"What a piece of work is a man, how noble in reason, how infinite in faculties; in form and moving how express and admirable, in action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a god: the beauty of the world, the paragon of animals!"  *Hamlet*, 2.2.300-4.

**Course Objectives**

In this class we will endeavor to challenge ourselves to deeply understand and imagine the world of Renaissance Europe, concentrating on Italy and England, so that we can embrace the ideals and realities of this vibrant and historically significant era and have a fuller understanding of what inspired Hamlet’s remark. We will do so by learning some of the key characteristics, ideas, and ideals of the period through a study of philosophy, political theory, social commentary and practice, as well as visual art, poetry, and drama.

Our learning objectives are to strengthen our analytical and critical thinking, reading, and discussion skills, as well as our ability to write clear, well-argued, responses and essays.

**Course Schedule**

**Week 1**  Jan.  27  Introduction/Introductions

29  Introduction to the Renaissance

**Week 2**  Feb.  3  Pico, *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, 215-254

5  Pico/ “The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe,” on Classes, vii-xxvi.
   De Pizan, *Treasure of the City of Ladies*, 1-96; 109-117; 127-50; Conclusion, 167.

**Week 3**  10  *Treasure*

12  *Treasure*

**Week 4**  17  *Treasure/ Courtier – Assignment below* *

19  *Courtier*
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<th>Week</th>
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<td>Week 5</td>
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<td>Week 8</td>
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<td>Week 9</td>
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<td><em>Vasari and into Renaissance art</em>**</td>
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<td><em><strong>Essay Due</strong></em></td>
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<td>Week 15</td>
<td>May 5</td>
<td><em>Othello</em></td>
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**Stampa reading assignment: Poems--
1,2,3,7,8,17,26,41,43,56,87,91,102,106,126,150,166,179,192,209,213,214,221,224,230, 233,241,283,298,307,308, 311

**Visit to the Metropolitan Museum of Art: Friday morning, March 27, Time TBA

**Required Texts:**

Christine De Pizan, *The Treasure of the City of Ladies* (Penguin)  
Castiglione, *The Courtier* (Penguin)  
Gaspara Stampa, *Selected Poems* (Italica Press)  
Shakespeare, *Merchant of Venice* (Pelican)  
Shakespeare, *Othello* (Pelican)  
Selections from Vasari’s *Lives of the Artists*,  
Petrarch, Selected Poems

For all our readings and discussions, be looking for parallels with our contemporary time. I encourage you all to keep up with news and issues by reading The New York Times, or getting information about our culture and politics from a reliable source.

**Requirements**

**Readings:**

Read each assignment in full by the first day we begin to discuss it. Please always come to class with the book in hand.

**Responses:**

For each new reading write a one to two-page response with five (5) extended comments in five (5) short paragraphs. The one exception is when reading *The Courtier*, please write a response with 8 short comments—2 for each book.

It is necessary that you follow this format of 5 separate ideas from each text that inspired, interested, or puzzled you. Each response will look like a collection of five paragraphs. The
responses must cover the entire reading or I cannot accept them.

These are to be typed and handed in on the very first day we begin to read the book.

The ideal way to write the response is to read the books on your own and write down your own observations, without consulting outside sources. The responses are a way to engage with the text so that you are prepared for our discussions. They are not a test. However, if you consult any outside sources while preparing your responses, you must cite them as you would in a paper.

Essays:
Write two critical essays on a topic of your choice, five pages in length, double-spaced and typed. All papers must be about the books we are reading this term and focused on the Renaissance. Two weeks before the paper is due, we will begin to discuss topics. A week before the paper is due, you will hand in a one-sentence description of your topic or at least have spoken to me by the time topics are due. Topics due: March 5 and April 21.

You may use outside sources if you wish, but you must be scrupulous in documenting the sources, having footnotes and a bibliography. (See below). If you choose to do research, you must use valid ACADEMIC sources such as Project Muse or JSTOR to find articles on the subject of your interest. Of course, the Library is filled with books and I encourage you to use that resource.

If you choose to revise your essay, or I have suggested you do so, you have only two weeks to hand in the revision. In order for the grade to improve, the essay must have been significantly revised and improved in a significant manner for the grade to change. Consult instructions about revision on Classes.

Please use gender neutral terms like “humans,” “humankind,” “people” in your essays and avoid “man,” and “mankind.”

How-To Guide Book Renaissance Style
After reading Pico, de Pizan, Castiglione, and Machiavelli, you will work in small groups to design a guidebook for our modern times based on the advice of our four authors. Each group will write up a report discussing the main ideas of your guidebook, and how you came upon these ideas. These are due on March 24. We will have time in class for each group to present their projects.

Renaissance Discussion:
On March 10 we will have a discussion modeled on the format in Castiglione, based on a
topic that the class mutually chooses and agrees on.

**Class Participation:** Class discussion is crucial to the class and a major part of the final grade.

**Museum:** Visit the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Friday morning, March 27

**Documentation**

With all your work, you must be **scrupulous** about documenting all your sources—this means any **research conducted for papers or for responses**. Please consult a proper guide for proper documentation form. You need to indicate and document correctly the use of anyone else’s **ideas, words, phrases**. Complete honesty with regard to the presentation of your work is crucial. Using other people’s ideas without proper citation is not only an illegal, foolish and dishonest action, it also violates the bond we all form as members of this class. The following is Gallatin’s statement on academic integrity.

**Gallatin Academic Integrity Statement**

**Academic Integrity**

As a Gallatin student you belong to an interdisciplinary community of artists and scholars who value honest and open intellectual inquiry. This relationship depends on mutual respect, responsibility, and integrity. Failure to uphold these values will be subject to severe sanction, which may include dismissal from the University. Examples of behaviors that compromise the academic integrity of the Gallatin School include plagiarism, illicit collaboration, doubling or recycling coursework, and cheating. Please consult the Gallatin Bulletin or Gallatin website ([www.gallatin.nyu.edu/academics/policies/policy/integrity.html](http://www.gallatin.nyu.edu/academics/policies/policy/integrity.html)) for a full description of the academic integrity policy.

**Grades**

Although only the essays receive formal grades, the responses, class participation, and the group projects all constitute the final grade. Remember **all the work of the semester must be completed in order to receive a grade**. The two essays make up 60% of the grade; written responses, class participation, and guidebooks make up the other 40%.

**Cell Phones and Computers**

Absolutely no cell phones in class—please turn them off before you come in. And please no computers in class. However, if you have a special need of any kind, please do talk to me first and we can work out an accommodation.

**Attendance**

Attendance is a very important part of the class. More than 2 absences can endanger your grade. Please talk with me as soon as a problem arises.
Please always come on time and do not leave early.

**Disabilities**
If you have a disability of any kind, and need support, please contact The Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Students with Disabilities, and please do let me know how best I can help you.

**Learning Community**
If you are having trouble during the term--with attendance, the material, or anything else related to the course--never hesitate to speak with me so that I can help you. We can always work out whatever issue you might have.

Finally, and most importantly, I conceive of the classroom as a learning community in which students are teachers and teachers are students. Therefore, we learn from each other in a spirit of mutual respect and love of the material.

I look forward to a very enjoyable semester together and having a great deal of fun.