las Casas, A Brief Account Of The Destruction Of The Indies (**Reader**); Michel de Montaigne, "The Old World and the New" (Ross 157-61, **Reader**).

*Reference:* Boorstin, *The Discoverers*; Field and James, *Renaissance*; Todorov, *The Conquest. Jardin, Global Interests*.

10. [MAR 13]

**A New Perspective On the World – Scientific Paradigm Shifts.** *Discussion:* Cosmology and medicine, the cases of Copernicus, Vesalius and Paracelsus.

*Text:* Copernicus, "The Revolution of the Celestial Spheres" (Ross 589-93, **Reader**); "The Art of Paracelsus" (Ross 552-58, **Reader**); Vesalius, "Anatomy and the Art of Medicine" (Ross 563-72, **Reader**).

*Reference:* Boorstin, *The Discoverers*; DaCosta Kaufmann, *The Mastery of Nature*; Field and James, *Renaissance and Revolution*; Koestler, *The Sleepwalkers*.

11. [MAR 20]

**The Kingdom of God – Renaissance and Reformation.** *Discussion:* Reformation and Counter-Reformation, Savonarola, Luther, Calvin.

*Text:* Francesco Guicciardini, "Savonarola, A Portrait" (Ross 647-52, **Reader**); Reginald Pole, "An Appeal to the Council of Trent" (Ross 665-72, **Reader**); Luther, "The Faith of a Christian" (Ross 721-27, **Reader**); Calvin, "Good Christian Discipline" (Ross 738-42, **Reader**).

*Reference:* Green, *The European Reformation*; MacCulloch, *Reformation*; Spitz, *Basic Interpretations*; Spitz, *The Protestant Reformation*.

12. [MAR 27]

**The Sociology of the Renaissance.** *Discussion:* Women in the Renaissance.

*Text:* A mini anthology of women writings (Louis Labé, Queen Elizabeth I, etc., **Reader**).

*Reference:* Birnbaum, *The Long Journey*; Braudel, *Capitalism*; Burke, *The European Renaissance*; Garin, *Science and Civic Life*; MacCulloch, *Reformation*; Voegelin, *Renaissance*.

## ASSIGNMENTS

- Participation in classes and discussion on the readings of the class. (20%)
- Journal. Choose 5 texts from the reader and write 2 double spaced pages about each of those in the following way: summarize the contents of the text and relate it to the corresponding class materials / discussions. Also indicate your personal opinion (if you found that text relevant to the course and if this text may be useful to your research topic at CEU, etc.). (40%).
- Written exam (40 %).

## REFERENCES

(This is a list of recommendations! The mandatory readings are marked as **reader** under each individual class.)

### **Primary Texts**

- Erasmus, Desiderius. *The Education of a Christian Prince; with the Panegyric for Archduke Philip of Austria*. Ed. Lisa Jardine. Cambridge University Press, 1997. (CEULib)
- . *The Praise of Folly and Letter to Maarten van Dorp, 1515*. Tr. Betty Radice. London: Penguin, 1993. (CEULib)
- Guicciardini, Francesco. *Dialogue on the government of Florence*. Ed. and tr. Alison Brown. Cambridge University Press, 1994. (CEULib)
- . *History of Italy and History of Florence*. Tr. Cecil Grayson, ed. and introd. John R. Hale. New York: Washington Square Press, 1964. (CEULib)
- Cassirer, Ernst; P. O. Kristeller; J. H. Randall ed. *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man: Selections in Translation*. University of Chicago Press, 1948. (CEULib)
- Machiavelli, Niccolo. *History of Florence and of the Affairs of Italy, from the Earliest Times to the Death of Lorenzo the Magnificent*. New York: Haper, 1960. (CEULib)
- . *The Letters of Machiavelli: A Selection*. Tr. and ed. Allan Gilbert. New York: Capricorn Books, 1961. (CEULib)
- . *Machiavelli and His Friends: Their Personal Correspondence*. Tr. and ed. James B. Atkinson and David Sices. Dekalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois University Press, 1996. (CEULib)
- Watkins, Renée Neu tr. and ed. *Humanism and Liberty: Writings on Freedom from Fifteenth-century Florence*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1978. (CEULib)

### **Secondary Sources**

- Baron, Hans. *Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance: Civic Humanism and Republican Liberty in an Age of Classicism and Tyranny*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1955. (CEULib)
- Birnbaum, Marianna D. *The Orb and the Pen. Janus Pannonius and Matthias Corvinus and the Buda Court*. Budapest: Balassi, 1996. (CEULib)
- Birnbaum, Marianna D. *The Long Journey of Gracia Mendes*. Budapest: CEU Press, 2003. (CEULib)
- Black, Robert. "Humanism." In Christopher Allmand, ed. *The New Cambridge Medieval History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, 7: 243-77. (CEULib)
- Boorstin, Daniel J. *The Discoverers*. New York: Vintage Books, 1983. (CEULib)
- Braudel, Fernand. *Capitalism and material life, 1400-1800*. New York: Harper & Row, 1975. (CEULib)
- Braudel, Fernand. *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th-18th Century*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992. (CEULib)

- Burckhardt, Jacob. *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (1860). London: Penguin Books, 1990. (CEULib)
- Burke, Peter. *The European Renaissance – Centres and Peripheries*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1998. (CEULib)
- Busse, Wilhelm G. ed. *Burg und Schloss als Lebensorte in Mittelalter und Renaissance*. Düsseldorf: Droste, 1995. (CEULib)
- DaCosta Kaufmann, Thomas. *The Mastery of Nature: Aspects of Art, Science, and Humanism in the Renaissance*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993. (CEULib)
- Dannenfeldt, Karl H. *The Renaissance: Basic Interpretations*. Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath, 1974. (CEULib)
- Field, J. V. and Frank A. J. L. James. *Renaissance and Revolution: Humanists, Scholars, Craftsmen, and Natural Philosophers in Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993. (CEULib)
- Fuřková, Elizka; James Bradburn et al. ed. *Rudolf II and Prague. The Court and the City*. London / Prague: Thames & Hudson / Skira, 1997, 223-31. (CEULib)
- Garin, Eugenio. *Science and Civic Life in the Italian Renaissance*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1969. (CEULib)
- Gombrich, Ernst H. *New Light on Old Masters*. Oxford: Phaidon, 1986. (CEULib)
- Green, V. H. H. *The European Reformation*. Stroud: Sutton, 1998. (CEULib)
- Greenblatt, Stephen. *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation Of Social Energy In Renaissance England*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1992. (CEULib)
- Hale, John Digby. *The Civilization of Europe in the Renaissance*. London: Fontana, 1994. (CEULib)
- Hartt, Frederick. *History of Italian Renaissance Art: Painting, Sculpture, Architecture*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1987, 1994 (CEULib)
- Haskins, C. H. *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century* [1927]. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1955. (CEULib)
- Hauser, Arnold. *Social History of Art* (1954). London: Routledge, 1989. (4 vols, CEULib)
- Hay, Denys ed. *The Renaissance Debate*. NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965. (The Reader contains selections from this book.)
- . *The Italian Renaissance In Its Historical Background*. Cambridge University Press, 1966. (CEULib)
- Jardin, Lisa. *Erasmus, Man of Letters: The Construction of Charisma in Print*. Princeton University Press, 1993. (CEULib)
- . *Global Interests: Renaissance Art Between East and West*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000. (CEULib)
- Klaniczay Tibor ed. *Matthias Corvinus and the Humanism in Central Europe*. Budapest: Balassi, 1994. (CEULib)
- Koestler, Arthur. *The Sleepwalkers: a History of Man's Changing Vision of the Universe*. London: Penguin, 1989. (CEULib)
- Kristeller, Paul Oskar. *Renaissance Thought: the Classic, Scholastic and Humanic Strains*. New York: Harper & Row, 1955. (CEULib)
- MacCulloch, Diarmaid. *Reformation. Europe's House Divided, 1490-1700*. London: Penguin, 2004. (CEULib)
- Martines, Lauro. *Power and Imagination: City-states in Renaissance Italy*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988. (CEULib)
- Mazzotta, Giuseppe. *The Worlds of Petrarch*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1993. (CEULib)
- Ross, James Bruce, Mary Martin McLaughlin ed. *The Portable Renaissance Reader*. London: Penguin, 1968. (The Reader contains selections from this book.)

- Rubinstein, Nicolai. *The Government of Florence under the Medici (1434 to 1494)*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1997. (CEULib)
- Spitz, Lewis W. *The Reformation: Basic Interpretations*. Lexington, Mass.: Heath, 1972. (CEULib)
- Spitz, Lewis W. *The Protestant Reformation, 1517-1559*. New York: Harper & Row, 1987. (CEULib)
- Sz nyi, György E. "Scientific and Magical Humanism at the Court of Rudolf II." In Elizka Fu iková, James Bradburn et al. ed. *Rudolf II and Prague. The Court and the City*. London / Prague: Thames & Hudson / Skira, 1997, 223-31. (CEULib)
- . "The World of the Italian Renaissance." In Dóra Sallay, Vilmos Tátrai, Axel Vécsey ed. *From Botticelli to Titian. Masterpieces of the Italian Renaissance*. Budapest: Szépm vészeti Múzeum, 2009, 19-39. (Included in the Reader.)
- Thomson, A. F. *Popes and Princes, 1417-1517: Politics and Polity in the Late Medieval Church*. London: Allen & Unwin, 1980. (CEULib)
- Todorov, Tzvetan. *The Conquest of America: the Question of the Other* (1992). Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999. (CEULib)
- Voegelin, Eric. *Renaissance and Reformation*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1998. (CEULib)