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Italian Humanities  
Spring 2010

Required texts: Peter D’Epiro & Mary Desmond Pinkowish,
Sprezzatura: 50 Ways Italian Genius Shaped the World (2001)

Other materials on Blackboard or at Cal Copy as assigned.

Course Description: This semester we’ll focus on Italy, wellspring for much of the richest culture that can be truly called European. Thus we’ll travel across several historical periods: the Roman World, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the Baroque. We’ll consider examples taken from five areas of interest: art (painting and sculpture), architecture, literature (poetry, prose, drama, and philosophy), music, and science & technology. We’ll also view some episodes of the documentary series Art In The Western World, as well as select films that dramatize their age effectively.

E-mail / Internet: I make regular use of e-mail and the Internet in this class. Announcements, program changes, and most class materials (including this syllabus) are distributed via the Blackboard e-mail link. Therefore, it is necessary—as necessary as your buying the textbook—that you furnish the university a valid e-mail address and check it at least once a week. I’ll go over materials in class as well, of course, but you may well miss them or receive them late if you’re not routinely on-line. Please note: you must have access to Powerpoint to view my lectures notes on Blackboard. Finally, don’t be concerned if you don’t always receive a reply to any e-mail that you may send to me. I might simply deem it worth a collective rather than an individual response, as the issue raised might concern the whole class.

Workload: Two exams, periodic short quizzes, and two papers (details announced later). Typically, exams are short answer (fill-in blanks & brief essay questions) with some lecture slides to identify. One make-up session for a missed exam is offered the last week of term, with different content and method, so think carefully if you decide to miss a regularly scheduled exam.

Grades: 25% term grade for each exam; 25 % for quizzes; 25 % for assigned papers. TBA: possible extra-credit assignments such as guest lectures and theater outings.

Attendance & class participation: I take attendance regularly, if not always at every class session. Two unexcused absences is the official limit (one for night classes); after that you lose one grade per missed day (A to B, B to C, etc.), at my discretion. I will also use attendance and general class comportment to help me determine where to place someone who’s on the cusp of two grades. Only doctor-certified illness or documented legal concerns constitute excused absences, though if you have a serious problem (i.e., a work conflict), let me know and I’ll try to accommodate you. You can only do better by attending regularly and taking good notes. Furthermore, you’re responsible for you final outcome. It’s also your responsibility to drop the class if you decide not to continue, or you may well be given an F anyway come the end of term.

Much of my lecture material corresponds to the textbook, but I do introduce other ideas as well, so be aware that anything touched upon in my lectures or in the reading is fair game for an exam question. Before each exam, I’ll briefly go over the essential material expected. For all those reasons, you’re encouraged to exchange e-mails and phone numbers with a few peers; you’ll have a way to catch up if you miss class, and -- who knows? -- you may make a few new friends.
**Class conduct:** I do not take class disruptions lightly. You're hear to learn, not play; I'm hear to teach, not baby-sit. While in class, you're expected to conduct yourselves as adult professionals. Informed questions and polite attention make for good participation; eating, talking to your neighbor, or chatting on the phone is obviously disruptive and will not be tolerated. Checking I-phones, Blackberries, etc, is a sign of inattentiveness and will get you dismissed from class and counted absent that day. **Mobiles off! No cellphone use once class is in session; doing so will result in your being obliged to leave and take an absence for that day.** If you have a reason to be waiting for an important call (like word from the hospital or a child coming home from school), let me know in advance; if it's an emergency, go outside discreetly to take care of it. Late arrivals or those who have to leave early, please sit at the back and enter or exit quietly. Drinks and snacks are fine; just don't spill them.

**Cheating & plagiarism:** Don't do it. Cribbing answers or using other people's ideas without giving them proper credit is both unethical and a serious breach of school rules. Depending on the severity of the offense, you'll certainly fail the assignment in question; you may also fail the course. In that case, the Dean will have more than a few sharp words for you as well. The same goes for disrupting an exam in any way.

**Course plan by week.** Have chapter readings done for each Thursday. All assignments and activities subject to change as circumstances dictate.

(1-21) Course introductions – the Humanities.
(1-28) Rome I: Republic & Empire – the Caesars (chapters 1-3).
(2-4) Rome II: Architecture (ch. 5). Viewing: *Art of the Western World: the Classical Ideal.*
(2-11) Rome III: Roman Philosophy & Law, Roman Poetry – Ovid (ch. 7-8).
(2-18) Rome IV: the Satirists (ch. 4, 6).
(3-4) The Middle Ages I: Romanesque & Gothic (ch.9, 11). *Satyricon* papers due.
(3-11) The Middle Ages II: Cathedral Culture & the Universities (ch. 10, 12).
(3-18) The Middle Ages III: Aquinas & Scholasticism (ch. 13).
(4-1) Spring Break; no class.
(4-8) The Middle Ages IV: Literature & the Three Crowns (ch.16-17). *Decameron* papers due.
(4-15) The Middle Ages V: Dante’s *Divine Comedy.* (ch. 14). Midterm.
(4-22) No class. EX CR: Josh Ober lecture (Aztec Athletic Center).
(5-6) The Baroque (ch. 34-35, 36).
(5-20) Final exam (4-6 PM).