

HIST 310 / POLSC 430: Italy in the Renaissance: The Medici Story

Credits: 3

Instructor: Marcello Bellini, Laurea

Schedule: TBA

Prerequisite: None

Site visit fee: TBA

Course Description:

This course traces the fortunes of an extraordinary family whose vicissitudes span over three hundred years (from the late 14th century up to the early 18th century), from the rise of the family bank under Cosimo the Elder to the final demise of the family line with the death of the last Medici Grand Duke of Tuscany in 1737. Since the power of Medici family enabled their members to rule Florence, to control the Papacy, to "act as the needle of the 'Italian' compass", and, sometimes, to influence the policies of an entire continent, their story will provide students with an understanding of the history, politics and civic life of this period. The Medici were statesmen, scholars and patrons of art, collectors, entrepreneurs and impresarios. Some of them were poets, others were popes. This class attempts to explain a pattern of political control that brought Florence from a republicanism uniquely energetic in its cult of liberty to the drowsy acceptance of near-absolutist rule.

The class also introduces students to the artistic and philosophic movements of the period by discussing the achievements of the artists and architects who worked for Medici, such as Brunelleschi, Donatello, Michelozzo, Michelangelo, Botticelli, Sangallo, Bronzino, Vasari, Buontalenti, Cellini, as well as the musicians who worked at the Medici court in 16th and 17th century.

Slides, dvds and several site visits will supplement the lectures.

Course descriptions may be subject to occasional, minor modifications at the discretion of the instructor.

Textbooks:

Readings include, but are not limited to, selections from the following:

E. Micheletti *The Medici of Florence*, Becocci 1993

AA.VV: *Atlas of the Renaissance*, Cassel 1994

C. Hibbert: *The rise and fall of the house of Medici*, Penguin Group 1979

J. R. Hale: *The Florence and the Medici*, Phoenix Press 1977

D. Hay and J. Law: *Italy in the age of the Renaissance 1380-1530*, Longman 1989

P. Strathern: *The Medici, Godfathers of the Renaissance*, Pimlico 2005

T. Parks: *Medici money*, W. W. Norton 2005

R. Martines: *April blood*, Oxford university press 2003

R. de Rover: *The Rise and decline of the Medici bank 1439-1494*, Beardbooks 1999

AA.VV: *The Medici Women*, Arnaud 1997

F. Ames-Lewis: *The early Medici and their artists*, Birkbeck College 1995

E. Micheletti *The Medici of Florence* (pages 3-85), Becocci 1993

C. Hibbert: *Florence, the biography of the city* (pages 74-179), Penguin books 1994

D. Hay and J. Law: *Italy in the age of the Renaissance 1380-1530*, Longman 1989

C. Hibbert: *The rise and fall of the house of Medici*, Penguin Group 1979

J. R. Hale: *The Florence and the Medici* (pages 166-177: *The French perspective*, Catherine

and Marie), Phoenix Press 1977

During orientation at the Institute, students will receive a list of textbooks they are required to purchase. Students should not purchase any texts before orientation.