
DA VINCI AND THE RENAISSANCE

HONR 299 SPRING 2020

Professor Dino Franco Felluga—3 credits (1+2)



Da Vinci and the Renaissance is a fully cross-disciplinary study-abroad program that explores the transition from the medieval period to the Renaissance across multiple subjects (art, architecture, engineering, science and more), laying out how much of what we take for granted today about technology or about the human subject were implemented in this rich period, especially in Italy. Our focus will be that most famous “Renaissance man,” Leonardo da Vinci. The course’s interdisciplinary approach asks students to think about the constructed nature of the things we take for granted as “natural” (e.g., time, space, human subjectivity, meaning, sight, knowledge, and law), thus opening our eyes to the significance of cultural differences. We will also consider the many ways that we are now seeing a cultural, ontological, and epistemological shift that is as far-reaching as the one between the medieval period and the Renaissance

The 3 credits will be split between 8 weeks of instruction at Purdue (1 credit) and our study-abroad program to Venice and Florence (2 credits). In Italy, we will see a number of things that we will have discussed before getting on a plane together. We will also think about the nature of confronting a different culture and of being a tourist in a foreign land.

LECTURE AND DISCUSSION SCHEDULE

Da Vinci and the Renaissance is, to a large extent, an experiential course, which means that we are actually “in class” during the many activities we will have while touring places in Italy over March Break. Those activities are prepared for and supplemented by more traditional in-class time together at Purdue, when lectures and discussion will provide the background and framework for your independent intellectual work.

Here is our lecture schedule for the 8-week course, along with the readings for each day:

The Human January 14 and 16

de Botton, *The Art of Travel* (“On Anticipation”)

da Vinci, Notebook excerpts

Nelson, *Visuality*

<https://www.cla.purdue.edu/english/theory/newhistoricism/modules/foucaultcarceral.html>

<https://www.cla.purdue.edu/english/theory/newhistoricism/modules/foucaultpower.html>

Space and Time January 21 and 23

Foucault, “Of Other Spaces”

White, “Value of Narrativity”

Visuality I January 28 and 30

Panofsky, *Renaissance*

Visuality II February 4 and 6

Gombrich, *Art and Illusion*

Music/Science February 11 and 13

Howard and Moretti, *Sound and Space*

Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*

War and Speed February 18 and 20

Virilio, *Speed and Politics*

Francis C. Moon, Preface xiii-xvi, Note xxi-xxii, and Intro 3-14; the rest is optional

The Posthuman February 25 and 27; March 3 and 5

N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman*

Clifford Geertz, “Balinese Cock Fight” to be read for March Break

de Botton, *The Art of Travel* (“On Possessing Beauty”) to be read for March Break

COURSE MATERIALS AND GRADES

PRIMARY MATERIALS

All readings and all works by Leonardo da Vinci will be made available through a shared Dropbox folder. Please have readings completed before the assigned weeks above.

I am asking you to read a number of philosophical/theoretical articles that help to set in context Leonardo's work and the Renaissance more generally. Be sure to use quotations from the readings in your blog posts. There are a total of 7 blog posts listed below. Think about how the readings give you a unique perspective on the Renaissance as well as on your experience as a tourist in Italy. In addition to the readings listed on the previous page, I am providing you with optional readings, which you will find in our Dropbox folder.

ASSIGNMENTS FOR THE 8-WEEK COURSE *see below for details*

- 1) Personal Introduction and Italy Imagined Blog Post: 20 points
- 2) Timeline/Map/Gallery: 30 points
- 3) Presentation Blog Post: 30 points
- 4) Participation: 20 points

ASSIGNMENTS OVER MARCH BREAK *see below for details*

- 1) Oral Presentation: 10 points
- 2) Campo Assignment Blog Post: 20 points
- 3) Thick Description Blog Post: 20 points
- 4) Scavenger Hunt Blog Post: 15 points
- 5) Finding Beauty Blog Post: 15 points
- 6) Italy Realized Blog Post: 20 points

GRADES figured on a 100-point scale as follows:

94	100 A (4.0)	80	83 B- (2.7)
90-93	A- (3.7)	70	79 C (2.0)
87	89 B+ (3.3)	60	69 D (1.0)
84	86 B (3.0)	< 60	F (0.0)

POLICIES

Texts All assigned reading should be completed before discussion date. Students should read, think about, and be prepared to discuss assigned material.

Communication Please check your email, GroupMe texts, and WorldStrides app daily. My email is: felluga@purdue.edu.

Attendance On-time attendance is critical for experiential classes. All class meetings and activities are required. If you cannot attend because of illness, contact me immediately.

Academic Integrity Plagiarism is the appropriation of another's ideas without citation. If you copy something from the web or present another person's idea as your own—even in your own words—you are plagiarizing. Plagiarists will fail this course.

Disabilities If you are eligible for academic accommodations, please contact me to discuss your needs.

Nondiscrimination Each voice on this program has something of value to contribute. Please respect the different identities, experiences, beliefs, and values expressed by other students. Discriminatory speech or behavior will not be tolerated.

Emergencies In the event of a major emergency, course requirements, deadlines and grading percentages are subject to change.

Conduct You are ambassadors for Purdue University and the United States. Act with courtesy and respect to our Italian hosts, other tourists, and each other.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

OVERVIEW

There are 4 course grades for the 8-week portion of da Vinci and the Renaissance; 6 grades for March Break. All your formal work for both courses will appear online in two forms: 1) our collective COVE timeline/map/gallery; and 2) your course blog, which you must create. There are many mechanisms for creating a blog (WordPress, SquareSpace, Wix, SiteBuilder, GoDaddy). Please choose the one you prefer, create your blog before your first assignment deadline, and share your URL with me via email.

When complete, your blog will be a verbal, visual, and intellectual record of your study-abroad experience and home to the “blog post” assignments below. Your audience for this blog is primarily professional (your professor and student colleagues), but you are invited to share your blog with the world and to have your family and friends follow along on your journey of Italian discovery. Feel free to add extra blog posts specifically designed to share your experience with others as in a travel journal; however, please make clear which ones are your assignments by indicating them in some clear way. The formal course blog posts, by contrast to any informal posts, should be analytical, carefully written and proof-read; they should reflect your background research, including quotations; and they should illustrate your engagement with course readings and discussion.

There are two kinds of formal blog posts: 1) some are designed to help you analyze the historical shift from the medieval period to the Renaissance (how we have come to think the way we do); 2) some are designed to help you analyze your experience in Italy (your expectations, the cultural differences you encounter, the experience of being a tourist). When possible, try to combine these two types of analysis: how does knowledge of the past impact your experience of being a tourist? Does your analysis of historical paradigm shifts help you to make sense of the cultural paradigm shift of experiencing another culture today? Does your new understanding of the history of ideas help you to make sense of the present and future of our interconnected, globalized world? Have your readings given you a new understanding of what you are looking for or what you actually see when you travel?

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

8-WEEK COURSE

1) PERSONAL INTRODUCTION AND ITALY IMAGINED BLOG POST (DUE BY JAN 21)

This should be the first post on your blog. In about 500 words, introduce yourself. Who are you and why are you interested in Italy? What are you hoping to find? What do you imagine Italy (and Italians) will be like? Close your eyes and think of Italy. What do you see? Try to be honest about your expectations. Later, for your last assignment over March Break, you will have an opportunity to come back to this post to reflect on what you learned from your experience of these courses and study-abroad program. Include at least one image and one quotation from our de Botton reading, "On Anticipation." Try your best to engage with this critical reading.

2) TIMELINE/MAP/GALLERY (DUE BY FEB 4)

Add your own material to our collective timeline, map and gallery as background research for your presentation blog post (see directly below). For this exercise, you will use a set of digital tools that I will show you how to access during our first class. Your timeline should include a minimum of two items that clarify or set in context the object or event you will be examining. Include, in addition, at least two map elements and two gallery images tied to your timeline entries. Provide a full explanation of each element (timeline, map, image) and be sure to cite the sources you use. Support your material with appropriate images; you might consider using Wikimedia Commons as a resource for this: just make sure that you properly state fair use or public domain status of the images and provide information about the source of the image. Entries should be professional, well-written, and well-researched. Provide a Works Cited at the end of each element listing any sources you used and follow MLA bibliographic conventions.

3) PRESENTATION BLOG POST (DUE MARCH 9)

This assignment allows you to make your own some aspect of da Vinci. Carefully research your object and then write a blog post in essay form about it. Over March Break, you will also make an oral presentation to the class about your object, which you will deliver at the appropriate point during our program (see below). Make sure to discuss the significance of your object: analyze, don't just describe! Engage course discussions. Include at least one image and three quotations from course readings. Provide links to your timeline/map/gallery elements. Include a Works Cited and follow MLA bibliographic conventions.

4) PARTICIPATION

Perhaps the most important thing you can do as part of our time together is to engage in the material and the experiences. Be sure to have readings prepared so you are ready to discuss them. Unexplained absence from class will result in reduction of your participation grade. Tardy arrivals are disruptive to class and will also impact your participation grade.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

MARCH BREAK COURSE

1) ORAL PRESENTATION

Using your presentation blog post as base, prepare an oral presentation, which you will deliver to the class at the appropriate point during our program (see presentations below). Make sure to discuss the significance of your object: analyze, don't just describe! Use GroupMe to provide digital copies of any images you mention. Your presentation should last no more than 10 minutes and should be polished and professional – please practice. You will be graded on the quality of your presentation and engagement with your audience, especially your response to questions afterwards.

03/14 at Verrocchio statue, SS Giovanni e Paolo, Venice: da Vinci's plans for a horse statue (Lauren Lum)

03/15 at Basilica di San Marco, Venice: Leonardo and music (Chyna Ferguson)

03/16 at the Correr Museum, Venice: Leonardo and astronomy (Jacob Halpern)

03/16 at the Correr Museum, Venice: Leonardo and ship-building (Cooper Slack)

03/17 at the Accademia, Venice: Leonardo's *Last Supper* (Katelyn Macknyk)

03/17 in front of the Florence Duomo: Verrocchio's lantern and bronze ball (Ariana Eskew)

03/18 at the Uffizi, Florence: Leonardo and botany (Marina Mehling)

03/18 at the Uffizi, Florence: *The Baptism of Christ* (Arija Simonaitis)

03/18 at San Lorenzo Church, Florence: Leonardo's architecture designs (Adam Sands)

03/18 at San Lorenzo Church, Florence: *Vitruvian Man* and Humanism (Kanti Bharat)

03/19 at the Leonardo Museum, Venice: Leonardo and hydrodynamics (Evan Shreiner)

03/19 at the Leonardo Museum, Venice: Leonardo's bridge designs (Blake Hakimian)

03/19 at the Leonardo Museum, Venice: Leonardo and anatomy (Jackson Pechin)

03/19 at the Leonardo Museum, Venice: Leonardo's aerial screw (Elise Zaniker)

03/20 somewhere in Venice: geology, both Leonardo and Venice (Madeline Quinn)

2) CAMPO ASSIGNMENT BLOG POST (DUE MARCH 16)

Pick a campo in Venice and find as many of the architectural features listed on [this terms page](#) as you can. Take your time to look carefully to see all that is there. Photo-document your work. Afterwards, write a 500-word reflection on how the campo functions as a space and on how the exercise affected your appreciation of Venice as a tourist. Engage course material by including at least one quotation from our course reading. Questions to consider: what is significant about the difference between the Medieval and Renaissance elements you see? How does your campo affect your understanding of tourism, space, time, society, power, and the human? See [my blog post](#) for an example of the architectural hunt. (N. B. this sample posting does not include a critical reflection – which should be considered the most important part of your own assignment.) [Post your essay and photos to your blog by midnight on March 16.](#)

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

MARCH BREAK COURSE

3) THICK DESCRIPTION BLOG POST (DUE MARCH 22)

Write an analysis of some aspect of Venetian/Italian culture, following the model of Geertz' "thick description." (See the Geertz reading in our Dropbox folder; you can also check out [my sample blog post applying Geertz.](#)) Length: 750 words. Provide at least one picture and engage course material by including at least one quotation from our course reading. Post your essay and photo(s) to your blog by March 22.

4) FINDING BEAUTY BLOG POST (DUE MARCH 22)

Read de Botton's "On Possessing Beauty" from *The Art of Travel*. Create a word-painting (500 words). Find something in Venice or Florence that, to your eyes, possesses beauty, then attempt to "possess it and give it weight" (de Botton 214) describe it as fully as you can using the techniques proposed by de Botton in the reading. Include at least one photograph and one quotation from course readings, paying special attention to de Botton's warnings about the aesthetic problems inherent in photography. As de Botton writes, "In the process of re-creating with our own hands what lies before our eyes, we seem naturally to evolve from observing beauty in a loose way to possessing a deep understanding of its constituent parts and hence more secure memories of it" (217). Include a drawing of your object, keeping in mind Ruskin's belief that "the sight is a more important thing than the drawing" (de Botton 233).

5) SCAVENGER HUNT BLOG POST (DUE MARCH 22)

On the train ride back from Florence, I will be setting you up in groups of 3 and giving you some item that you must find in Venice. This assignment will require you to engage with locals who can help you with your quest. Once you have found your item, take a picture of yourselves with it. Add the picture to a blog post in which you describe your quest and reflect on your experience, especially your engagement with locals. 750 words. Did the activity teach you anything about Venetian culture or the Italian people? Did it help you to think about the relationship between the tourist and the local inhabitant? Include at least one quotation from course readings. Post your essay and photo(s) to your blog by March 22.

6) ITALY REALIZED BLOG POST (DUE BY SUNDAY, MARCH 29)

This will be the last post on your blog, after your return home. Take at least 750 words to reflect on what you've learned during these courses and study-abroad program. Was Italy as you imagined it? Have your ideas changed in any way? Have you? Is your relation to your Lafayette surroundings different now? How? What have you learned about cultural difference or about what you used to take for granted as "true"? What were your most powerful experiences and why? (Please engage assigned materials to help parse your experience.) Include at least one picture and at least one quotation from our readings. Post your essay and photo(s) to your blog by March 29.