

The Culture of the Renaissance

CLC 2240G, winter 2010

W 11:30-1:30pm, F 12:30 - 1:30pm, WL 258

Instructor: Călin Mihăilescu (cmihails@uwo.ca; tel. 661-2111 ext. 85862)
Teaching Assistant: Ruxandra Onicală (ruxandraonicala@gmail.com)

Office Hours: UC 361, Thu. 12:30-3:30 (or by appointment)

Shopping list

Baldesare Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*. London: J.M. Dent; New York: E.P. Dutton, 1974
Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, *Oration of the Dignity of Man*. Chicago: Regnery Gateway, 1980
Desiderius Erasmus, *The Praise of Folly*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003
Nicolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*. Cambridge University Press, 1988
Christopher Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus* London: Methuen, 1972
Thomas More, *Utopia*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1975

All available in the “Comparative Literature and Culture” section at the University Bookstore.

Course Description The short version: we will learn how to think better when reading literature, and writing and/or talking about it. The long one: we will be exploring together a wide range of theoretical discourses whose chief aim is to

Course Content and Aims The course introduces students to major literary, plastic, and philosophical works of the late-fifteenth and sixteenth century in Western Europe, a period loosely defined as the Renaissance. The material is predominantly Italian, English, French, Spanish and German (all texts are available in English translation). Constant reference the cultures of the Antiquity and the Byzantine and Western Middle Ages will be made. We will discuss various authors (from Pico della Mirandola to Christopher Marlowe) and artists (from Masaccio to Michelangelo), combining focused text analysis with synthetic evaluations of the period as a whole.

Learning Outcomes By the end of this course the students will have become acquainted with some of the major artefacts of the Renaissance, from literary texts to painting, sculpture, architecture, music, philosophy, theology, political thought and general history. The students should be able recognize and analyze such artefacts and to place them in their historical context. The ability to connect various areas of knowledge of the humanities will increase. Students will improve their ability to express themselves on these and other related topics, both orally (through in-class presentations) and in writing (in the form of essays).

Course Guidelines Students are expected to attend all lectures and to complete all required readings before coming to class. Class presentations (which are not to be longer than 15 minutes) should be articulate, informative and provide personal analytic touch. Essays must be submitted within the deadline.

Plagiarism “Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or a passage of a text from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate, and by proper referencing such as footnotes and citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offense (see Scholastic Offense Policy in the Western Academic Calendar). The University of Western Ontario uses plagiarism checking software. Students may be required to submit their written work in electronic form for plagiarism checking.”

Syllabus

Jan. 6	Introductory: major themes of the Renaissance; the rise of the known
Jan. 8	On viewing, perspective, and freedom: principles of Renaissance painting
Jan. 13	Renaissance sculpture
Jan. 15	Renaissance architectures
Jan. 20	On being human: Pico della Mirandola, <i>Oration of the Dignity of Man</i>
Jan. 22	Pico, <i>Oration</i> ; humanism from Petrarch to Erasmus
Jan. 27	New Worlds: Thomas More, <i>Utopia</i>
Jan. 29	More, <i>Utopia</i>
Feb. 3	More, <i>Utopia</i>
Feb. 5	Nicolò Machiavelli, <i>The Prince</i>
Feb. 10	Machiavelli, <i>The Prince</i>
Feb. 12	Machiavelli, <i>The Prince</i>
Feb. 17 & 19	Reading week; no classes
Feb. 24	The twists of wisdom: Erasmus, <i>The Praise of Folly</i>
Feb. 26	Erasmus, <i>The Praise of Folly</i>
Mar. 3	Erasmus, <i>The Praise of Folly</i>
Mar. 5	The daily life in the Renaissance
Mar. 10	Poetry in the Renaissance
Mar. 12	On gods pagan or not
Mar. 17	Castiglione, <i>The Book of the Courtier</i>
Mar. 19	Castiglione, <i>The Book of the Courtier</i>
Mar. 24	Castiglione, <i>The Book of the Courtier</i>
Mar. 26	Marlowe, <i>Doctor Faustus</i>
Mar. 31	Marlowe, <i>Doctor Faustus</i>
Apr. 2	Good Friday; no class
Apr. 7	Marlowe, <i>Doctor Faustus</i> and the Faustian tradition
Apr. 9	Conclusions

Course Requirements

A. Class Participation (20%)

As part of the grade for participation, students are expected to attend the classes, participate in class discussions and complete possible on-the-spot quizzes.

Notes on attendance: Attendance will be taken at the *beginning* of each class. If you have a legitimate reason to miss class (sickness, family crisis, religious holiday), please contact me beforehand so that we can arrange for you to make up any missed material. Missed classes and/or lack of class participation can add up and adversely affect your class participation grade.

B. Class Presentation (15%): 10-15 minutes, delivered orally, to be followed by class discussion. You are not required to hand in a written version of your presentation.

C. Paper (25%): 6-8 pages, due in class on March 31st.

The paper is to be written on a topic of your choice. All students are expected to have their topics approved during office hours or via email. It would be a good idea to begin thinking about the final paper as early as possible in the semester.

D. Final Exam (40%) will consist of identification- and essay questions.