

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO, GRAHAM SCHOOL

Art History

THE MEDICI AND PATRONAGE OF RENAISSANCE ART

HUAS75004
Fall 2022

DRAFT SYLLABUS

Class Meetings: Mondays September 26-November 14, 2022

Time: 1:30 pm-4:00 pm

Location: Remote instruction via Zoom (fully synchronous)

Instructor: Dr. Sheryl E. Reiss (sherylreiss8@yahoo.com)

Virtual Office Hours: by appointment (via video conference)



Ottavio Vannini, *Michelangelo presenting Lorenzo the Magnificent with his Sculpture of a Faun*, seventeenth century, fresco, Florence, Palazzo Pitti

COURSE DESCRIPTION

For centuries, the name Medici has been practically synonymous with patronage of art. Between the early fifteenth and later sixteenth centuries, the Medici family of Florence rose from the ranks of the

city's merchant bankers to become virtual rulers of the Florentine republic, cardinals and popes in Rome, and hereditary dukes and grand dukes of Tuscany. Much of the family's power and fame derived from two kinds of patronage: the social and political patronage that first established their faction and then enabled them to maintain control; and the artistic and cultural patronage that was central both to the fashioning of the family's image and to the realization of its princely ambitions. This course will explore Medici patronage of the visual arts ca. 1400-1570. To do so, we will focus on works of art and architecture, on primary source materials, and on scholarship concerned with the Medici and, more broadly, with art patronage in Renaissance Italy. Topics to be considered include the connections between the two types of patronage employed so effectively by generations of the Medici; their relations with artists including Filippo Brunelleschi, Michelozzo, Donatello, Fra Angelico, Fra Filippo Lippi, Benozzo Gozzoli, Bertoldo di Giovanni, Andrea del Verrocchio, Domenico Ghirlandaio, Michelangelo, Raphael, Baccio Bandinelli, Andrea del Sarto, Benvenuto Cellini, Agnolo Bronzino, Giorgio Vasari and others; how other patrons emulated, flattered, and competed with Medici; and the roles of Medici women as patrons and shapers of the visual arts in Medicean Florence and Rome; and the importance of Medici palazzi, villas, and gardens in their political and aesthetic programs.

CLASS MEETINGS

This is primarily a lecture course with PowerPoint presentations. During class meetings we will spend significant time analyzing and discussing images and their socio-historical contexts. Due to the remote format of this course, some adjustments will need to be made for asking questions and discussion.

TEXTBOOKS (available on-line through Amazon.com and other online retailers)

There is no required textbook for this course, but you may wish to purchase one or more of the books recommended below.

RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOKS (available from Amazon.com and for purchase from other online retailers)

- Fabrizio Ricciardelli, *The Medici: The Power of a Dynasty* (Florence, 2022) ISBN-13: 978-8856404678

No pages will be assigned in this book. You may read it along with the members of the Medici family considered in each unit.

- John T. Paoletti and Gary M. Radke, *Art in Renaissance Italy*, 4th edition. (Upper Saddle, N.J., 2011). ISBN 13: 9781842124567 (those of you who have taken the survey of Italian Renaissance art with me may already have this book).

Due to the expense of purchasing this book, which can also be rented from Amazon, it is recommended rather than required. Page numbers will be suggested on the final syllabus but not required. PDFs of the introduction and chapters concerning Medici patronage will be placed on Canvas.

OTHER RECOMMENDED BOOKS (available on-line through Amazon.com and other retailers)

- John Hale, *Florence and the Medici: The Pattern of Control* (London, 2001 [originally published 1977]).
- Adrian W. B. Randolph, *Engaging Symbols: Gender, Politics, and Public Art in Fifteenth-Century Florence*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002.
- Natalie Tomas, *The Medici Women* (Aldershot, UK and Burlington, VT, 2002).
- Mary Hollingsworth, *The Medici* (London, 2017).
- Allie Terry-Fritsch, *Somaesthetic Experience and the Viewer in Medicean Florence: Renaissance Art and Political Persuasion, 1459-1580* (Amsterdam: 2020).
- *The Medici: Portraits and Politics 1512-1570*, exh. cat., Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, ed. Keith Christiansen and Carlo Falciani (London and New Haven, 2021).
- Bruce L. Edelstein, *Eleonora di Toledo and the Creation of the Boboli Gardens* (Florence and Livorno, 2022).

OTHER BOOKS OF INTEREST

- Christopher Hibbert, *The House of Medici: Its Rise and Fall* (New York, 1974).
- Gene A. Brucker, *Florence, the Golden Age, 1138-1737* (New York, 1984).
- A. Richard Turner, *Renaissance Florence: The Invention of a New Art* (London and New York, 1997).
- John M. Najemy, *A History of Florence, 1200– 1575* (Chichester, UK, 2008)
- Fabrizio Ricciardelli, *A Short History of Florence* (Florence, 2020).

READING ASSIGNMENTS

For each unit of the course, required readings in PDF format will be available on Canvas in the folder Files/Readings. Relevant pages in Ricciardelli and in Paoletti and Radke will also be recommended for those who purchase or rent the book. For each unit other readings will be recommended that will be provided as PDFs. These will be listed on the final syllabus. There is no obligation to read the recommended readings.

ADDITIONAL SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS AND EXHIBITION CATALOGUES

For those participants who wish to read in greater depth about topics covered in class meetings, recommended PDFs of more challenging scholarly articles will be available from the instructor. There is no obligation to read these supplemental readings. PDFs of open-source exhibition catalogues will also be available on Canvas.

VIDEOS

Videos on artistic techniques and on some of the works of art discussed in this course may be found through the Khan Academy and on the websites in which the objects are housed. Links to recommended videos will be provided in the PowerPoint presentations.

COURSE WEB SITE ON CANVAS, OUTLINES, AND ILLUSTRATIONS OF WORKS DISCUSSED IN CLASS

The Canvas web site will contain links to information including this syllabus; reading assignments and readings; and outlines listing works of art, terms, and names along with occasional announcements.

Outlines will be posted on the Canvas course website prior to each class meeting. Please do bear in mind the following about these outlines, which are provided for your convenience:

- They are not absolutely comprehensive -- they are provided so that you will have basic information about most of the things I will be presenting and names and terms in one place. I often make adjustments to the PowerPoints after posting the outlines.
- Because they are arranged by medium and artist, the order is not always the same as in the PowerPoints.
- Each outline will roll over into the following week.
- Occasionally works of art/architecture and terms will appear on more than one outline.

I will place my PowerPoint presentations on the Canvas course website after each lecture so that you may consult the images.

DISCUSSIONS

Substantive questions relevant to the material covered in lectures are always welcome, but due to the remote format of this course, please hold your questions until the designated discussion periods. **Please note that I do not see questions placed in Chat until after the class meeting.**

DIFFICULT CONTENT

Please be aware that this course includes some material that may prove difficult for certain students. Some images and/or texts may include nudity, sexually explicit content, and/or violence. Please consult me before or during the first week of class if you believe that such images and/or texts might be troubling to you.

RECORDING OF CLASS MEETINGS

Please be aware that per Graham School policy, class meetings will be recorded to be made available to participants in this course. These recordings will be available on Canvas for review and for participants who have to miss class meetings. They may not be downloaded or shared.

COURTESY

Class meetings on Mondays will begin promptly at 1:30 p.m., Chicago time. I will open the Zoom space five to ten minutes before that time. Please do everything you can to minimize distractions during our synchronous class sessions such as eating and getting up and down if your camera is on. Please silence all phones and close your browser and social media pages. During discussions, please try not to interrupt your fellow students when they are speaking. And please dress as you would in an in-person classroom setting.

CURRENT EXHIBITIONS AND MUSEUM VISIT

During the time of this seminar an extraordinary exhibition devoted to Donatello and his world (previously in Florence at Palazzo Strozzi and the Museo Nazionale del Bargello and subsequently traveling to the Victoria & Albert Museum in London) will be on view at the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Gemäldegalerie from September 2, 2022 to January 8, 2023. Additional exhibitions of interest on will be listed on the final syllabus posted a week before the first class meeting.

If the health situation and University of Chicago guidelines permit in-person museum visits I will schedule a visit or two to the Art Institute of Chicago to look at works of art with Medici connections. Dates will be discussed in class.

LECTURE AND DISCUSSION TOPICS

Lecture topics are tentative and may involve part of a lecture, a full lecture, or more than one lecture

UNIT 1: INTRODUCTION (Weeks 1-2)

- Renaissance Art Patronage
- The Origins of the Medici

Required reading: Sheryl E. Reiss, “A Taxonomy of Art Patronage in Renaissance Italy,” pp. 23-39 (**PDF on Canvas**); Paoletti and Radke, *Art in Renaissance Italy*, 4th edition, Introduction, 12-45 (**PDF on Canvas**)

Recommended reading: Contact instructor and/or see final syllabus

UNIT 2: THE EARLY MEDICI (Weeks 2-4)

- Cosimo il Vecchio, *Pater Patriae*
- Piero the Gouty and Lucrezia Tornabuoni

Required reading: Paoletti and Radke, *Art in Renaissance Italy*, 4th edition, chap. 11, 249-60 (**PDF on Canvas**); Ernst Gombrich, “The Early Medici as Patrons of Art,” pp. 35-57 (**PDF on Canvas**); John Paoletti, “Strategies and Structures of Medici Artistic Patronage in the 15th Century,” in *The Early Medici and their Artists*, ed. F. Ames-Lewis, London, 1995, 19-36 (**PDF on Canvas**); Domenico Veneziano’s Letter to Piero di Cosimo de’ Medici and Benozzo Gozzoli’s Patron Asks for Revisions in his Work in Creighton E. Gilbert, *Italian Art 1400-1500*, 4-5; 6-9 (**PDFs on Canvas**);

Recommended reading: Contact instructor and/or see final syllabus

UNIT 3: THE LAURENTIAN GOLDEN AGE AND ITS AFTERMATH (Weeks 4-6)

- Lorenzo and Giuliano, called the Magnifici

- Savonarola
- Exile and return
- Piero the Unfortunate and Alfonsina Orsini, de' Medici

Required reading: Paoletti and Radke, *Art in Renaissance Italy*, 4th edition, chap. 11, 268-69, 273-75, 277-85 (**PDF on Canvas**); F.W. Kent, *Lorenzo de' Medici and the Art of Magnificence*, pp. 1-10 (**PDF on Canvas**); Patricia Rubin, "Vasari, Lorenzo, and the Myth of Magnificence," in *Lorenzo il Magnifico e il suo mondo*, ed. E. Garfagnini, Florence, 1994, pp. 427-441 (**PDF on Canvas**); Sheryl E. Reiss, "Widow, Mother, Patron of Art: Alfonsina Orsini de' Medici," in *Beyond Isabella: Secular Women Patrons of Art in Renaissance Italy* (2001), 125-40 (**PDF on Canvas**);

Recommended reading: Contact instructor and/or see final syllabus

UNIT 4: THE MEDICI POPES AND THE BEGINNINGS OF THE PRINCIPATE (Weeks 6-7)

- Leo X and Clement VII
- Giuliano and Lorenzo the Younger
- The Medici Bastards Cardinal Ippolito and Duke Alessandro de' Medici

Required reading: Paoletti and Radke, *Art in Renaissance Italy*, 4th edition, 415-23 and 424, 426-31, 433-38 (**PDF on Canvas**); John Shearman, "The Florentine *entrata* of Pope Leo X," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* (1975): 136-58 (**PDF on Canvas**); Sheryl E. Reiss, "A Word-Portrait of a Medici Maecenas: Giulio de' Medici (Pope Clement VII) as Patron of Art" in *Sebastiano del Piombo and Michelangelo: The Mirror and the Compass* ed. Matthias Wivel (Turnhout, 2021), 75-94 (**PDF on Canvas**).

Recommended reading: Contact instructor and/or see final syllabus

UNIT 5: FROM DUCHY TO GRAND DUCHY (Weeks 7 and 8)

- Cosimo I and Eleonora di Toledo
- Grand Dukes Francesco I and Ferdinando I

Required reading: Paoletti and Radke, *Art in Renaissance Italy*, 4th edition, chap. 23, "Florence under Cosimo I" (**PDF on Canvas**); Sefy Hendler, "Cosimo and the Politics of Culture: Reinventing Florence as Cultural Capital," in 207-10 (**PDF on Canvas**); Bruce L. Edelstein, "Bronzino in the Service of Eleonora di Toledo and Cosimo I de' Medici: Conjugal Patronage and the Painter-Courtier," in Reiss and Wilkins, *Beyond Isabella*, 225-40 (**PDF on Canvas**); Yael Even, "The Loggia dei Lanzi: A Showcase of Female Subjugation" in *The Expanding Discourse: Feminism and Art History* (New York, 1992), 126-135 (**PDF on Canvas**).

Recommended reading: Contact instructor and/or see final syllabus

Accessing remote courses

Remote courses are taught through our Canvas platform. Approximately two weeks before your class begins, we will add you to your canvas site using the email address you provided at the time of registration. An invitation will then be sent to that email. Click the “Get Started” button in the email to begin the Canvas login process. For step-by-step instructions, please visit <https://grahamschool.uchicago.edu/academic-programs/online/learning-resources/liberal-arts>. Once you’ve created your Canvas account, you can access any Graham School canvas course for which you are registered at: <https://canvas.uchicago.edu>.

Accessibility information

Student Disability Services (SDS) works to provide resources, support and accommodations for all students with disabilities and works to remove physical and attitudinal barriers, which may prevent their full participation in the University community. Students that would like to request accommodations should contact SDS in advance of the first class session at 773.702.6000 or disabilities@uchicago.edu.

UChicago CARES Statement:

The University and its faculty are committed to creating a safer and more inclusive learning environment for all students. At the University, all faculty, staff, graduate student instructors, and teaching assistants are considered “Individuals with Reporting Responsibilities” and are required to let the University’s Title IX Coordinator know about any disclosures they receive from students about experiences of sexual misconduct (including sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, and sexual harassment). This includes disclosures of experiences that happened before their time at the University. This is to ensure that all students who have experienced sexual misconduct receive support, options, and information about their rights and resources. Students are not obligated to respond to this outreach, and this will not generate a report to law enforcement. For more information, please see [this handout for students](#) as well as the [University’s Policy on Harassment, Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct](#) and [Policy on Title IX Sexual Harassment](#). You can also reach out directly for services and support from the [Office for Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Support](#) by emailing titleix@uchicago.edu.

If you, or another student you know, wishes to speak to a confidential resource who does not have this reporting responsibility, please contact the Sexual Assault Dean on Call through the UChicago Safe App or at 773.834-HELP.

Questions? Contact Zoë Eisenman at zme1@uchicago.edu.