This course offers an introduction to the intellectual, social, and political transformations that are reflected in the astounding explosion of artistic creativity that occurred in Florence in the years 1400-1540.

**Texts to purchase:**

All other readings are in the Modules section of the Canvas course site.

Artworks should be easily searchable on commons.wikimedia.org

**Syllabus**

**Week One**  
Florence before the Renaissance
- origins and urban development of the city
- Guelphs versus Ghibellines, Whites versus Blacks
- the sweet new style: Dante and Giotto
- The Black Death
- The Revolt of the Ciompi

*Reading:*
- Najemy, pp. 88-95, 161-187
- Boccaccio, *Decameron, Day 2, Story 8, on Guido Cavalcanti leaping over the tombstones*
- T.J. Clark, “Giotto and the Angel”
- *Machiavelli, Florentine Histories, on the revolt of the Ciompi*, 115-131
- Brucker, pp. 236-239

**Week Two**  
The Crisis of 1400 and Civic Humanism
- civic humanism and communal republicanism before the crisis
  - Petrarch and Brunetto Latini
  - *Good and Bad Government* fresco in Sieno’s Civic Museum
- The Viper of Milan
- Salutati and Bruni as republican propagandists
- manuscript hunting
rediscovering Roman models:
  • *The Sacrifice of Isaac* (Brunelleschi and Ghiberti)
  • *Four Crowned Martyr Saints* (Nanni di Banco)

Reading:
  • Quentin Skinner, “Ambrogio Lorenzetti: The Artist as Political Philosopher”, excerpt
  • Hans Baron, "A Struggle for Liberty in the Renaissance: Florence, Venice, and Milan in the Early Quattrocento"
  • Bruni, "Panegyric on the City of Florence"

Week Three The Albizzi Period
  • The Albizzi oligarchy: merchant republicanism
    • Bruni on republican knightliness
  • International Gothic
    • *Adoration of the Magi* from the Strozzi Altarpiece (Gentile da Fabriano)
    • *St. George and David of 1405-1409* (Donatello)
  • realism: Donatello and Masaccio
    • *Brancacci Chapel frescoes* (Masaccio and Masolino)
    • *Zuccone* (Donatello)
  • Brunelleschi’s dome
  • Optimism of the Will: Alberti
  • Perspective
    • *Trinity* (Masaccio)
  • fears of the oligarchy
    • enemies within: magnates, armed factions
    • jousts, parades, exile
  • Captains of the Republic
    • *John Hawkood* (Paolo Uccello)
    • harangues

Reading:
  • Hankins, “Civic knighthood in the Early Renaissance: Leonardo Bruni's De militia (ca. 1420)”
  • Vasari, “Life of Brunelleschi”, available through University of Chicago library online at https://catalog.lib.uchicago.edu/vufind/Record/1296212
  • Alberti autobiography
  • Edgerton, “Brunelleschi’s Mirror”

Week Four The Age of Cosimo
  • the rise of Cosimo
    • personality and humanist interests
- banishment and return
- The Council of Florence
  - Meeting of Solomon with the Queen of Sheba (Ghiberti)
- The Medici palace
- Procession of the Magi (Gozzoli)
- David and Judith (Donatello)

**Reading:**
- Sarah McHam, “Donatello’s Bronze ‘David’ and ‘Judith’ as Metaphors of Medici Rule”
- Alison Brown, “Platonism in Fifteenth-Century Florence and its contribution to early modern political thought”
- Vincent Cronin, from The Florentine Renaissance, pp. 125-129 on the Council of Florence
- Rab Hatfield, “The Compagnia de’ Magi”

**Week Five**  From Cosimo to the Magnificent Lorenzo

- Realism: Coronation of the Virgin (Filippo Lippi)
- Christian devotionalism:
  - Adoration in the Forest by Filippo Lippi
  - Crucifixion, Annunciations (Fra Angelico)
- last years of Cosimo and Donatello
  - Mary Magdalene; Resurrection from the S. Lorenzo pulpits (Donatello)
- the challenge to Piero
- Lorenzo takes charge
  - David (Verrocchio)
- the Pazzi Conspiracy

**Reading:**
- Baxandall on Annunciations
- Najemy, pp. 291-305, 344-361
- Vasari, "Fra Filippo Lippi", in Lives of the Artists (Oxford)
- Luca Landucci, Florentine Diary, 19.
- Machiavelli, Florentine Histories, VIII, 9, 327 [book].
- Lauro Martines, “April Blood”
- Lorenzo de’ Medici, letter to the Signoria

**Week Six**  Florence in the 1480s: The Age of Magnificence

- Medici fortunes in decline
  - Sassetti Chapel (Ghirlandaio)
- Lorenzo’s circle and cultural influence
- Neo-Platonism
- Lorenzo de’ Medici, “Quant’è bella giovinezza” (poem)
- Primavera (Botticelli)

**Reading:**
• Lorenzo de' Medici, A Song for Bacchus (“Quant’è bella giovinezza”): http://konicki.com/blog2/2009/12/01/december-1-a-song-for-bacchus-by-lorenzo-de-medici/
• James Hankins, “The Myth of the Platonic Academy”
• Marsilio Ficino, Meditations on the Soul, letters 1-4
• Ovid, from Metamorphoses: myth of Flora
• Pico della Mirandola, “Oration on the Dignity of Man”, excerpt

Week Seven  Savonarola and the New Republic
• Lorenzo’s death and Savonarola’s prophecy
• The French invasion
• the Savonarolan republic
• the Soderini regime, 1498-1512
  o Machiavelli and neo-republican humanism
• David (Michelangelo)
• Michelangelo versus Leonardo
  o Battle of Anghiari (Leonardo)
  o Battle of Cascina (Michelangelo)
• Mystical Nativity (Botticelli)
• Portrait of Savonarola (Fra Bartolomeo)
• Execution of Savonarola on the Piazza della Signoria (Anonymous)
• David (Michelangelo)
• Machiavelli’s militia and the sack of Prato
• The Medici return

Reading:
• Savonarola sermons TBD
• Machiavelli Letter 3 (on Savonarola)
• James Ackerman, “Leonardo’s Eye,” excerpt
• Luca Landucci, Florentine Diary, on the French invasion, Savonarola, the militia, the sack of Prato, and the restoration of Medici rule
• Hartt, “Leonardo and the Second Florentine Republic”
• Vasari, pp. 295-296 and 430-431 (on Anghiaria/Cascina), 426-428 (on Michelangelo's David)

Week Eight  Twilight: 1512-1527
• Machiavelli in exile
  o The Prince
• princedom or republic?
  o Leo X’s dynastic ambitions
  o political symbolism: the baton ceremony
• Mannerism
  o Madonna of the Harpies (del Sarto)
  o Deposition from the Cross (Pontormo)
• The Prince in the republic
New Sacristy, San Lorenzo (Michelangelo)

Reading:
- Machiavelli letters 203 (describing the fall of the Soderini republic), 120 (castles in Spain), 224 (Machiavelli’s life in exile)
- The Prince
- Najemy on republicanism 1512-1527

Week Nine

The Fall of the Republic
- The Sack of Rome and the last expulsion of the Medici
- The Siege of Florence
  - The Ten Thousand Martyrs; A Young Halberdier (Pontormo)
- Alessandro, Duke of the Republic
  - Alessandro de’ Medici (Bronzino)
  - Hercules and Cacus (Bandinelli)
  - Captains turned to Dukes
- Lorenzaccio
  - Brutus (Michelangelo)
- Cosimo I, Duke of Tuscany
  - Perseus with the Head of Medusa (Cellini)
  - Eleonora di Toledo; Venus, Cupid, Folly and Time
- Piazza della Signoria: from republican battle-ground to open-air museum

Reading:
- Roth, from The Last Florentine Republic
- Nicholas Baker, “Neither Fish nor Flesh: The Difficulty of Being Florentine, 1530–1537”, from The Fruit of Liberty: Political Culture in the Florentine Renaissance, 1480-1550.
- Richard Trexler, “Two Captains and Three Kings: New Light on the Medici Chapel”, excerpt
- Rothfield, “Coda” to The Measure of Man

Week Ten

Student presentations on your final projects-in-progress for feedback to help make them the best they can be.

Dec. 10

FINAL PROJECTS DUE BY E-MAIL ATTACHMENT ON TO
lary@uchicago.edu

Assignments & Grading
1. Attendance & Discussion Contribution (20%)
2. A 15-minute in-class presentation (20%) on either a short passage (no longer than one page) from a Renaissance Florentine text, or on a work of art by a Renaissance Florentine artist. Your presentation must be informed by what you can learn about the work or quotation. Use Google Scholar to seek out at least three scholarly discussions of aspects or elements of the work or the quote; these discussions might be about the work itself or about the figures or concepts.
represented or mentioned in the work (i.e., who is the “Cacus” represented in Bandinelli’s *Hercules and Cacus*, and why would the rulers of the city at that point want Cacus shown next to the front door to the seat of government?).

3. Major final project (60%). You have two options:
   a. Write a research paper, 10-12 pp. due Dec. 10, via email attachment to lary@uchicago.edu. Options for this paper:
      i. Compare two works – one may be a work we discuss in class, but no more than one, and neither can be the one that you do your 15-minute presentation on (requirement 2 above) -- treating or mentioning the same subject. You might, for instance, find two Last Suppers, two palazzos or piazzas, two men on horseback, two Resurrections, two Mary Magdalenes, two battle-scenes, an image and a written description of the siege of Florence, etc. Explain how the differences in the way the same subject is handled reflects changes in or conflicts about aesthetic values, philosophical ideas, moral ideals, social attitudes, or political power; OR
      ii. Discuss one particular moment in Florentine history, showing how that moment was understood and interpreted by at least three different contemporary observers, including at least one artist.
   b. Create a curated exhibition of ten works of art. This should take the form of a powerpoint presentation, with 1-2 paragraph informational wall-cards for each work and a three-paragraph overview of the exhibit. The exhibition should link the works, and be organized to move the viewer through in a way that tells a story or builds from work to work.

For any of these options, your argument must include references to at least two of the texts we have read this quarter, plus references to at least three additional sources.
A GENERAL GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING WRITTEN PLAGIARISM

Are my own words being used?

YES

Is it my idea?

YES

Yay! You’re not plagiarizing!

OK

Go quote it!

NO

Are you using quotation marks or placing it in a block quote?

YES

Yay! You’re not plagiarizing!

NO

You’re plagiarizing!

YES

You’re paraphrasing

NO

Now what?

ADD A CITATION AND BIBLIOGRAPHY!