**Instructor:** Dr. Amber A. McAlister (she/her)

**Preferred Contact:** Canvas Inbox messaging

**E-mail:** [aam56@pitt.edu](mailto:aam56@pitt.edu)

**Student Hour:** On site and by appointment

*Painting is poetry that is seen rather than felt, and poetry is painting that is felt rather than seen.*

~Leonardo da Vinci[[1]](#footnote-1)

**I. COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is an introductory survey of the development of the visual arts of the Italian Renaissance, and its unique characteristics. Florence, considered by many the birthplace of the Renaissance, will serve as our real-world classroom. Students will learn about much of the history, philosophy, art, and architecture of the Renaissance through on-site lectures and experiential exercises in museums, city squares, churches, palaces, civic buildings, and archaeological excavations. On the excursions to Pisa and Rome, students will be able to directly connect the artistic characteristics of ancient Greek and Roman works to their influence on Italian artists starting as early as 1260 in Pisa. Iconic Renaissance art will be the focus in tours of the Sistine Chapel, Papal Apartments, and St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican (1480s and into the 1500s). Our chronological survey of the Italian Renaissance serves as the foundation for close looking and critical visual analysis. This course will, in addition, address a deep examination and understanding of materials and techniques, conservation and restoration, and questions about patronage, materiality, narrative, appropriation, race, and gender. Study abroad in art history affords the unique opportunity to experience many works of art and architecture in their original contexts (or close to it, nestled between bus lines and other modern encroachments), enriching our understanding of the arts and cultures we study.

* On the Greensburg campus fulfills the Artistic Tradition (AT), World Perspectives (WP), or Humanities (HUM) general education requirements.

**II. LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this course, students will:

1. Develop and master use of specialized vocabulary of the discipline of art history.
2. Gain knowledge and understanding of key artists and works of Italian Renaissance art history, with the ability to articulate and interpret their impact on the development of the Renaissance.
3. Develop abilities and skills to apply critical visual analysis to works of art and architecture.
4. Be able to recognize the various media used in Renaissance art, understand and explain the techniques used to manipulate these materials, and be familiar with current issues in art conservation and restoration.
5. Analyze and interpret the visual culture of the Renaissance through the lens of different theoretical approaches in art history.

**III. COURSE MATERIALS**

Required texts:

* Richard N. Turner, *Renaissance Florence: The Invention of a New Art*, reissue edition, Pearson, 1997. (ISBN-13: 978-0131344013)
* Additional Readings available on Canvas, either in PDF format or web sites – TO BE DOWNLOADED BEFORE DEPARTURE!!!!!

Required Resources:

* *Hidden Florence*; download the app at <http://hiddenflorence.org>; be sure to download the two Walks (Central Walk; Sant’Ambrogio Walk) before departure. Will require GPS usage for approx. 4 hrs.
* A notebook and a pen for notetaking (pencil for museums)
* CAPA Guardian app
* Phone with 24hr data plan on (Italian SIM recommended)
* A camera or camera phone that allows you to upload a photo to Canvas for every Blog entry.
* A computer and/or tablet or phone that allows you to write a paper, and complete other online assignments.

Recommended Resources:

* Dual authentication key fob to log in easily to Canvas, especially if you plan on getting an Italian SIM card
* Borsook, Eve. *The Companion Guide to Florence*. Vol. 6th revised, Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer Ltd, 1997.
* *DK Eyewitness Travel Guides* for Florence, Tuscany, Rome, etc.
* *Blue Guide* books give a lot of historical information. Lonely Planet & Rick Steve’s guides are also helpful.

Other Resources:

<https://www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/guidance/advice-for-you/when-travelling/travel-adaptor-for-italy/>

<https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/FH3SL5RQCQCP?ref_=wl_share>

Internet access and Data Plan:

This class is supported by a Canvas website ([http://Canvas.pitt.edu](http://courseweb.pitt.edu)) where additional readings, links, assignments, quizzes, etc. are available. You are to be reachable on your cell phone data plan 24/7 so plan accordingly, either by purchasing a SIM card in Italy or having an international plan with your regular carrier. The Hidden Florence app will require use of GPS and data plan for the 4-6 hours you will use it.

* **Internet in Italy!** Download PDFs before you leave the U.S. Watch the lecture videos and complete those embedded quizzes before you leave the U.S. Collect as much content as is available to you to use offline while you’re in Italy. You will be staying in apartments built in the 15th-16th centuries, most likely, and these buildings have stone walls that are upwards of a foot thick, so wifi doesn’t penetrate these buildings as well as you may be used to. It is possible that at any given time you won’t be able to upload a document to an assignment, or work online. We will adapt!

**IV. STUDENT MEETING HOURS**

No regular office hours will be scheduled – it is expected that the instructor and students will have adequate contact time during the field course. Dr. McAlister will also be available after class and by appointment when needed.

**V. ASSESSMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

**Panopto Lectures & Video Quizzes (5% of final grade)**

Lecture videos are punctuated by embedded quizzes to check comprehension.

**Reading & Lecture Quizzes (10% of final grade)**

Students will complete quizzes in Canvas based on terms and concepts from the Panopto pre-departure video lectures, *Art Basics* and the D’Alleva *Look!* PDFs, and the *Renaissance Florence* textbook. The goal is to be sure students are conversant with the necessary vocabulary and key concepts before the course starts in Italy. Format will be multiple choice, matching, fill in the blank, true/false, hot spot, etc.

**Weekly Journal (8 entries total; 50% of final grade)**

* 1 entry pre-departure, 1 entry post-program, 1 entry per program week

Students will complete a visual field journal in the form of online blog entries. The blogs are in Canvas and you will upload photo(s) and reflect on the prompts. These entries provide an opportunity for critical reflection and are not meant to be a mere record of events or objects viewed. You are expected to make connections between readings, class lectures/discussions, and experiences.

**Formal Analysis (10% of final grade)**

Formal analysis is fundamental to the discipline of art history. It involves looking closely and critically at a work of art/architecture and interpreting its visual structure. There will be both written and oral opportunities to develop these skills.

**Course Attendance & Participation (20% of final grade)**

Students will earn a daily attendance and participation grade based on:

* Participation - asking & answering questions voluntarily, connecting our experiences to readings, taking notes, making comments, etc.
* Punctuality – have you arrived ready to go by at least 5 minutes prior to the meeting time? Definition of “ready to go?” Not eating or drinking, ready to take notes, get in line, enter a building, etc.
* Preparedness – students are ready to take notes, have done the reading for the day and can demonstrate their familiarity with the material, etc.
* Attentive & respectful behavior – in regards to the professor, colleagues, and those around us, e.g., sticking close to the group, not wandering off, paying attention, etc.
* Digital detach – not wandering around taking photos, selfies, posting, texting, etc.
* Appropriate dress for the day – in general, you should be ready to enter a church if we walk past one we want to pop into. On days where we are scheduled to visit a church, cathedral, any religious institution, students must abide by their dress code. You will **NOT** be permitted to enter if the authorities think you are dressed inappropriately (very strictly enforced in Pisa and the Vatican!!!).
  + Women: shoulders, cleavage, belly, and knees should be covered. No tank tops, bare midriff, shorts above the knee, short skirts above the knee, sleeveless tops/dresses, etc. Bring a sarong to tie around your waist, and a jacket or shawl to cover your shoulders and chest just in case.
  + Men: knees must be covered. Wear convertible pants/shorts or long shorts that cover the knee. No caps/hats should be worn in religious buildings.
* I will use the Canvas Attendance tool to score attendance & participation, and will use the late feature, which Canvas calculates as a 20% penalty, to mark a grade down for the day.
* Students should maintain a respectful demeanor toward their colleagues and the host country and sites. Student behavior overseas is expected to be courteous and appropriate, and unacceptable behavior will be reflected in course assessment and grades as well as other consequences that are reflected in the University of Pittsburgh’s code of student conduct. Group travel requires punctuality, consideration, and responsibility from all participants.

**Introduce Yourself! x2 (4% of final grade)**

* Send me a message in the Canvas Inbox and introduce yourself to me.
* Send me a message via WhatsApp.

**NameCoach (1% of final grade)**

Please record your name so I know how to pronounce it (but please correct me when I’m mistaken!) and indicate your pronoun if you so choose.

**VI. GRADING SUMMARY AND SCHEMA**

**Grading Schema:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Letter Grade** | **%** |
| A | 93-100 |
| A- | 90-92.99 |
| B+ | 87-89.99 |
| B | 83-86.99 |
| B- | 80-82.99 |
| C+ | 77-79.99 |
| C | 73-76.99 |
| C- | 70-72.99 |
| D+ | 67-69.99 |
| D | 63-66.99 |
| D- | 60-62.99 |
| F | 0-59.99 |

* Note that grades are NOT automatically rounded up to the next percentile.

**VII. LATE WORK POLICY:**

* Students can complete work up **until 1 week after the due date**, at which time the assignment will close and work will not be accepted.
* Canvas will automatically **deduct 5%** of the assignment value per day the work is late.
* Late penalties will accrue per day until the score reaches 50% of the point value. Translation? If you turn your work in late you earn half the points possible for the assignment, which is much better than a zero for not turning in the work at all!!!
* If you have **connection issues**, you get dropped, etc., send me a message in the Canvas Inbox or WhatsApp and I will reset the assignment for you. If I don’t read your message before the due date/time I will still reset your assignment when I see your message.
* Panopto Lectures & Video Quizzes: late penalties will apply after due dates, but videos are always open and never close; there are unlimited attempts on answering the embedded questions.
* *Failure to turn in work may result in penalties affecting your final grade, including a half or full step lowering of the letter grade, or a failing grade for the course.*

**XIV. PRE-DEPARTURE CALENDAR & ASSIGNMENTS—***subject to change at instructor’s discretion*

| **TOPIC** | **READ**  [~ reading time] | **VIEW Panopto Lecture Videos**  [viewing time, +embedded questions] | **DO** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Introduction and Overview: What is Art History?**  Theories and questions | PDF in Canvas:   * D’Alleva, Ch. 1, Introducing art history, pp. 11-26 [~1 hr.] | Ciao! I’m Dr. McAlister! [5:49]  Introduction to Art History  [17:54] | * Introduce Yourself! Send a Canvas Message to Dr. McAlister * Send a WhatsApp message to Dr. McAlister * NameCoach |
| **Introductory Vocabulary** |  | Intro Vocabulary Part 1 [14:41] |  |
| **Art Basics:** Formal Elements of Art  & Essential Vocabulary | PDFs in Canvas:   * *Art Basics*, pp. 4-32 [~2.5 hrs.] * D’Alleva, Ch. 2, Formal Analysis, pp. 27-51 [~1 hr.] | Intro Vocabulary Part 2 – materials & techniques [26:14]  Intro Vocabulary Part 3 – formal elements [46:32]  Intro Vocabulary Part 4 – color [22:57] |  |
| **Formal Analysis** | PDFs in Canvas:   * D’Alleva, Ch. 3, Contextual analysis, pp. 52-73 [~1+ hrs.] * D’Alleva, Ch. 4, Writing art-history papers, pp. 74-81 [less than ~1 hr.] | Intro Vocabulary Part 5 – formal analysis-composition [35:45] | * QUIZ #1 – SG 1: Intro Vocabulary – Formal Elements |
| **Classical Greek and Roman Orders** |  | Roman Architectural Orders  [3:21]  Greek Architectural Orders  [18:51] | * QUIZ #2 – SG 1: Architecture & Classical Orders |
| **Get Ready for Florence!** | PDF in Canvas:   * Street Numbering in Florence (to help you find your apartment!) |  | * Pre-departure journal entry |
| **Head start?**  If you want to get a jump on things, read the textbook and take the quiz! |  |  |  |

**XX. ITALY CALENDAR & ASSIGNMENTS***—subject to change*

| **DAY** | **TOPIC –**  **SITE** | **READ**  **Before Class** | **DO**  **Before Midnight** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **WEEK 1** | | | |
| **Monday**  **13 May** | **Arrival**  **Buon arrivo!!** |  |  |
| **Tuesday**  **14 May** | **Welcome to Florence!!**   * CEA CAPA Orientation * Walking Tour of Florence * Piazzale Michelangelo * San Miniato * Welcome Dinner |  |  |
| **Wednesday15 May** | **Ciao! Parli italiano???**  Survival Italian Language Class |  |  |
| **Thursday**  **16 May** | **Liminal Spaces: The Civic Center of Florence**  **AM:** Classroom lecture  **PM:** Site visits   * Palazzo Vecchio + ruins + tower * Hidden Florence App Walking Activity |  |  |
| **Friday**  **17 May** |  | Complete reading Turner, *Renaissance Florence* | * QUIZ on Turner textbook * Weekly journal entry |
| **WEEK 2** | | | |
| **Tuesday**  **21 May** | **Development of the Renaissance at the Uffizi:**  Ancient precedents, Proto-Renaissance to Renaissance, Mannerism and Beyond | PDFs/Links in Canvas:   * Humanism Timeline * Dr. John M. Hunt, "Humanism in renaissance Italy," in Smarthistory, August 1, 2021, [**https://smarthistory.org/humanism-renaissance-italy/**](https://smarthistory.org/humanism-renaissance-italy/). * Dr. Heather Graham, "Humanism in Italian renaissance art," in Smarthistory, August 1, 2021, [**https://smarthistory.org/humanism-italian-renaissance-art/**](https://smarthistory.org/humanism-italian-renaissance-art/). | * Formal analysis |
| **Thursday 23 May** | **EXCURSION, Rome:**  **Ancient Roman Precursors:**   * Pantheon * Colosseum * Roman Forum & Palatine Hill | PDFs in Canvas:   * Marciari, John. "Introduction: Seeing Renaissance Rome" In *Art of Renaissance Rome: Artists and Patrons in the Eternal City*, 6-20. London: Laurence King Publishing, 2017; * Primary text: “Raphael Appointed Inspector of Antiquities in Rome,” pp. 44-45 |  |
| **Friday**  **24 May** | **High Renaissance in Rome:**  **Vatican Museums, St. Peter’s**  On-site lectures | PDFs in Canvas:   * Primary text: “Pietro Aretino’s Attack on Michelangelo’s *Last Judgment*,” pp. 122-124 * Cullen, “Divine Intervention in the Sistine Chapel,” *WSJ Magazine* (April 2019):74-81. | * Weekly journal entry (or upload as soon as you return to Florence from traveling) |
| **WEEK 3** | | | |
| **Tuesday**  **28 May** | **Liminal Spaces:**  **The Religious Center of**  **Florence**  Duomo Complex: Duomo + scavi, Baptistery, Museum, Campanile, Dome |  |  |
| **Thursday**  **30 May** | **Sculpture**  AM: Bargello  PM: Accademia | PDFs in Canvas:   * Primary text: “Comparative Merits of the arts” on the *paragone* debate (which is “better” painting or sculpture), pp. 4-15 * Primary text: “Installation of Michelangelo’s *David,*” pp. 39-44 * Primary text: “Cellini: Casting the *Perseus*,” pp. 138-146 | * Formal analysis |
| **Friday**  **31 May** |  |  | * Weekly journal entry |
| **WEEK 4** | | | |
| **Tuesday**  **4 June** | **Mendicant Orders;**  **Linear Perspective**  AM: Sta. Maria del Carmine, Brancacci Chapel  PM: Sta. Croce |  |  |
| **Thursday**  **6 June** | AM: Sta. Trinità, Sassetti Chapel; Ognissanti; Sta. Maria Novella archive  PM: Sta. Maria Novella w/ altar openings; Pharmacy |  |  |
| **Friday**  **7 June** |  |  | * Weekly journal entry |
| **WEEK 5** | | | |
| **Tuesday**  **11 June** | **EXCURSION, Pisa:** Baptistery, Duomo, Sinopie Museum, Tower  Dinner at Le Scuderie | PDFs in Canvas:   * Overview of Pisa and Duomo complex (PDF or access via secure server library link) |  |
| **Thursday, 13 June** | **Materials & Techniques**  AM: Classroom lecture  PM: Zecchi |  |  |
| **Friday**  **14 June** |  |  | * Weekly journal entry |
| **WEEK 6** | | | |
| **Tuesday**  **18 June** | **The Medici in Florence**  On-site lecture  AM: San Marco Museum  PM: Palazzo Medici-Riccardi |  |  |
| **Thursday**  **20 June** | **The Medici in Oltrarno**  On-site lecture  AM: Sto. Spirito;  Sta. Felicita, Capponi Chapel  PM: Palazzo Pitti; Boboli Gardens |  |  |
| **Friday**  **21 June** | **Farewell Dinner** |  | * Weekly journal entry |
| **Saturday 23 June** | **Departure**  **Buon viaggio!** |  |  |
| **Thursday**  **27 June** |  |  | * Post-program journal entry |

1. [https://drawpaintacademy.com/leonardo-da-vinci-quotes/#:~:text=“He%20who%20despises%20painting%20has,the%20generations%20of%20the%20world](https://drawpaintacademy.com/leonardo-da-vinci-quotes/#:~:text=).” [↑](#footnote-ref-1)