HIST 1001—Reading and Writing History

Renaissance East and West

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Mondays 9:00am­–11:25am

WWPH 3700

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**Course Description:**

The Renaissance was a decisive movement in world history. It developed as a cultural and intellectual movement in the global context. Between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, Europe and Muslim world engaged in intense exchange of ideas, objects, and skills shaped the Renaissance in Europe. This course will begin with a critical history of the evolution of the term. It will then trace the history of the Renaissance from its origins in the fourteenth century, when the political and commercial worlds of both Europe and Asia were undergoing profound changes, to the highpoint of intellectual, economic and political exchanges between East and West in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It will address the intellectual, religious and political developments that defined the Renaissance, such as humanism, revival of the ancient texts in the Muslim world, the northern European Reformation, and the rise of the Ottoman Empire in the sixteenth century. Finally, the course will consider the so-called Age of Discovery, the great overseas voyages of Columbus, da Gama, and Magellan that took place between 1480 and 1540. It will explore these voyages in the light of the desire to reach the markets of the east, and follow their development and consequences through the rise of maps and charts.

**Goals**:

## The main goals of the course are to familiarize history majors with the major problems in Renaissance history and historiography through a combination of lectures, readings in primary and secondary sources, and discussions. It also aims to acquaint the students with proper techniques of historical research and writing. We will read and analyze studies related to economic, political and intellectual exchanges between Europe and the Muslim World. The organization of the course is chronological. Students will learn to identify the Renaissance as a global phenomenon that embraced Europe, the Muslim World as well as the New World. Writing assignments in this course will aim at building skills through a series of short papers.

**Course Requirements:**

1. Students are expected to attend the class regularly, do the assigned reading before coming to class, to participate in discussions of all assigned readings and to complete **5** informal writing exercises in the class. Approximate time spent outside of class doing the reading and preparing for class each week: four to five hours. **(20% of grade)**
2. There will be three formal writing assignments, each of which will be revised. Each draft should be 4 pages in length and final revision is 6 pages. The first assignment draft is due in Week 3. The second assignment draft is due in Week 8. The third assignment draft is due in Week 13. Each draft essay is worth 5% and each revision is worth 15% of the overall grade for the class. **(60% of grade)**
3. A final presentation on one of the papers will be worth **20%** of the final grade.

**Attendance Policy:** Regular and prompt attendance is required. More than two unexcused absences will result in the reduction of your final grade. Coming to class late and leaving the class early without an excuse will also count as absences.

**Laptops, tablets, and cell phones**: Laptops, cell phones, and tablets are not allowed in this class.

**Late Work and Missed Exams:** Essays will not be accepted late. A student representing the university in a special academic or sporting event which conflicts with a deadline may reschedule the submission deadline if he/she contacts the professor AT LEAST TWO WEEKS BEFORE THE SUBMISSION DATE.

##### Academic Integrity: Cheating/plagiarism will not be tolerated. Students suspected of violating the University of Pittsburgh Policy on Academic Integrity, noted below, will be required to participate in the outlined procedural process as initiated by the instructor. A minimum sanction of a zero score for the paper will be imposed. Students should familiarize themselves with the published policies accessible at <http://www.fcas.pitt.edu/academicintegrity.html>.

**Email Policy:** The University of Pittsburgh e-mail Policy 09-10-01 states:  
Each student is issued a University e-mail address (<username@pitt.edu>) upon admittance. This e-mail address may be used by the University for official communication with students.  Students are expected to read e-mail sent to this account on a regular basis.  Failure to read and react to University communications in a timely manner does not absolve the student from knowing and complying with the content of the communications.  The University provides an e-mail forwarding service that allows students to read their e-mail via other service providers (e.g., Hotmail, AOL, Yahoo).  Students that choose to forward their e-mail from their pitt.edu address to another address do so at their own risk.  If e-mail is lost as a result of forwarding, it does not absolve the student from responding to official communications sent to their University e-mail  address. The link to this policy is located at

[**http://www.bc.pitt.edu/policies/policy/09/09-10-01.html**](http://www.bc.pitt.edu/policies/policy/09/09-10-01.html)  
Instructions on how to forward e-mail messages are at[**http://www.technology.pitt.edu/email-accounts/email/imap/imap-forward.html**](http://www.technology.pitt.edu/email-accounts/email/imap/imap-forward.html)

**Note on Disabilities**: If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and the Office of Disability Resources and Services, 216 William Pitt Union, (412) 648-7890/(412) 383-7355 (TTY), as early as possible in the term. Disability Resources and Services will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course.

**Blackboard:** Blackboard™ is an online software tool that facilitates interaction and communication among all members of the class. We will use it in this course for online discussions (Discussion Board), announcements and grade posting. Please familiarize yourself with Blackboard as soon as possible by visiting the following portal: <http://courseweb.pitt.edu>. Help with Blackboard is available 24 hours a day from the Technology Help Desk: 412-624-4357, or <http://technology.pitt.edu/tech_help.html>.

**Office Hours:** My office hours are a time when students can meet with me to discuss any matter related to the class. I especially encourage students who may find it difficult to participate regularly in class discussions to drop by to discuss any matter related to the course. In addition to my office hours, I will be available by appointment to speak to students. If you notice any problem or difficulty in the class, please see me during office hours as soon as possible.

**Required Texts:**

# Jerry Brotton, *The Renaissance Bazaar: From the Silk Road to Michelangelo* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

Gene Brucker, *Two Memoirs of Renaissance Florence: The Diaries of Buonaccorso Pitti and Gregorio Dati* (Long Grove, IL: Waveland PR Inc, 1991)

John Mandeville, *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*. Revised Edition. (London and New York: Penguin Classics, 2005)

Diana Hacker, *A Pocket Style Manual*. 6th ed. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2010)

The required books can be obtained from the University Book Store. They are also available on the course reserve at the Hillman Library. Selections from Jack Goody, *Renaissances: The One or the Many?* (Cambridge: CUP, 2010) will be available on the courseweb.

**Grading Criteria for the paper assignments:**

Your papers will be graded according to the following three criteria:

**1. Development and Analysis:** Does the paper adequately introduce the topic, present convincing evidence to support the writer’s position, summarize findings, and offer a reasonable conclusion?

a. Inquiry is clearly structured to answer the question posed and excludes extraneous material.

1. Paper clearly locates argument and evidence in time and space.
2. Paragraphs function as discrete units, with use of concrete evidence to support claims.
3. Paper provides evidence from a variety of primary or secondary sources to back up descriptive or causal claims.
4. Paper analyzes evidence and demonstrates its significance in relation to historical question posed.
5. Argument and evidence are consistent with the legitimate scholarly sources. (Wikipedia and unauthorized internet sources are not allowed).
6. Paper makes an argument that is worth taking seriously.
7. **Organization**: Is the paper’s structure apparent and easy to follow?

a. Entire paper is carefully constructed to introduce, discuss, and conclude; body of paper makes its case through systematic logical development.

**3. Mechanics:** Is the paper generally free of spelling, typographical, grammatical, and formatting errors?

1. Paper demonstrates mastery of standard written English grammar and usage and deploys an appropriate system of reference.

**Paper # 1 Assignment**

Draft Due date: Week 4

Revision Due date: Week 7

**When turning in a revised paper, the original paper must be attached. Late papers will not be accepted**

**Assignment:** The term Renaissance is a misleading and usually wrongly interpreted historical phenomenon which is usually discussed in the case of Europe. Nevertheless, it is imperative that students of history should discuss “the origins of Renaissance in the Global context.” Using the information presented in Brotton, *The Renaissance Bazaar* and Jack Goody, *Renaissances: The One or the Many?* and the primary sources we have discussed during first three weeks of the class write an essay that inquires **whether the Renaissance is exclusively an European phenomenon or not**.

**Be sure to have a thesis that does the following:**

1. Answers the question, “Is the Renaissance an exclusively European phenomenon?”
2. Expresses a particular view of this issue.
3. Argues that this view is worth taking seriously. (You should explain why your view enables us to understand as opposed to the other views.)

**Style and Grammar:** Use the style and grammar recommended in Diana Hacker, *A Pocket Style Manual*. **Style and grammar will be evaluated as part of your grade!**

**Style and length:** Your drafts should be **four pages** and your revised paper should be approximately **1800 words in length (6 pages).** Please double-space your text. Please include page numbers on each page and your name on the first page.

**Reminder:** Please retain all drafts and notes that you make in the process of writing your paper, in case issues of plagiarism arise. If you have questions about plagiarism, please refer to the following: <http://www.english.pitt.edu/resources/plagiarism.html> or speak with me.

**Oral Presentation Assignment**

**Assignment:** Prepare an oral presentation of one of the three papers you have written for this course. Your presentation should last **only fifteen minutes**. Following your presentation, there will be a five minute question and answer period (your classmates will ask you questions and you will answer.)

**Preparation:**

1. Modify your paper to make sure it can be easily understood when read aloud. (Avoid using long sentences which are harder to understand aurally.) Write your presentation and print out a version to read from the day of your oral presentation. You can use power point presentation. Make sure to bring your computer and/or flash disk with you to the class.
2. Practice your presentation to make sure it is **only fifteen minutes**. It takes usually two minutes to read one page of double-spaced text.

**Structure of the Presentation:**

1. Introduce the paper briefly, explain why the subject is important.
2. Summarize three or four main points of the paper
3. Communicate the content of the paper
4. End with a conclusion where the most important points of the paper are repeated

**Grading Criteria for the Oral Presentations:**

Your presentation will be graded according to the following criteria:

1. Clarity of introduction and conclusion (20 pts)
2. Communication of the main points (20 pts)
3. Pace of speed (not too fast, not too slow) (20 pts)
4. Appropriate length (15 minutes!) (20 pts)
5. Answer to questions (20 pts)

**Course Outline**

## Week 1 (August 27): Introduction to the Course

## Documentary: “The Medici: Godfathers of the Renaissance (PBS, 2003)”

## Week 2 (September 3): Labor Day

## Week 3 (September 10): The idea of Renaissance

**Readings:**

1. Goody, 7–43
2. *Two Memoirs of Renaissance Florence*, 9–18 & 107–141

**Week 4 (September 17): Global Renaissance**

**\* First writing assignment drafts due in class.**

**Readings:**

1. Brotton, 33–61
2. *Two Memoirs of Renaissance Florence,* 19–88

## Week 5 (September 24): Individual meetings to discuss Assignment #1

## Week 6 (October 1): Humanist Script

**Readings:**

1. Brotton, 62–91
2. *Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, 9–72

## Week 7 (October 9): Church and State

**\* First writing assignment revisions due in class.**

Documentary: “Martin Luther: Reluctant Revolutionary (PBS, 2002)”

**Readings**:

1. Brotton, 92–123

## Week 8 (October 15): Rebirth in Islam

**Readings:**

1. Goody, 94-144

## Week 9 (October 22): Putting Things in Perspective

**\* Second writing assignment drafts due in class.**

**Readings:**

1. Brotton, 123-154
2. *Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, 72–120

**Week 10 (October 29): Individual meetings to discuss Assignment # 2**

**Week 11 (November 5): Renaissance and the New World**

**\* Second writing assignment revisions due in class.**

**Readings:**

1. Brotton, 154–184
2. *Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, 120–190

**Week 12 (November 12): Experiments, dreams, and performances**

Movie

**Readings:**

1. Brotton, 184–220

## Week 13 (November 19): Student Presentations

**\* Third writing assignment draft due in class.**

**Week 14 (November 26): Student Presentations**

**Third writing assignment drafts will be returned**

## Week 15 (December 3): Student Presentations

**Week 16 (December 10): Third writing assignment due by 5 :00pm.**