



## **CIEE Ferrara, Italy**

<b>Course name:</b>	Symmetry, Harmony and the Human Being: Italy and the Arts through the Renaissance
<b>Course number:</b>	AHIS 3002 FERR (ENG)
<b>Programs offering course:</b>	Ferrara Language and Culture
<b>Language of instruction:</b>	English
<b>U.S. Semester Credits:</b>	3
<b>Contact Hours:</b>	45
<b>Term:</b>	Fall 2019

### **Course Description**

The course introduces students to the world of art through art historian's methods. It provides skills and "tricks" needed to read a Renaissance work of art, as well as appreciate it aesthetically. Since a work of art is a complex phenomenon, all its aspects must be analysed in order to be understood. Which colours, shapes and lines are used? What is their meaning? What materials and techniques are used? What was its original setting? For whom was it done? But also, who is the artist? What is his/her cultural background? All these questions have to be answered in order to have a deep and critical awareness of an artwork.

The course acquaints the students with major protagonists of Italian Renaissance Art. It examines the evolution and development of Western Art, from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance, focusing on a selection of centres, great artists and their masterpieces. Ferrara, with its outstanding monuments, will be our case-study, a great opportunity to examine artworks in their original settings.

### **Learning Objectives**

Learn methods to analyse a Renaissance work of art in its form, meaning and visual symbolism; relate artworks to their historical background; understand the master's artistic aims.

Recognize the major social and historical forces which conditioned Renaissance art in Italy and in Ferrara through the analysis of Italian intellectual, social, economic and political history.

Build up a "language of looking", a proper visual vocabulary to describe artworks.

Improve reading, talking and writing critically about art and art history.

Become more familiar with the principal resources and tools for scholarly research in art history (books, articles, web-sources).



## **Course Prerequisites**

The course has no prerequisites.

## **Methods of Instruction**

Lectures supported by PowerPoint combined with seminars (for which students are assigned weekly reading tasks), site visits and research challenges.

Students will be encouraged to take part in discussion of Renaissance styles, workshops and techniques. Strong emphasis on the material culture of the city of Ferrara and neighbouring towns.

## **Assessment and Final Grade**

1. Oral presentation:	10%
2. Midterm exam:	25%
3. Final exam:	25%
4. Term paper:	15%
5. Participation:	25%

## **Course Requirements**

### **Oral Presentation**

Students will have to select a painting from the Pinacoteca Nazionale di Ferrara, carry out a research on the chosen artwork and then provide a critical analysis of it for the other students (15 minutes), based on methods learned in class in the first clusters of lessons.

### **Midterm Exam**

In the first part of the exam, students will be given extracts from critical texts on art and will be required to comment on them; in the second, they will be shown four images already studied during the course. They will have to identify title and materials used in each case and write a brief critical analysis of the work of art in question. The exam will extend for 2 hours from the starting time.



### **Final Exam**

Students will be shown a group of 8 pictures already studied during the course and will have to identify artist, title, date, place and materials used in each case, and then write a critical analysis of the work of art in question. The exam will extend for 2 hours from the starting time.

### **Term Paper**

Students will have to carry out a case study of one aspect of the Renaissance. They will go further on the subject-matter selected for oral presentation, which deals with a particular theme of Renaissance Art and they will discuss it with the course instructor during office hours or in *ad hoc* tutorials.

Paper outline must include one-paragraph thesis statement and at least two printed secondary sources.

All essays must be typed on a computer and double-spaced (c. 1.500 words, excluding footnotes and bibliography). Students are expected to print the term paper and also to send it to the instructor via email. Late submissions will be penalised by a grade for every day late. Extensions are granted only in special circumstances, such as serious illness or bereavement.

### **Class Participation**

Students are expected to attend regularly and participate actively in class. The instructor will keep a record of attendance throughout the course, which will include the results of the quick-write test administered at the beginning of each class. Students will be expected to do the readings and assessments in advance, so as to be familiar with images and artists and to be able to participate in the discussion.

Students are reminded that plagiarism (presenting another person's work as one's own) is completely unacceptable and if attempted will result in the student receiving a FAIL for the term paper. To avoid this, always make sure that references and other people's ideas are cited correctly. If you are unsure about how to cite a reference, check with the course instructor.

Laptops, mobiles and other electronic devices are not allowed in the classroom.



## **Weekly Schedule**

### **Week 1      Cluster I: Methodology and Critical Approaches to Art History**

#### **Lesson 1**

Introduction: What Is Art History?

#### **Lesson 2**

On art and artists  
Reading: Welch, 1997, 9-33.

### **Week 2      Cluster II: Historical, social, economic and artistic context**

#### **Lesson 1**

Artists and Patrons, public patronage I: institutions  
Reading: Baxandall, 1974, 1-17; Welch, 1997, 79-91, 103-119.

#### **Lesson 2**

Artists and Patrons, public patronage II: the court  
Reading: Welch, 1997, 60-75, 119-123, 211-213, 237-239, 301-307.

### **Week 3**

#### **Lesson 1**

Learning to look at paintings I. Tour of the Pinacoteca Nazionale, Ferrara (venue at Palazzo dei Diamanti, corso Ercole I d'Este, 21)  
Reading: *I Racconti del Castello / The Castle Talks*, 2006, 33, 36- 41, 49-55, 164-167.

#### **Lesson 2**

Learning to look at paintings II. Piero della Francesca and Paolo Uccello: composition, space, form, tone and colour  
Reading: Acton, 1997, 1-5, 25-33, 51-61, 81-82, 103-104.

### **Week 4**

#### **Lesson 1**



Learning to look at paintings III. Rogier van der Weyden and Sandro Botticelli: subject-matter and iconography  
Reading: Acton, 1997, 120-127, 135-141; Baxandall, 1974, 45-56.

## **Lesson 2**

### **Midterm Exam**

## **Week 5**

### **Lesson 1**

#### **Cluster III: cities, main personalities and masterpieces**

The Early Renaissance style: Brunelleschi, Ghiberti, Donatello  
Reading: Smart, 1971, 11-26; Gombrich, 1995, 177-183.

Among the artworks analyzed in the readings, select one work by Ghiberti and one by Donatello. Memorize title, date, location and prepare a brief relevant comment on each work of art.

#### **Deadline for the oral presentation outline**

### **Lesson 2**

**Oral presentation**  
at the Pinacoteca Nazionale in Ferrara

## **Week 6**

### **Lesson 1**

The Second Renaissance style: Masaccio, Ghirlandaio, Botticelli  
Reading: Smart, 1971, 27-34; Schneider Adams, 2001, 240-245; Gombrich, 1995, 191-194; Holmes, 1997, 98-101.

Among the artworks analyzed in the readings, select one work by Masaccio and one by Ghirlandaio. Memorize title, date, location and prepare a brief relevant comment on each work of art.

### **Lesson 2**

Art and Literature: Giotto, Giusto de' Menabuoi, Pisanello



Reading: Welch, 2000, 138-143; Holmes, 1997, 86-89; Burke, 1998, 23-26, 34, 42-46; Hugh, 2005, 403-407; Schneider Adams, 2001, 246-248; AA.VV., 2006, 44-46.

Among the artworks analyzed in the readings, select one work by Giotto and one by Pisanello. Memorize title, date, location and prepare a brief relevant comment on each work of art.

## **Week 7**

### **Lesson 1**

Padua and Venice: Giovanni Bellini, Antonello da Messina, Mantegna.

Reading: Schneider Adams, 2001, 260-267, 270-272, 278-283; L'Occaso, 2011, 166-171.

Among the artworks analyzed in the readings, select one work by Giovanni Bellini and one by Andrea Mantegna. Memorize title, date, location and prepare a brief relevant comment on each work of art.

### **Deadline for the Term Paper outline**

### **Lesson 2**

Private and public palaces: tour to Palazzina Marfisa d'Este and Palazzo Schifanoia

Reading: Toffanello, 2011, 182-201.

## **Week 8**

### **Lesson 1 & 2**

Field trip to Padua (venue at Padua train station)

Visit to the Scrovegni Chapel, Eremitani Church, Baptistery, Palazzo della Ragione, Basilica of Saint Anthony and Scoletta del Santo

Reading: Welch, 2000, 97-101, 265-273.

The day tour is worth 2 lessons: if missed, it will be considered as 2 lessons missed.

### **Lesson 3**

Florence and the High Renaissance: Leonardo

Reading: Gombrich, 1995, 209-220; Hartt, 2003, 431-449.

Among the artworks analyzed in the readings, select two works by Leonardo da Vinci. Memorize title, date, location and prepare a brief relevant comment on each work of art.

## **Week 9**



### **Lesson 1**

Florence and Rome at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century: Michelangelo

Reading: Gombrich, 1995, 220-229; Hartt, 2003, 460-466, 490-499.

Among the artworks analyzed in the readings, select two works by Michelangelo. Memorize title, date, location and prepare a brief relevant comment on each work of art.

### **Lesson 2**

Florence and Rome at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century: Raphael

Reading: Gombrich, 1995, 229-236; Schneider Adams, 2001, 321-329, 344-353.

Among the artworks analyzed in the readings, select two works by Raphael. Memorize title, date, location and prepare a brief relevant comment on each work of art.

## **Week 10**

### **Lesson 1**

Venice and the importance of color: Titian

Reading: Hope, 2003, 11-18, 21-22, 27-28 and catalogue's pictures n. 5, 8, 10, 13, 34.

Among the artworks analyzed in the readings, select two works by Titian. Memorize title, date, location and prepare a brief relevant comment on each work of art.

### **Deadline for the Term Paper**

### **Lesson 2**

"La bella Maniera": Mannerism

Reading: Smart, 1971, 161-174.

## **Week 12**

### **Lesson 1**

### **Final Exam**

## **Readings**

Students are provided with a course reader available online at Canvas which contains all the weekly reading materials. Students will be expected to do the readings prior to the



lecture, in order to be familiar with the images and artists, and participate actively in the classroom discussion.

A set of images will be provided before the mid-term and the final exam. The CIEE study center contains a selection of books, some of which are included in the bibliography below, and two box files containing around 100 articles and chapters from books which are available for consultation: *Renaissance Ferrara* and *Apollo - The International Magazine of the Arts*. Students are encouraged to consult this material.

Although the material may not always be of direct relevance to the essay topics, the articles are useful to read as examples of “how to write” about works of art and material culture in general.

There is also a number of books and articles on Renaissance Ferrara in the various public and university libraries around the city (Ferrara integrated catalogue: <http://opac.unife.it>)

Studying on-site is strongly encouraged, therefore students are invited to visit some of Ferrara’s neighbouring cities such as Mantova, Padova, Bologna, Rimini, Firenze, Verona, Venezia, all easily reachable by train.

### **Course text**

Welch, Evelyn. *Art in Renaissance Italy 1350-1500*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. Print.

It is not included in the course reader, but copies of the text are available at the CIEE library.

### **Books and essays included in the reader**

AA.VV. *I Racconti del Castello / The Castle Talks*, Ferrara: Edsai, 2006. Print.

Acton, Mary. *Learning to look at paintings*, London, New York: Routledge, 1997. Print.

Baxandall, Michael. *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy: a Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style*, London: Oxford University Press, 1974. Print.

Burke, Peter. *The European Renaissance: centres and peripheries*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1998. Print.

Gombrich, Ernst. *The Story of Art*, London: Phaidon Press, 1995. Print.

Hartt, Frederick. *A history of Italian Renaissance art: painting, sculpture and architecture*, New Jersey: Prentice Hall; New York: H.N. Abrams, 2003. Print.





Holmes George. *The Oxford illustrated history of Italy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997. Print.

Hope, Charles. *Titian*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003. Print.

Hugh, Honour. *A world history of art*, London: Laurence King Publishing, 2005. Print.

L'Occaso, Stefano. *Mantua: the Gonzaga family (1397-1519)*, in Folin, Marco. *Courts and courtly arts in Renaissance Italy. Art, culture and politics, 1395-1530*, Woodbridge: Antique Collectors' Club, 2011. Print.

Schneider Adams, Laurie. *Italian Renaissance Art*, Boulder: Westview Press, 2001. Print.

Smart, Alastair. *The Renaissance and Mannerism in Italy*, New York: Thames and Hudson, 1971. Print.

Toffanello, Marcello. *Ferrara: the Este family (1393-1535)*, in Folin, Marco. *Courts and courtly arts in Renaissance Italy. Art, culture and politics, 1395-1530*, Woodbridge: Antique Collectors' Club, 2011. Print.

### **Recommended books and articles available at CIEE library**

Brown, Alison. *The Renaissance (Seminar Studies in History)*, London: Longman, 1999.

Burckhardt, Jacob. *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, London: Penguin, 1990.

Cole, Alison. *Art of the Italian Renaissance Courts: Virtue and Magnificence*, London: Everyman, 1995.

Goffen, Rona. *Renaissance Rivals: Michelangelo, Leonardo, Raphael, Titian*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002.

Hall, John. *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art*, London and New York: Routledge, 1997.

Vasari, Giorgio. *Lives of the Artists*, 2 vols, London: Penguin, 1987.

Series: *I Classici dell'Arte*, Milano: Rizzoli.

Series: *I Maestri dell'Arte*, Miano: Fabbri.