While including influential contributions from earlier decades, this course emphasizes developments in the historiography of Renaissance culture in Italy and Europe over the past two decades. Pathbreaking works that draw creatively upon the methods and insights of other disciplines receive special emphasis. The final grade is based upon: (1) active, informed participation in discussions (50%); and (2) a bibliographic essay on a topic selected by the student in consultation with the instructor (50%). The essay will be due by 9:30am on Tuesday 4 December.

28 August: Renaissance Humanism, I


[class will not meet on 4 September]

11 September: Renaissance Humanism, II


18 September: Renaissance Humanism, III

25 September: The Renaissance and Individualism


2 October: Learned Women, I


Grafton and Jardine, From Humanism to the Humanities, 29–57 (=chap. 2: “Women Humanists: Education for What?”)

Sarah Gwyneth Ross, The Birth of Feminism: Woman as Intellect in Renaissance Italy and England (2009), 1–189.

9 October: Learned Women, II

Ramie Targoff, Renaissance Woman: The Life of Vittoria Colonna (2018)


16 October: Learned Women, III

Diana Robin, Publishing Women: Salons, the Presses, and the Counter-Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Italy (2007)


23 October: The Catholic Reformation & the Council of Trent

Thomas F. Mayer, Reginald Pole: Prince & Prophet (2000), 103–74 (=chaps. 3 & 4)

John W. O’Malley, Trent: What Happened at the Council (2013)

30 October: Words & Images, I

6 November: Words & Images, II

Sachiko Kusukawa, Picturing the Book of Nature: Image, Text, and Argument in Sixteenth-Century Human Anatomy and Medical Botany (2012)

13 November: Masculinity

Thomas V. Cohen, Love and Death in Renaissance Italy (2004), 1–42, 229–35 (notes).


[20 November: Thanksgiving Break; class will not meet]

27 November: Widening Conceptions of European Culture


Surekha Davies, Renaissance Ethnography and the Invention of the Human: New Worlds, Maps and Monsters (2016)

4 December: The Early Modern Information Explosion

Ann M. Blair, Too Much to Know: Managing Scholarly Information before the Modern Age (2010)

11 December: Bibliographic essays due electronically at 9:30am. Class will not meet.