

Course Syllabus: "The Glory of the Renaissance"

Long title: "The Glory of the Renaissance: How Music, Painting and Architecture Thrived at the Nexus of Spiritual, Political and Intellectual Power in Fifteenth-Century Italy"

LS 770-73

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"The disciplines are interconnected, and a person cannot master one unless he seeks light from another." Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini, 1450.

Course overview

You can lose yourself in the magnificent *Duomo* of Florence, completed by the great fifteenth-century architect, Filippo Brunelleschi. You can also lose yourself in a painting by Piero della Francesca, or in Guillaume Dufay's brilliant music for the Catholic liturgy, pieces like the *Missa Se la face ay pale*—lose yourself in the sense of tasting a vast and brilliant world that leaves the petty concerns of day-to-day life behind. Fifteenth-century Italy enjoyed a strong tradition of art designed with this in mind. Composers, painters and architects used the full range of intellectual and emotional power available to them to create a transcendent world, and they did so through the patronage of powerful people who expected something in return. That is how the themes of art, spirituality, intellectual inquiry and politics intersect, and that is how some of the greatest art in the European tradition was created. Much of it is still around for us to enjoy and understand today.

This course covers music, painting, architecture, religion and politics in the 15th Century, primarily in Florence and Rome. We begin with three class meetings in Durham, then continue with a group trip to Florence and Rome.

Each student will select another city to work on for a term project. Let's see how the themes we are talking about in Florence and Rome played out there. What is 15th century painting, architecture and music like in Prato, Pienza, Arezzo, Perugia, Milan, Ferrara, Siena, Bologna, Mantua, and Naples? These are obvious choices, but there are also charms and surprises to discover in Pistoia, Verona, Rimini, Modena, Pavia, Genoa, Padua. You are welcome to pair up, with two people for one city, travelling together and dividing up areas of inquiry.

Prerequisites: none. The learning goals of this class are: 1) to gain general knowledge about fifteenth-century music, painting and architecture; 2) to understand how themes of spirituality, intellectual life and politics intersect in the arts; 3) to develop writing and research skills.

Required purchases: Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy: A Primer in the History of Pictorial Style*; Ross King, *Brunelleschi's Dome: How a Renaissance Genius Reinvented Architecture*; Ross

King, *Michelangelo and the Pope's Ceiling*. Sakai contains readings from Oxford Music Online, David Fallows, *Dufay* and Patrick Macey, *Bonfire Songs: Savonarola's Musical Legacy* along with other course materials, including listening assignments.

Grading: Term paper (50%); assignments and class participation (50%). Please meet with me early to discuss your term project. Reports on term projects will be given during our time together in Rome.

Term project in stages

- 1) February: Communicate with TB to select a city to work with. Recommended choices: Prato, Pienza, Arezzo, Perugia, Milan, Ferrara, Siena, Bologna, Mantua, and Naples. The assignment is to compare architecture, painting or music in your city to what we have studied. For example, Siena had a fiercely independent tradition in painting that did not yield quickly to what was happening in Florence. Another example: Piero della Francesca's fresco cycle in Arezzo is one of the great monuments of the fifteenth century. Another example: the central piazza in the postage-stamp-sized city of Pienza was rebuilt by the pope in 1460 using the latest architectural ideas from Florence. Your choice of city must be approved in advance of the first class meeting on May 9.
- 2) At class meetings in Durham on May 9 and May 23, present a written list of fifteenth century paintings and architecture in your city. This is not a paper, just a list.
- 3) May 9-June 11: Move ahead with research for your term paper before we arrive in Italy. Prepare your powerpoint presentation on your term project, which will be shared while we are in Rome.
- 4) Week of June 19: powerpoint presentations on fifteenth century painting, architecture or music in your city—15 minutes each.
- 5) Optional: try to visit your city. We will have one free day in Florence, and it is easy to make day trips from there to Prato, Arezzo, Pistoia, Siena, Bologna. For other cities, you may schedule time before the official arrival day (Saturday June 12) or after the official departure day (Sunday June 25)
- 6) July 17: the written version of your term project is due. Electronic submission only.

Meeting 1 (May 9, in Durham) *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy* Our study begins with *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy* by Michael Baxandall. For our first class meeting, each student will have read the entire book in advance. Please report today on any fifteenth-century paintings in your city. Assigned discussion leaders should be prepared to discuss all paintings mentioned by Baxandall and what he has to say about them. Listening in today's class: Josquin's *Ave Maria*.

Assignment for June 10: Assigned paintings to write about. In Italy you will be our guide when we look at these paintings as a group. Please use these two sectional headings for your short paper (2-3 pp), which is due on June 10: 1. Using *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy* to

understand [the title of your painting] 2. Additional observations about [title of your painting] Use section 1 to demonstrate your command of Baxandall's arguments, as they apply to your painting. In section 2, bring at least one additional source (book or article) to the discussion (find this through oxford art online—see below). Pithy writing is valued here.

Paintings to choose from: Massaccio's Trinity in Santa Maria Novella and his Brancacci Chapel; Fra Angelico Annunciation in convent of San Marco and Santa Trinita Altarpiece in Museo San Marco; Giotto in Santa Croce; Ghirlandaio in Santa Maria Novella and Sistine Chapel; Ghiberti's doors for the Baptistery; paintings from the Low Countries in Italy (Hugo van der Goes and Rogier van der Weyden, Uffizi, Hans Memling, Doria Pamphilj); Filippo Lippi in the Uffizi, Galleria Nazionale (Rome) and Museo Doria Pamphilj (Rome); Botticelli (Uffizi, Sistine Chapel); Perugino (Uffizi, Sistine Chapel) Paolo Uccello (Uffizi); Verrocchio (Uffizi, David in the Bargello); Piero della Francesca (Uffizi); Piero di Cosimo (Uffizi, Sistine Chapel); Gentile da Fabriano (Uffizi).

Meeting 2 (May 23, in Durham): For our second class meeting in Durham we discuss Ross King's *Brunelleschi's Dome*. This massive structure proclaimed the wealth and power of Florence and the Church on an unprecedented scale. It also reflected Brunelleschi's rarified aesthetics. Our main goal in discussion is to identify themes that might be relevant for architecture in other cities. Please report today on any fifteenth-century architecture in your city. A motet was commissioned from Guillaume Dufay, the most famous composer of the day, for performance at the dedication ceremony for the high altar in 1436. Dufay's luxuriant piece is based on mathematical proportions similar to those of the dome. Dufay also achieved a stylistic breakthrough by bringing the lyric melodic style associated with love songs to the monumental style of the motet. He thus articulated an approach to spirituality that channels sensual desire through devotion to the Virgin Mary. Dufay's *Nuper rosarum flores*

Assignment for architecture in Italy: Guides to lead us through the architecture of these buildings: Brunelleschi Pazzi Chapel (Florence), Brunelleschi Hospital of the Innocents (Florence), Brunelleschi Santo Spirito (Florence), Sangallo Villa Farnesina (Rome), Santa Maria Trastevere (Rome), Sistine Chapel (Rome). No written assignment but please prepare a brief powerpoint presentation to show in Italy.

Meeting 3 (June 6, in Durham): At our third class meeting in Durham we discuss Ross King's *Michelangelo and the Pope's Ceiling* as our guide to the Sistine Chapel and its famous paintings. By the mid-1490s, Josquin Desprez, the most famous composer of the day, was working there. Among the pieces he composed for the Chapel were two mass-cycles based on the *L'homme armé* song. This well known song was first about mounting a

crusade to recover Constantinople, lost to the infidels in 1453, second about conquering the devil, and third about patriarchal power. By 1505, the Pope's choir was singing a magnificent piece by Josquin that celebrates patriarchal power using the very themes depicted in Michelangelo's famous paintings on the ceiling. Thus, these two leading artists of the time are linked by a building, just as Brunelleschi and Dufay were linked seventy years earlier in Florence. Josquin wrote another piece that expresses sympathy with Savonarola, the religious reformer and arch enemy of the papacy who was publically executed in Florence in 1498. The piece adds another dimension to our understanding of *'quattrocento* spirituality, as it manifested through art and politics.

Week 1 in Italy (Arrive June 12, Florence):

Florence: Presentations *in situ* on these paintings, as we visit them through our itinerary: Day 1: Massacio's Trinity in Santa Maria Novella plus Ghirlandaio in Santa Maria Novella, Massacio's Brancacci Chapel; Day 2: Fra Angelico Annunciation in Convent of San Marco, Fra Angelico Santa Trinita Altarpiece in Museo San Marco; Day 3: Giotto in Santa Croce and Brunelleschi's Pazzi Chapel; the Uffizi; Day 4: Ghiberti's doors for the Baptistry and the Duomo, and Brunelleschi Hospital of the Innocents. Day 5: Brunelleschi's Santo Spirito and the Bargello; Day 6: Brunelleschi and Donatello in San Lorenzo, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo

Florence: Brunelleschi sites: *Duomo*, Old Sacristy of *San Lorenzo*, *Ospedale degli Innocenti* and Piazza Annunciata, *Santo Spirito*, *Pazzi Chapel*

Florence lecture: Savonarola, San Marco, Fra Angelico. Read for today: Macey, *Bonfire Songs*, chapters 1, 2 (pp. 32-51 only), 4 (pp 91-98 only) and 8 (p. 184-192 only). Be prepared to talk about these as separate topics: Savonarola and religion; Savonarola and the arts; Savonarola and politics.

Florence: Opera del Duomo Uffizi, Bargello

One day in Florence will be reserved for travel. Those of you who have chosen nearby cities to work with for your term project can take a day trip to that city.

Week 2 in Italy (arrive June 19, Rome, depart June 25):

Rome lecture: Plainchant and paintings for the Christian liturgy. Listening: Plainchant for the Christian liturgy, antiphons, hymns, and mass ordinary items. Texts and translations of the Mass Ordinary are easy to find on the web. Here is a site:

http://www.kitbraz.com/tchr/hist/med/mass_ordinary_text.html

Rome visit: Fra Angelico Chapel for Nicholas V in the Vatican. Sistine Chapel ceiling and wall murals. Vatican museum.

Rome visit: report on architecture of Santa Maria Trastevere, one of the oldest churches in Rome. Listening for today: *Balsamus et munda cera* by Dufay, written for Santa Maria in Trastevere. Symbolism, function and style in early fifteenth-century motets.

Rome visits and reports: Villa Farenese (architecture ca. 1500 perhaps by Sangallo). Doria Pamphilj Gallery (Hans Memling, Filippo Lippi). Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica in Palazzo Barberini (Lippi)

Rome lecture: Please read Craig Wright's article "Dufay's 'Nuper Rosarum,'" on Sakai; and the article "Dufay" by Alejandro Planchart, on our Sakai site, through section 2, "posthumous reputation." (To find this article, go to Resources, then Dufay, then Dufay encyclopedia article). For Dufay, please think about this question: what skills did Dufay need in order to advance his career as successfully as he did? Dufay's *Missa Se la face ay pale*

Rome lecture: Josquin Desprez's *Missa L'homme armé*. Josquin's *Missa Fortuna desperate* and *Missa La Sol Fa Re Mi*. The "Goddess" Fortuna in antiquity and in the fifteenth century. The secular song *Fortuna desperate*. Josquin's motet *Miserere mei Deus* and *Missa Hercules Dux Ferrariæ*

Rome presentations on term projects.

Art online

--Artstore: www.artstor.org. Register at your first visit with your Duke email address and a password of your choice. That will be your log on from then on; off campus use should be easy. Duke Images: <https://imagine.aas.duke.edu/>
Simply log in with your Duke ID

For Art, /Arts and Humanities/Art History/use

For music: http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/advanced_search

Online reference works:

Oxford University Press offers excellent online encyclopedias that should be your first stop for general information and bibliographies on virtually any topic. Go to the search page of the online library catalogue/on the right: research by subject.

For art use "Oxford Art Online" and "Oxford Reference Online—Art and Architecture" for keyword searching.

<http://guides.library.duke.edu/arthistory>

The third item in the list, the Pelican History of Art, are standard, English-language volumes by period.

For music:

http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/advanced_search

For religion:

Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church

(<http://search.library.duke.edu/search?id=DUKE005081035>)

The Encyclopedia of Religion

(<http://search.library.duke.edu/search?id=DUKE003741074>)

Catholic Encyclopedia

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/>

Reserve list These items have been placed on reserve for our class in the Music Library:

Baxandall, Michael, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy: A Primer in the History of Pictorial Style* ND615 .B32 1988 c.1

Dufay, *Opera Omnia* M1.C677 no. 1 1951-1966 rev. vv. 1, 3 and 6

Fallows, David, *Dufay* ML410.D83 F355 1987

Grafton, Anthony, *Leon Battista Alberti: Master Builder of the Italian Renaissance*, NA1123.A5 G73 2000

King, Ross, *Brunelleschi's Dome: How a Renaissance Genius Reinvented Architecture* NA5621.F7 K56 2000

King, Ross, *Michelangelo and the Pope's Ceiling* ND623.B9 J55 2003

Lewine, Carol, *The Sistine Chapel Walls and the Roman Liturgy* 755.2 L672 S623 1992

Macey, Patrick, *Bonfire Songs: Savonarola's Musical Legacy* ML 3093.M33 1998

New Josquin Edition, v. 23 with commentary M3.J68/1987

Saalmann, Howard, *Filippo Brunelleschi: The Buildings* NA1123.B8 S23 1993b

Sherr, Richard, ed., *The Josquin Companion* ML 410.J815 J68 2000

The Gates of Paradise: Lorenzo Ghiberti's Renaissance Masterpiece NB 1287.F6 G43 2007.

Christmas with the Tallis Scholars CD 14209

Intégrale des motets isorhythmiques/Guillaume Dufay CD 16080

Flos Florum/Dufay CD 10969

Secular Music/Dufay CD 10996

The Brightest Heaven of Invention CD 1368 (Dufay's *Ave regina coelorum*)

Missa Se la face ay pale/Dufay CD 997
Dufay and the Court of Savoy CD 18256
Missa L'homme armé/Dufay CD 520
Quadrivium/Dufay (Nuper; Balsamus) CD 10943
Popes and Anti-popes (Balsamus) CD 6771
A Musical Book of Hours CD 5520
Missa Hercules Dux Ferrariae/Josquin (Ave Maria) CD 10380
Missa Pange lingua/Josquin CD 15135
Missa Pange lingua/Missa La Sol Fa Re Mi Josquin CD 369
Missa Fortuna desperata/Josquin CD 7465
Missa L'homme armé/Josquin CD 13795
Messes de l'Homme armé Josquin CD 19703
Josquin Motets and Chansons CD 1304
Josquin Missa L'homme armé CD 367
Stabat Mater Josquin (Salve Regina) CD 8425

New Josquin Edition, vv. 4 (*Missa Pange Lingua*), 9 (*Missa Fortuna Desperata*), 11 (*Missa Hercules Dux Ferrariae*).
Opera Omnia, M3 J58 1967 v. 1 fasc. 1 (*Missa L'homme armé*)

Basilica Santa Sabina
Santa Maria Antiqua