

Syllabus for HIST 12203

The Italian Renaissance: Dante, Machiavelli and the Wars of Popes and Kings
CLCV 22216, ITAL 16000 RLST 22203 KNOW 12203 SIGN 26034 RENS 12203 MDVL 12203

Dr. Ada Palmer

adapalmer@uchicago.edu

Spring 2022, Stuart 105 + Rockefeller Chapel

Office: Social Sciences 222 or Zoom

Class: Mon/Weds 1:30-2:50 PM

Student Hours (Office Hours): M/W after class

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Florence, Rome, and the Italian city-states in the age of plagues and cathedrals, Dante and Machiavelli, Medici and Borgia (1250–1600), with a focus on literature and primary sources, as well as the rediscovery of lost texts and technologies of antiquity, and the place of Church and in Renaissance culture. We will consider such topics as humanism, patronage, cultural immersion, dynastic and papal politics, corruption, assassination, rivalry, art, music, magic, censorship, religion, education, rare books and manuscripts, science, heresy, reform, and the roots of the Reformation. Writing assignments focus on higher level writing skills and biographical research, with a creative writing component. Non-History majors welcome.

REQUIREMENTS & GRADING

1. **Class Participation OR class responses (25%)** The teaching assistants will take note of which students speak up in class, asking questions or supplying comments. Students who do so will receive credit for class participation for that particular class. If you don't have a chance to participate in any given class, or if you prefer to listen rather than to speak, you may instead write a single paragraph (one double-spaced page maximum) of comments expressing your views on the discussion that occurred in the previous class and send it to your TA by email before the next class; this will give you full credit exactly the same as speaking in class. There are twelve normal class sessions (i.e. excluding the papal election sessions) and you should aim to either participate in discussion or turn in a written response at half the classes, i.e. six times during the quarter. If you do it more often, great! But six total is enough for full credit. If you are not certain whether you have done enough, ask your TA by e-mail and they will tell you how many you've done. *Note: attendance will not be taken except at the papal election simulation (see below); there is no attendance component of the grade; you know your obligations best so I trust you to make your own choices about when to attend or not. At the election, however, missing it affects everyone else, so we will check up on everyone to make sure we have a substitute for you if you need to miss a day.*
2. **Nine short (three page double-spaced) writing assignments: (45%)**
 - a. Ficino/Pico/Poliziano/Castiglione/Lorenzo Letter (week 3) 5%
 - b. Five Papal Election Letters 1 (weeks 4-6) 5% each
 - c. Papal Election Personal Reaction (week 7) 5%
 - d. Machiavelli Letter (week 8) 5%
 - e. Dante (week 9) 5%
3. **Creative project (20%)** Explained in full later in this syllabus, for this project you will recreate or perform something related to the Renaissance, i.e. sew a garment, construct an astrolabe, perform a scene from a period play, translate a poem, write a poem, replicate an alchemy experiment, paint a painting with period materials, etc. Projects must be accompanied by a five page (double-spaced) write-up explaining your work and research,

- with footnotes and bibliography. Project should be equivalent in difficulty to a twelve-page research paper. If you prefer, you may choose instead to write a twelve-page research paper on a topic related to the Renaissance.
4. **Final Take-Home Essay Exam (10%)** due by e-mail by the end of exam period (i.e. it must be in my inbox when I get up at 7 AM on the day after the last day of exam period). The exam questions appear toward the end of this syllabus.
 5. **Optional Extra Credit Assignments, A MAXIMUM OF THREE, (+3% each)**

See later in the syllabus for customized alternate assignments for students who read Latin or Italian, and students from the Classics and Italian departments.

SPECIAL ACTIVITY: PAPAL ELECTION SIMULATION

In weeks 4, 5, and 6 we will hold an in-class simulation of a papal election. Each student will play a different participant in the election, each with unique resources and goals: powerful cardinals vying for the throne; other cardinals leveraging their votes to forward religious, political and personal agendas; the guard, chaplain, vote-counters, treasurers and secretaries who help the election run; and World Monarchs trying to influence the election from the outside. Characters will be assigned based on an online survey, and students will write assignments from the perspective of their characters. All informational materials for the simulation will be supplied by the instructor; no research necessary.

The simulation's main sessions will take place during class, but much of the simulation involves characters communicating and meeting with their allies between sessions, to plan and negotiate. Some communication will be text-based asynchronous conversation in the Discord forums. Live meetings with allies will be self-scheduled, and you can hold them in any way you like (in-person, Zoom, etc.) but you are encouraged to hold them on the class Discord channel (a Zoom-like voice/video chat system) because that makes it easy for orchestrators to join and help you. The characters in the simulation vary a lot in how many meetings they need to have between sessions: some characters urgently need to have a lot of meetings with a lot of allies to accomplish their goals, while others have goals which can mostly be accomplished in class with fewer meetings. For example, there are many French cardinals and they must meet often with each other and their king to plan a coherent strategy, while there is only one cardinal from Portugal who thus has far fewer people he needs to communicate with, and can mostly do it using text chat. The election casting survey will ask many questions about what kind of experience you want in the simulation, including how much out-of-class time you want to put into the simulation. For those who have lighter schedules, you can choose more time-consuming characters and enjoy the intensity of having lots of high-stakes meetings, while for those with lots of deadlines, jobs etc. we have fun characters designed to be exciting with minimal out-of-class time investment, to match each person's needs.

LANGUAGES ACROSS THE CURRICULUM OPTION:

If we have five or more interested students, then this course will have an LxC section, in which students who are interested will have extra small-group meetings with a special language TA to give you supplementary language training focused on learning to use your language skills to do

historical research and read or translate pre-modern texts non-English languages, and. This optional section will give you the opportunity to get special training and mentorship in your target language, and help doing your final project using sources in the target language (or writing something in that language). Contact the instructor to alert us if you are interested. All languages are welcome and all skill levels are welcome, from beginner to native speaker, so long as you are interested in learning about how to work with Renaissance-era versions of languages. The workload for this option is self-directed, so you can read a lot or just a paragraph each week, as you prefer. The LxC section usually stops meeting during the two main weeks of the election.

FORMAT FOR SUBMITTING ASSIGNMENTS:

With the exception of physical objects created for creative final projects, all assignments will be submitted electronically, by emailing them to your TA (and sometimes to the instructor as well). Files should be in 12 point Times New Roman or another similarly-sized serif font (no sans-serif, please) with standard one-inch margins. Submitting assignments in .doc or .docx format is preferred, or .txt, though PDF is acceptable *except for papal election letters*, which will have special instructions handed out as the election approaches. Please avoid submitting Google Doc files directly—download them as .docx format and email them instead.

COVID AND TEACHING FORMAT: IN-PERSON WITH ONLINE BACKUP

This course will run in-person, but since the instructor is immunocompromised we need to be prepared to switch briefly to online classes if the instructor becomes ill in a way which requires quarantine. Hopefully there will be no remote phase, but if there is it will be conducted via Zoom. I want to give you the best possible experience, and that could mean saving my strength in some parts of the course to make sure I'm well enough for the rest. Many thanks or your understanding.

Also, while the university no longer requires masking in classrooms, as a personal favor I request that all of you to kindly mask during all indoor activities, and that you do your best to have either N95, KN95, N94, or respirator masks, because it really makes a difference. Thank you very much for your understanding and support with my high-risk situation! In spring when it is warm enough we will meet outside.

ESSENTIAL SOFTWARE

The course will use two or three different online tools. I know that's a lot, but when you want to do something right you want to use the best tools. When you are sure you are taking the course, please sign up for any for which you don't already have an account:

- **Zoom:** I'm assuming you already know from past courses but [here's the portal](#)
- **Discord:** will be used for the ally negotiation parts of the papal election, so join the Papal Election Discord Server ([link to be shared soon](#)). If you aren't familiar with Discord, the link will help you make an account and there will be an intro for new users. If you don't have a Discord account don't bother choosing a userpic; we will use the characters' coats of arms. Once you join the server, post to say who you are so the admins can give you "student" status. You will see many staff on the Discord—these are volunteers (mostly students who took the course in the past) who help me run the papal election event. They can't wait to meet you!

- **OPTIONAL: GatherTown** is a backup option for our election in case we need to go virtual. The U Chicago virtual GatherTown campus is open to anyone, and you can use it for secret meetings during the election if you wish to avoid being spotted on Discord. Simply create a GatherTown account [here](#) (so the system remembers you) then join the virtual campus [here](#).

PANDEMIC & POLITICAL CRISIS ADAPTATION:

No one on Earth is okay right now, not you, not your classmates, not me the instructor, no one. We're exhausted, hurt, scared. We've been waking up every day for two years to find the world still up-side-down and on fire. No one is operating at 100%; our reading is slow, our memories aren't at their best, sleep is hard. Additionally, everyone is extra vulnerable, not just to COVID but to other illnesses since our bodies are worn out, to accidents, to falls and broken bones, to emotional flare-ups, anger, despair, and those too-familiar days when we wake up in the morning and just can't cope. We cannot and should not expect ourselves to produce at the same levels we would in a calm year. The most important thing is to recognize that this is normal, and is happening to everyone. Do not judge yourself and your work compared to the imaginary version of you who isn't living through the current crises; instead remember that all of us are facing the same hardships, and the same fatigue. When you're feeling overwhelmed this spring—and it will happen—just remind yourself that the current situation *actually is overwhelming*, so feeling overwhelmed is 100% normal in this situation. This syllabus has some adjustments to adapt, but the most important adaptation of all is to just remind yourself that and no one in the class (including the TAs and instructor!) is producing more than 70% of the scholarship we might hope for in a normal year, because a lot of our energy is going to producing something even more important: *taking care of ourselves, and of each other*.

- **Please read my handout on Self-Care and Healthy Work Habits**, and take it seriously, doing all you can to live by it. These are methods developed by someone who balances teaching, producing research, publishing novels, performing music, and blogging, all while coping with chronic illness, disability, doing what political activism I can fit in, and still sleeping a healthy amount, exercising, and playing Dungeons & Dragons regularly. *A healthy work-life balance really can be achieved*, and the tips in the file genuinely can help you get more work done in fewer hours and be happier too. Please read it!
- **I will not give extensions this year; I will waive assignments instead.** Extensions just make things harder by doubling your workload right after a crisis, as you struggle to catch up while trying to also do the new assignments from the later weeks. If you can't get something done on time, talk to your TA and we will work out a reduced load or a way to waive that assignment so you have a chance to catch up.
- **I will not take attendance except at the election simulation.** If people miss the election simulation it disrupts things for everyone, so you do need to prioritize that as much as you can (and in a true emergency we'll be ready with a backup, there are at least two such emergencies every year). For the rest of the class, attendance will not be tracked. You do need to either speak in class a certain number of times or turn in a certain quota of discussion reactions (see above) but attendance itself is up to you; if you have unreasonable midterms for another course, or a friend who really needs you, or one of those days where you just can't cope, or a friend's rock band is debuting, you are mature

adults and I trust you to make the judgment about priorities. I'll do my best to make class recordings available, and to help hook you up with classmates to help catch up.

- **If your other courses give unreasonable assignments, let your TA know.** Some courses at this university have adapted poorly to the crisis (to online teaching especially) and sometimes give combinations of assignments which are actually impossible. I have in the past looked at a colleague's syllabus and calculated that they assigned 43 hours of work in a 48 hour period. If one of your other courses assigns something truly ridiculous, let your TA know, and we will do what we can to move or waive assignments. For graduating seniors, some flexibility with due dates around the thesis deadline period is already built into the syllabus for you.
- **If you have a major crisis during this quarter, let us know and we will adapt the course for you**, up to and including the possibility of waiving all remaining assignments if need be. If a loved one falls ill and you suddenly need to be a caregiver; if you get seriously ill or experience long COVID; if there is a coup or war in your home country and you need to concentrate on opposing authoritarianism or keeping loved-ones safe, if something gets broken, whether a broken limb or your ability to cope, do what you need to, and we'll make it work. In days of true crisis, we sometimes need to be human beings first and scholars second, and that is 100% okay.

RECOMMENDED TEXTS TO PURCHASE:

You don't need to buy books; all readings are on Canvas in PDF or web format. Since reading on screens can be tiring, you may wish to buy a few books, available at Seminary Co-Op Bookstore. If you can afford full price, please support independent bookstores (& avoid Amazon lying to you about how quickly books will arrive!), but if the few dollars' discount from you get from Amazon really makes a difference then there's no shame in resorting to Amazon. Physical books are reserve in Regenstein. We are reading all of *The Prince*, for rest we are reading excerpts.

Boccaccio, *Decameron*. Any edition is fine, but if you're having trouble choosing I recommend the W.A. Rebhorn translation (Norton), 0393350266 (because it's cheap).

Dante, *Inferno*. The John Ciardi translation is required unless you are reading in Italian. Why? It has the best and clearest notes for those reading Dante for the first time. Also Ciardi makes the funny bits actually funny. Many editions of his translation exist. The cheapest is usually:

Inferno, Ciardi Translation (Signet Classics, 2001) 0451527984

Or it's only a few dollars more to get all 3 books of *Commedia* not just *Inferno*:

The Divine Comedy, Ciardi translation (NAL Trade, 2003) 0451208633

If you're planning to read it in Italian, see the notes on Italian versions below.

Machiavelli, *Machiavelli and His Friends* (English; University of Illinois Press) 087580599X.

We are reading the introductions and letters 3, 22, 25, 54, 70, 78, 90-92, 107, 110, 112, 115, 121, 166-9, 178, 203, 211-238, 269-274, 278, 305, 328, 332. See also the guide to the letters, included in syllabus.

Machiavelli, *The Prince*. Any edition is just fine, but if you don't have it already I recommend: *The Prince* (Hackett) ed. David Wootton, 0872203174

Or for only a couple extra dollars to get this great collection, by the same editor: *Machiavelli, Selected Political Writings* (Hackett) ed. David Wootton, 087220247X

OPTIONAL EXTRA TEXT recommended for Renaissance or Medieval Studies, History, or Italian language students, and all who enjoy racy historical tales of necromancy & assassins:
Benvenuto Cellini, *My Life* (Autobiography). Recommended: Oxford, 0199555311

- **Question:** I have a different version of one of these books. Can I use it instead?
- **Answer:** Yes EXCEPT that I strongly recommend the John Ciardi translation of Dante.
- **Question:** These books are free on my e-reader. Can I use the free version?
- **Answer:** For texts in Italian and Latin yes, but the free English e-books are usually 100-year-old translations, outdated, and sometimes difficult to understand, so it can be worth the ~\$6 to have a new one (whether print or e-book).

EXTRA TEXTS FOR STUDENTS TAKING THIS AS AN ITALIAN COURSE:

Boccaccio, *Decameron*. Any Italian version is acceptable.

Machiavelli, *Il Principe*. JiaHu Bilingual edition, 1909669059 (or any Italian edition).

Dante, *Inferno*. Any edition w/ Italian is fine but avoid the Mandelbaum, it's dry and the funny bits aren't funny. The notes in the Ciardi are helpful even if you read Italian.

Recommended versions:

Inferno, facing page Pinsky Translation 0374525315

If you're reading Italian and want to go super in-depth then you may prefer to invest in the Durling Martinez whopper commentary edition:

Inferno, Durling Martinez, Oxford University Press 0195087445

If you're studying Italian literature and expect to read more Dante you may want:

Dante, *Tutte le Opere*, I Mammut, 8881833328

Optional: Benvenuto Cellini, *La Vita* (Autobiography). Any Italian version.

E-RESERVES: (found in the "Modules" section of CANVAS)

Draft Book: *Why Renaissance*. This is the draft of a book I am currently writing based on this course, turning my lectures into a more polished form. It will appear in two versions on Modules—at the top you will find a short one with only the parts we are reading *before* the papal election; afterward a new Module appear with a longer draft.

Boccaccio, *Decameron* excerpts.

Castiglione, *The Courtier* (Singleton Translation, 1959 edition), Book 1 pp. 25-54, 70-82;

Book 2 pp. 109-120; Book 3 pp. 205-227, Book 4 pp. 289-325.

Marsilio Ficino, *Meditations on the Soul* (Inner Traditions) 0892816589. Selected letters.

Lorenzo de Medici, from *Lorenzo de' Medici Selected Poems and Prose*, letters pp. 167-181.

Petrarch, *Canzoniere*, poems (Italian and English) 7, 16, 53, 77, 80, 84, 89, 104, 128, 131, 136, 137, 186, 187, 190, 191, 205, 246, 248, 279, 304, 326, 359, 365.

Petrarch, letters, *Familiars* (separate Latin and English files): I.9 (on humanism), II.9 (on Rome and Laura), III.12 (on the active life), III.18 (on books), IV.8 (on the laureate), VIII.7 (on the plague), VIII.9 (violence and friends), XXIV.3 (to Cicero), XXIV.4 (again to Cicero), supplements to Cicero letters (ed. Mario Cosenza); XXIV.12 (to Homer). Latin text in PQ4490.E23 R833 (4 vols) vol. 1 45-48, 90-97, 128-131, 138-142, 174-5; vol. 2. 174-186; vol. 4 225-231, 253-63

Poliziano and Medici letters, integrated PDF file.

Machiavelli letters collection excerpts.

Dante Lecture Transcript (so class can be Q&A).

COURSE SCHEDULE:

Week 1 **March 20 (M):** Introduction: The Renaissance World. (No reading).

Class meets in Stuart 205 this week!

March 22 (W) REMOTE: Welcome to the Great and Terrible Renaissance

Class meets in Stuart 205 this week!

- Reading:
 - Read the preliminary pages of this syllabus (up to this point) carefully all the way through. Really, it's important.
 - *Why Renaissance* draft book, Introduction and Part 1 (through page 35).
 - *Decameron*, Day I Introduction, stories 1, 3, conclusion; Day III stories 4, 7 and 10; Day IV introduction, stories 1-2; Day V story 8; Day VI story 7; Day VIII stories 5, 7; Author's Epilogue.
(Note: **the e-reserve file of Boccaccio contains more stories than are required**, including several that are cut off mid-way; **keep track so you don't spend time on extra sections.**)
 - Petrarch *Canzoniere* #128 "Italia Mia" (included in this syllabus)
- No written assignment due.

Week 2 **March 27 (M) REMOTE:** Desperate Measures: Petrarch, the Birth of Humanism

- Reading:
 - *Why Renaissance* draft book, Part 2 (pages 36-65).
 - Short PDF supplement "Petrarch Background"
 - Petrarch e-reserve letters on life and humanism: *Familiars* I.9 (on humanism), II.9 (on Rome and Laura), III.12 (on the active life), III.18 (on books), IV.8 (on the *laureate*), VIII.7 (on the plague), VIII.9 (on violence and friends), *Familiars* XX.10 (on finding Cicero), XXIV.3 (to Cicero).
 - Optional but recommended for Classics students also read XXIV.4 (again to Cicero), XXIV.12 (to Homer) and XXIV.7 (to Quintilian).
 - Students taking the course for Classics credit are encouraged to read one Petrarch letter (your choice) in Latin (Latin file on e-reserve)
 - Students taking course for Italian credit may skip the letter to Cicero and read as many of the following poems as you can get through in a reasonable time: e-reserve Petrarch, *Canzoniere* poems 7, 16, 53, 77, 80, 84, 89, 104, 131, 136, 137, 186, 187, 190, 191, 205, 246, 248, 279, 304, 326, 359, 365) (file contains more poems than are required.)
- No written assignment due.

March 29 (W) REMOTE: Florentine Architecture Tour and the Rise of the Medici

- Readings on e-reserve:
 1. Poggio, *Two Renaissance Book Hunters*, letters III, IV, XI, XXX, XLIX, LXXX, LXXXI,
 2. Poggio appendix letter of Franciscus Barbarus (separate PDF file)
 3. Ficino, *Meditations on the Soul*, letters 1-4, 6, 11 and 22, 26-27 (pp. 3-21 and 39-48).
- Watch video lecture "History Through Architecture" <= it is linked in Modules and is also available directly in Canvas on the "Panopto Video" tab.

- No written assignment due.

Week 3 **April 3 (M) In Rockefeller Chapel:** Humanism at Court and in Danger

- Reading:
 - *Why Renaissance* draft book, Part 3 (pp 66-88), read the following lives (some are shortened to exclude events in/after 1492, the year of our election):
 - Part 3 Beginning
 - Part 3 #1: Alessandra Strozzi: A Widow Leads Her Family
 - Part 3 #2: Manetto Amantini: a Craftsman Finds a Place to Rise
 - Part 3 #3: Francesco Filelfo: A Scholar Seeks Stability
 - Part 3 #4: Giovanni Battista da Montesecco: an Assassin Fears for His Soul
 - *Optional:* Part 3 #5: Ippolita Maria Sforza: the Princess and the Peace (this retells some of the content of the video lecture, from her point of view; you know the basic facts, and should read only if you want extra details).
 - Part 3 #6: Josquin des Prez: the International Renaissance (Partial)
 - Part 3 #7: Poliziano: Patronage Pays and Repays (Partial)
 - Part 3 #8: Savonarola: Saint or Demon? (Partial)
 - Poliziano and Medici letters (integrated PDF file); and e-reserve Castiglione, *The Courtier*, Book 1 pp. 25-54, 70-82.
- *Written Assignment Due:* Three page (double-spaced) letter, write as if you were Ficino, Pico, Poliziano, Castiglione, or Lorenzo de Medici writing to one of the others. Or you may write two shorter letters, one responding to the other.
 - *If you are a senior writing a thesis, and your thesis due date is very close to this, you may turn this letter in over the weekend i.e. April 16-17, simply let your TA know you are making use of the thesis extension.*
- ELECTION PREPARATION: **create a Discord account** (unless you have one already) and join the Papal Election Discord Server by a link to be shared soon.

April 5 (W) In Rockefeller Chapel: PAPAL ELECTION PREPARATION

- Readings e-reserve:
 1. Castiglione, *The Courtier*, Book 2 pp. 109-120;
 2. *Lorenzo de' Medici* letters 1-7
 3. Marsilio Ficino *Meditations on the Soul* letter 95 (to Pope Sixtus IV after the Pazzi Conspiracy)
- Read all papal election documents carefully.
- No written assignment due.

Week 4 **April 10 (M) In Rockefeller Chapel:** PAPAL ELECTION I

- Reading: Pre-election Letter Supplement PDF: two letters on the election of the previous pope, Innocent VIII, showing how overtly papal election bribery was discussed in the period.
 - Optional Reading: Benvenuto Cellini, *My Life*, Book 1 sections 1-41 (pp. 1-74). Cellini was a goldsmith-sculptor-artist-sniper-assassin-mercenary-necromancer, who lived a bit later than the moment of this election, experiencing its aftermath. We will not discuss the Cellini in class, but his rollicking account of Renaissance adventures, and especially his account of how courtiers, Cardinals, and others interacted is very fun, and can be useful

for you during the election. In total I recommend reading pp. 1-298 of the Cellini spaced out over 2 weeks, but again it's 100% optional.

- No written assignment due, but see the letter due Wednesday which you may want to complete right after class on Monday to get a timely reply.

April 12 (W) In Rockefeller: PAPAL ELECTION II

- No required reading. If doing the optional Cellini, *My Life*, reading, recommend you read up to Book 1 section 89 (p. 153).
- *Written Assignment due: Write a letter as your character* in the election (three double-spaced pages min.), writing about the first day, your experiences, fears, hopes, goals. The addressee must be a specific person: a relative, friend, courtier, teacher, instructions to a subordinate or reports for a superior. It could be addressed to another student's character, to a non-player character mentioned in your character sheet, or it could be a letter to posterity, or an ancient. If you write to a player, the letter will be delivered to that person and will advance your negotiations. If you write to a non-player-character you *will receive a reply* which will affect the game—the addressee may send you valuable information, resources, or take action based on your letter. Letters must be turned in by e-mail, and the sooner you send them in to the sooner and better a reply you will receive. **If you write right after class and send it by 6 pm** you will get a guaranteed reply at or before Wednesday's class, otherwise your reply may come later. See the election deadline handout for details about the timing of replies.

Week 5 April 17 (M) In Rockefeller: PAPAL ELECTION III

- No required reading. If reading the optional Cellini, this is a good time to finish Book 1 (p. 222)
- *Written Assignment due:* Write a second letter (three page minimum) as your character in the election, to the same addressee or to a new one. You will receive a reply, so the sooner you send the letter the better. See the election deadline handout for details about the timing of replies.

April 19 (W) In Rockefeller: PAPAL ELECTION IV

- No required reading. Concentrate on the election.
- *Written Assignment due:* Write a third letter (three page minimum) as your election character, discussing the events of the election.

Week 6 April 24 (M) In Rockefeller: PAPAL ELECTION V

- No required reading. If doing the optional Cellini reading, read Book 2 sections 1 to 53 (pages 223-298) which is where we're stopping.
- *Written Assignment due:* Write a fourth letter (three page minimum) as your character, discussing the events of the election.

April 26 (W) Lawn outside Rockefeller, or (in case of rain) in Rockefeller:

Papal Election Discussion Part 1

- **Required Reading** (very short): first reread the two letters about the election of Sixtus (file name "Letters Pre-election supplement" or "Innocent Election Letters") which you will now understand on a very different level. Then read *Lorenzo de' Medici Selected Poems & Prose*, letter 11 (to his son Giovanni i.e.

“Leo” giving advice before 1492 the papal election), and Ficino *Meditations on the Soul*, letter 5 (Truth writes to Cardinal Riario).

Week 7 **May 1 (M) Lawn outside Rockefeller, or (in case of rain) in Rockefeller:**

Papal Election Discussion 2: the Real Events

- First read the histories of our election written by our planets.
- Then, after reading the histories, read **in the new more complete version of the Why Renaissance draft book which has just appeared in Modules:**
 - **Required:** Lorenzo de Medici: Hero or Villain? (this is an earlier subsection that we skipped in the shortened draft book, look for it within Part 1)
 - **Required:** Part 3 #8: Savonarola: Saint or Demon? (complete)
 - **Required:** Part 3 #9: Alessandra Scala: The Girl of Dreams (complete)
 - *Fully optionally, you may also enjoy:*
 - Part 3 #6: Josquin des Prez: the International Renaissance (complete)
 - Part 3 #7: Poliziano: Patronage Pays and Repays (complete)_
 - Part 3 #10: Raffaello Maffei: A Scholar Fears for His Soul Too (complete)
 - Part 3 #11: Lucrezia Borgia: Princess of Nowhere
- *Written Assignment due:* Write a fifth letter (three page minimum) as your character, discussing the end of the election and its consequences.
- *Second Written Assignment due:* Send your TA a brief, one-paragraph, informal proposal for what you want to do for your creative project. This is so the TA can give advice, and let you know if the project sounds unfeasible.

May 3 (W) Lawn outside Rockefeller, or (in case of rain) in Rockefeller:

Papal Election Discussion 3: the Crisis of Italy

- Reading:
 - Read the following lives in Part 3 in the new more complete version of the Why Renaissance draft book:
 - **Required:** Part 3 #12: Camilla Rucellai: Spirit of the Last Republic
 - *Optionally, you may also enjoy:*
 - Part 3 #13: Michelangelo the Great and the Terrible
 - Part 3 Interlude: Let's Ground Ourselves in Time
 - Part 3 #14: Julia the Sibyl: A Prophetess in an Age of Science
 - **Required:** Part 3 #15: Machiavelli: S.P.Q.F. (all parts)
 - Then read e-reserve Machiavelli, Letters, read introductions, letters 3, 22, 25, 69, 54, 70, 78, 90-92, 107, 110, 112, 115, 121, 166-9, 178, 203, 211-221 (the second half of the file is for next week). See also the guide to the letters, included in this syllabus.
- *Written Assignment due:* Four page (double-spaced) reaction paper discussing *as yourself, not your character*, your experiences in the papal election, ups and downs, how you feel differently now about history and these characters and events, etc.

Week 8 **May 8 (M) Lawn outside Rockefeller, or (in case of rain) in Rockefeller:**

The Realities of Machiavelli's *Prince*

- Reading:
 - Machiavelli, *The Prince*. (If you read it before, reread it now, thinking about the election)

- *Why Renaissance* draft book, Part III, 15: Machiavelli
- *Written Assignment due:* Send your TA an email update on how your final project is going, including the title and author of four sources (primary or secondary) that you are using for the project.

May 10 (W) *hopefully outside*: Machiavelli's Critique: Did Humanism Fail?

- Reading:
 - *Why Renaissance* draft book, Part IV complete. If the reading this week is a bit too heavy for you, you may skip the sections on atheism (stopping at "The Question at Last" and skipping to "Was Machiavelli a Humanist?")
 - e-reserve Machiavelli, *Letters*, letters 222-238, 269-274, 278, 305, 328, 332. See the guide in this syllabus.
- *Written Assignment due:* Write a letter (three double-spaced pages min.) either (A) as if you are Machiavelli reflecting on the events of *our* election, or (B) as if you are your election character and just read Machiavelli's *Prince*. In the latter case may write to Machiavelli or to any character of your choice.

Week 9 **May 15 (M) *Lawn outside Rockefeller, or (in case of rain) in Rockefeller:***

Dante: A Special Place in Hell for Wicked Popes

- *Some in-class presentations of senior final projects may happen today.*
- Reading:
 - Dante lecture transcript (in PDF and DOC on Canvas in "Modules")
 - Dante, *Inferno* 19 Cantos = ½ of the book

Note: Dante wrote more than 150 years before our events of 1492, but now you understand some of the endemic problems of his world enough to appreciate why he singles out particular sins. There are 19 cantos which would be particularly rich to read in the light of our election (roughly half the text), but to avoid giving you too heavy a reading load I have marked some of them optional, to be read only if you're enjoying Dante and have time to read more.

- Required: I-IV (arrival, the neutral, gates of Hell, limbo)
- *Optional:* VIII (wrathful & sullen, Dante judging the damned)
- *Optional:* IX (fallen angels at the gates of the infernal city)
- *Optional:* X (deniers of afterlife, Dante damning even friends)
- Required: XII (violence & murder, not very deep in Dante's Hell)
- *Optional:* XIV (blasphemy; even blaspheming Jove is a sin! Also the "Giant of Crete" an allegory of human history.)
- Required: XV-XVI (sodomites & moneylenders, full of Florentines!)
- Look at the useful map between XVII and XVIII
- Required: XIX (simoniacs & wicked popes)
- *Pure optional fun if you have time:* XXI-XXII the "comedy of the little devils" where we see the demons who torment those guilty of graft (i.e. embezzlement), this is the part where Dante gives the most imagination to his infernal creatures & lets humor leak into what is otherwise a "comedy" only in the happy ending sense. Also, there's boiling pitch, so the devils have *pitchforks*. That's why devils have pitchforks! Pitch!
- Required: XXIII (hypocrites are clerics!)
- Partly Required: XXVI-XXVII (evil councilors, Florence famous in Hell, Odysseus, Guido da Montefeltro, abuse of papal power; if you're rushed,

then just read the first couple lines of XXVI to get the context, then skip ahead to XXVII).

- Required: XXVIII (people who cause schisms and discord)
- Required: XXXII-end (traitors)
- *No written assignment due.*

May 17 (W) Lawn outside Rockefeller, or (in case of rain) in Rockefeller:

Conclusion: Desperate Times.

- *Some in-class presentations of senior final projects will happen today.*
- Read [“On Progress and Historical Change”](#) (blog post essay). Alternately, if you would enjoy it and have time, instead read the expanded version of the same essay which is Part V and the Conclusion of *Why Renaissance*. Before reading the *Why Renaissance* version you will need to go back to Part III and read “Julia the Sibyl” which you may have skipped.
- *Written Assignment due:* Write as Dante and create extra “canto” for *Inferno* (it does not have to be in verse), describing the place in Hell of (A) your papal election character, or (B) one or more other characters from the election, or (C) one or more authors we have read. You are welcome to get into the spirit and be petty and personal as Dante is, and/or to use grand poetic style. *If you have an unreasonable cluster of due dates for other classes this week, you may turn in this assignment as late as Friday without penalty, just let your TA know by email.*

Final Project: Physical items must be presented to the class, either in one of the last two class sessions or at the class party. **The accompanying project write-up must be submitted to your TA by email.** Write-ups can be submitted after midnight, but must be in your TA’s inbox when your TA wakes up at 9 AM on the day after the due date.

- *Due date for graduating seniors:* TBD waiting for registrar to announce grading due date
- *Due date for non-graduating students:* Saturday June 4th (must be in by morning of June 5th)

By tradition, there will be an **optional class party & banquet**, held during reading period or exam week, either outside or at Professor Palmer’s apartment,

FINAL CREATIVE PROJECT

This is a self-designed creative project, which should be of effort roughly equivalent to writing a twelve page research paper. The creative project should involve imitating, creating and/or experiencing something from the Renaissance. Final projects may be done individually or, if you wish, you may collaborate with classmates to do something too ambitious for one person to do alone. You may, for example:

- Translate a short original Renaissance text into English
- Learn and perform a Renaissance piece of music, or a theatrical scene (group)
- Create and experience wearing some items of period Renaissance clothing
- Build a piece of Renaissance technology based on period plans & materials
- Write a piece of fiction, poetry, or music in a Renaissance style
- Create a piece of art using Renaissance methods and materials
- Build a model of a Renaissance building, place, or object
- Cook a period Renaissance meal and bring it in to class to share

If you choose to do a creative project then, in addition to making/performing the thing you must write a five-page (double-spaced) paper explaining what you did and what evidence it was based on (with footnotes and bibliography), and discussing what you learned from the process. Final projects which have a physical or performance component may be presented to the class during the last two sessions of the course, at the optional class party, or by recording a zoom video to email to the class. *If you are taking this course cross-listed from Classics, Italian or another department then your final project should use the skills from your department (i.e. languages).*

We have a class budget for materials for creative projects—if you want to do something which requires buying things (fabric, ingredients, inks etc.) discuss it with the instructor and we can reimburse you, but you must (A) get approval first to make sure it's within budget, *and (B) save the receipts!*

All final project ideas must be submitted to the instructor in Week 7 for approval, but you may e-mail anytime to ask about an idea you have. Students who have an idea for a group project are encouraged to recruit collaborators using the Discord server. Those doing group projects may either submit a single group write-up, or may each submit write-ups individually.

If you prefer, *you may choose to write a twelve page standard research paper* on a topic of your choice related to the Renaissance (a person, a place, an issue) instead.

EXTRA CREDIT ASSIGNMENTS:

Up to three times per quarter (any time before the last class session), you may complete one of these extra credit assignments and receive a bonus equivalent to up to 3% of the course grade.

- **Extra-Credit Assignment 1: Writing “Half and Half Again” (you may do this up to three times):** This self-paced exercise for improving your writing skill is based on exercises used in professional creative writing workshops and journalism training programs in New York City. It is designed to teach you how to improve your writing skills on your own time, which should in turn improve your grades on future writing assignments (in this class and others), not to mention giving you writing skills which will be valuable lifelong. Take a paper, of at least four pages in length, which you have written for a different class (either in college or in High School) and rewrite it to make exactly the same arguments in half as many words. You must hand in both the original paper and the shortened version. For extra challenge (and an extra 4% bonus) wait two weeks, then rewrite the same paper a second time to be one quarter its original length. (If you are interested in further opportunities to work on writing, talk to me.)
- **Extra-Credit Assignment 2: Historical Board Game Evaluation (you may do this up to three times):** Borrow one of Ada Palmer's collection of Italian Renaissance themed board games (or suggest one you have already). Play it (with friends is best, you all get credit) and write a 4-page double-spaced evaluation of how the game uses history, what choices it makes, and how you might modify it to use the history better. This should not be a comment on the game mechanics, but on its use of history, what it includes and excludes, what lessons it teaches or claims it makes about the historical figures involved, what it omits and what assumptions it makes etc.
- **Extra-Credit Assignment 3: Read the whole *Why the Renaissance* draft book, and write a four page double-spaced response paper about it.** This may only be done once since it's unique, and may only be done *after* the election simulation is over, because of spoilers.
- **Extra-Credit Assignment 4: Read a whole nonfiction book** about one of the characters associated with our papal election simulation, **and *either* write a 4-page double-spaced response paper about it *or* use it to make additions to the character's Wikipedia page.** This may only be done *after* the election simulation is over, because of spoilers. You can choose something from our [list of recommended books](#) about many of the figures associated with the election, which are pre-approved; if you suggest a different book it must be approved by the instructor and your TA.

TAKE-HOME FINAL ESSAY EXAM:

Write **only one** of the following four essays. You have unlimited time, open book and open notes, but the essay must be between 1,000 and 1,500 words (4-5 double-spaced pages). Like an in-class exam, you do not need to have a bibliography or footnotes, and you may paraphrase when you discuss authors, no need to quote. Like our earlier written assignments, these do not need to be formal academic papers, they should be freeform and conversational in style.

Essay option 1:

Speaking as yourself, write a letter to your character from the papal election simulation. Your letter may and should be personal, and emotion and strong opinions are welcome. If you were a planet/angel you may instead write to one of your historical protagonists. You may discuss anything you like, but should include some or all of the following: How you feel about the person, how the person is remembered, praise, criticisms, advice. You may include information about the future which you think your historical figure would really want to know or be strongly affected by, things you think would be a consolation to the person, or a shock, and your general opinions on the Renaissance and how it differs from the modern world. Keep in mind the huge gulf of perspective between your Renaissance figure and yourself, and describe future events and issues in ways your Renaissance figure could understand. The best letter will draw broadly on your knowledge of the Renaissance from lecture and readings, and will reflect on how the Renaissance was a different world from ours.

Essay option 2 (recommended but not required for Classics students):

The Renaissance saw itself as a revival of antiquity. Choose a favorite ancient author of yours—Homer, Plato, Sappho, Cicero, Virgil, Ovid, Seneca—and write a letter to that person describing the Renaissance. Explain what happened to his or her work and the works of antiquity in the Middle Ages, how Renaissance scholars labored to bring it back, and what they did with it. Feel free to express strong opinions and emotions.

Essay option 3:

Write a letter addressed to yourself five years from now. In it, discuss what you feel are the most valuable things you learned in this course, things you'll want to remind yourself of after five years pass. You may wish to reflect on systems of power, on historical agency, on who appears to have power in the stories we tell about history, who really has power, the difference between having *power* and having *control*, on how the stories we tell about who has power affects our actions, and on how you hope your future self will be acting on those lessons a few years from now. Thinking of the global and political events of this unique year, you are invited to reflect on how you now think differently about what power you as an individual have to act and make a difference in the face of such forces, and what you would urge your future self to do. You are also invited to talk about what the human interactions in this course taught you about teamwork, self-care, communication, empathy, etc.

Note: While you should not let COVID and current politics crowd history out of the essay, you are welcome to discuss current events—this is about reminding your future self what you learned from this experience, in which world events and the events of our class were inextricably layered. Remember Ercole Bentivoglio urging Machiavelli to write his history since, without a good history of those few years, future generations would never believe how bad it was.

These years feel similar in many ways, but we get to approach them armed with many histories, Machiavelli's among them, and with Machiavelli's revolutionary method of looking at history as a series of examples from which we can learn ways to better react, anticipate, mitigate, resist, recover, and rebuild—assets those who lived through 1492 did not have. It can be hard to think about five years from now when the world is on fire around us, but the crisis of Italy didn't end with the 1492 election, there many stages of aftermath, and with each the stakes got higher, and the ability to organize, resist, mitigate, and rebuild became more important. Of all the miracles that Renaissance sources say they witnessed (angels, visions, ghosts, demons, prophecies) the more I study the period the more the one that really feels like a miracle is that Florence never burned. But it wasn't a miracle, it was teamwork. You protected things too—that shows we *can* wield that human teamwork again. *You* can wield it, just as well as Machivelli did. As students right now your main job is not to fight the fires of today, urgent as they are, your main job is leveling up, learning, gaining the skills (professional and personal) that will make you more powerful and better able to help put out and prevent the fires of tomorrow, when your strength will be greater and your action needed even more than in the fires of today. What do you want to pass on to that future, more powerful version of yourself, reminders of the lessons of this strange spring, and the uniquely overlapped experience of 2020-2023 and 1492?

Essay option 4, only for religious studies majors and minors, optional, not required:

"1. No one can understand Virgil's Bucolics unless he has been a shepherd for five years. No one can understand Virgil's Georgics, unless he has been a farmer for five years. 2. No one can understand Cicero's Letters (or so I teach), unless he has busied himself in the affairs of some prominent state for twenty years. 3. Know that no one can have indulged in the Holy Writers sufficiently, unless he has governed churches for a hundred years with the prophets, such as Elijah and Elisha, John the Baptist, Christ and the apostles. Do not assail this divine Aeneid; nay, rather prostrate revere the ground that it treads. We are beggars: this is true." –Last words of Martin Luther.

You may never hear anyone call Martin Luther a humanist, but, as you can see from his last words, the of Petrarch's call for the study of the classics, and of later humanists who used the classics to understand the divine, had so thoroughly permeated Europe that even Luther was deeply immersed in humanist ideas about the importance of reading original sources (especially, in Luther's case, Scripture). We did not discuss the Reformation directly in this course, but we have looked at its roots in depth, the historical circumstances which shaped and enabled it. Imagine that a friend or relative who did not take this class has just asked you: "Why did the Reformation start in 1517, and not before or after?" Answer this question based on your knowledge of from this class. Good answers will use elements from more than three of our primary source readings, and your experiences from the papal election simulation. Answers that focus on the history of the Reformation itself, Luther, events in Germany, and other content we did not discuss in class will not receive good scores—this essay must draw primarily on course content. In addition to discussing corruption and anticlericalism, you should think about how technological changes, political changes, and intellectual changes such as humanism contributed to the background and education of Luther and the world that was prepared to accept his ideas. Write as if you were just talking to a friend over dinner; no need for a formal essay structure.

VARIANT ASSIGNMENTS FOR STUDENTS STUDYING ITALIAN

These alternate assignments are **mandatory** for students who wish to receive Italian credit.

Readings which should be done in Italian to the best of your ability:

Boccaccio, *Decameron*: read some of the stories (your choice) in Italian.

Petrarch, *Canzoniere* selections should be read in Italian.

Optional reading: Benvenuto Cellini, *La Vita*, read as much in Italian as you can.

Machiavelli, *Il Principe*, read as much in Italian as you can.

Dante, *Inferno*, read as much in Italian as you can.

Readings which should be done in English (Italian/Latin are optional if you prefer them):

Ficino, Castiglione, Machiavelli's *Letters*, Petrarch's *Letters*, Pico's *Oration*.

Writing assignments which should be done in Italian, if you feel you have enough skill:

- Ficino, Pico, Castiglione, Lorenzo letter (week 3) 4%
- Machiavelli and Cellini letter (week 8) 4%
- The Week 9 assignment on Dante is to write an extra canto of the *Inferno* describing the afterlife, either of your papal election character, other characters from the election, or one or more of the authors we read. Attempting to write Dante in Italian is very challenging. Thus, during Week 9, students taking the course for Italian credit may choose to:
 - A) Try to write a Dante-like canto in Italian. A very ambitious undertaking!
 - B) Write a Dante-like story in Italian, without attempting poetry.
 - C) Some mixture, where you tell most of the story in prose but compose a little verse.
- Your final project must involve the use of the Italian language.

VARIANT ASSIGNMENTS FOR STUDENTS WHO READ LATIN

These variant assignments are **optional** but strongly encouraged for students who are studying or have studied Latin, and especially for those taking this course for Classics credit.

Modifications to three of the short writing assignments. If you wish, instead of substituting you may complete both the Latin assignments and the ordinary assignments, **and receive extra credit**.

h. ~~Machiavelli letter~~ (week 8) Substitute Renaissance Latin Assignment 1

i. ~~Dante~~; (week 9) =< Substitute Renaissance Latin Assignment 2

Renaissance Latin Assignment 1: (it is OK to do this in a group with fellow students)

Translate the first “Life of Pythagoras” from “Two samples of Renaissance Latin” (below)

Renaissance Latin Assignment 2: (it is OK to do this in a group with fellow students)

Translate the second “Life of Pythagoras” from “Two samples of Renaissance Latin.”

Addition: Petrarch’s letters (which we are reading in Week 2) and Poliziano’s letters (week 3) are on e-reserve in Latin. You may at any time turn in a translation of about 400 words from one of Petrarch’s letters in lieu of the normal English language writing assignment for any given week, or for extra credit (up to 4% each).

During the papal election, if you want to optional reading, instead of Cellini you may read in Latin as much as you like of *De Viris et Feminis Aetate Nostra Floretibus* by Paolo Giovio, or the *On Human Worth and Excellence* by Manetti. The assignment is to read, not translate, working on the skill of skimming rapidly through Latin for comprehension, rather than wrangling out each sentence to create an English text. You should read with an English translation handy, and after every couple of paragraphs look at the English to test your comprehension.

If you want to do extra Renaissance Latin translation practice, or to try writing a piece of Renaissance-style Latin, talk to the instructor about creating personalized extra-credit assignments.

Petrarch, Canzoniere 128. 'Italia mia...' (My Italy...)

Addressed to the Italian lords hiring German mercenaries for their internecine wars.

My Italy, though words cannot heal
the mortal wounds
so dense, I see on your lovely flesh,
at least I pray that my sighs might bring
some hope to the Tiber and the Arno,
and the Po, that sees me now sad and grave.
Ruler of Heaven, I hope
that the pity that brought You to earth,
will turn you towards your soul-delighting land.
Lord of courtesy, see
such cruel wars for such slight causes:
and hearts, hardened and closed
by proud, fierce Mars,
and open them, Father, soften them, set them
free:
and, whatever I may be, let your Truth
be heard in my speech.

You lords to whose hands Fortune entrusts the
reins
of the beautiful region
for which you seem to show no pity,
what is the purpose of these foreign swords?
Why is our green land
so stained with barbarous blood?
Vain error flatters you:
you see little, and think you see much,
if you look for love or loyalty in venal hearts.
He who has more troops
has more enemies under his command.
O waters gathered
from desert lands
to inundate our sweet fields!
If our own hands
have done it, who can rescue us now?

Nature provided well for our defense,
setting the Alps as a shield
between us and the German madness:
but blind desire, contrary to its own good,
is so ingenious,
that it brings plague to a healthy body.

*Italia mia, benché 'l parlar sia indarno
a le piaghe mortali
che nel bel corpo tuo sí spesse veggio,
piacemi almen che ' miei sospir' sian quali
spera 'l Tevere et l'Arno,
e 'l Po, dove doglioso et grave or seggio.
Rettor del cielo, io cheggio
che la pietà che Ti condusse in terra
Ti volga al Tuo dilecto almo paese.
Vedi, Signor cortese,
di che lievi cagion' che crudel guerra;
e i cor', che 'ndura et serra
Marte superbo et fero,
apri Tu, Padre, e 'ntenerisci et
snoda;
ivi fa che 'l Tuo vero,
qual io mi sia, per la mia lingua s'oda.*

*Voi cui Fortuna à posto in mano il
freno
de le belle contrade,
di che nulla pietà par che vi stringa,
che fan qui tante pellegrine spade?
perché 'l verde terreno
del barbarico sangue si depinga?
Vano error vi lusinga:
poco vedete, et parvi veder molto,
ché 'n cor venale amor cercate o fede.
Qual piú gente possede,
colui è piú da' suoi nemici avvolto.
O diluvio raccolto
di che deserti strani
per inondar i nostri dolci campi!
Se da le proprie mani
questo n'avene, or chi fia che ne scampi?*

*Ben provide Natura al nostro stato
quando de l'Alpi schermo
pose fra noi et la tedesca rabbia;
ma 'l desir cieco, encontra 'l suo ben fermo,
s'è poi tanto ingegnato
ch' al corpo sano a procurato scabbia.*

Now wild beasts
and gentle flocks sleep in one pen
so the gentler always groan:
and this, to add to our grief,
from that race, that lawless people,
of whom, as we read,
Marius so pierced their flank,
that the memory of the deed can never fade,
how thirsty and weary
he no longer drank river water but blood!

I'll say nothing of Caesar
who painted the grass crimson
with their blood, where he raised the sword.
Now it seems, no one knows by what evil star,
heaven hates us:
mercy, oh you who so beset us.
Your warring wills
waste the better part of the world.
For what fault, what justice, through what fate,
do you trouble your poor
neighbours, and persecute those afflicted
by fortune, and scattered, and search
out foreign people and accept them,
they who spill blood and sell their souls for
money?
I speak to tell the truth,
not in hatred of anyone, nor scorn.

Are you still ignorant of German deceit,
with so many clear examples,
they who lift their fingers in mock surrender?
Their scorn is worse, it seem to me, than their
harm:
while your blood flows
more freely, as other's anger flails you.
From matins to tierce
think to yourself, consider how
any can care for others who behave so vilely.
People of Latin blood,
free yourself from this harmful burden:
don't make an idol of a name
empty, and without substance:
that the berserkers thence, that backward race,
defeat our intelligence
is our sin, and not nature's.

*Or dentro ad una gabbia
fiere selvagge et mansuete gregge
s'annidan si che sempre il miglior geme;
et i: questo del seme
(per più dolor) del pop01 senza legge,
al qual, come si legge,
Mario aperse si 'l fianco
che memoria de l'opra anco non langue,
quando assetato et stanco
non piu bewe del fiume acqua che sangue*

*Cesare taccio, che per ogni piaggia
fece l'erbe sanguigne
di lor vene, ove 'l nostro ferro mise.
Or par (non so per che stelle maligne)
che 'l cielo in odio n'aggia,
vostra merct, cui tanto si commise.
Vostre voglie divise
guastan del mondo la piu bella parte.
Qual colpa, qual giudicio, o qual destino
fastidire il vicino
povero, et le fortune afflitte et sparte
persequire, e 'n disparte
cercar gente, et gradire
che sparga 'l sangue et venda l'alma a
prezzo?
lo parlo per ver dire,
non per odio d'altrui né per disprezzo.*

*Né v'accorgete anchor per tante prove
del bavarico inganno
ch'alzando il dito colla morte scherza?
Peggio è lo strazio, al mio parer, che 'l
danno;
ma 'l vostro sangue piove
piú largamente, ch'altr'ira vi sferza. Da la
matina a terza
di voi pensate, et vederete come
tien caro altrui che tien sé così vile.
Latin sangue gentile,
sgombra da te queste dannose some;
non far idolo un nome
vano senza soggetto:
ché 'l furor de lassú, gente ritrosa,
vincerne d'intellecto,
peccato è nostro, et non natural cosa.*

Is this not the earth that I first touched?
Is this not my nest
where I was so sweetly nourished?
Is this not the land I trust,
benign and gentle mother,
that covers both my parents?
By God, let this move you
a little, and gaze with pity
at the tears of your sad people,
who place their hopes in you
next to God: if only you show
signs at least of pity,
virtue will take up arms
against madness, and cut short the warring:
if ancient courage
is not yet dead in Italian hearts.

Lords, see how time flies,
and how life
flies too, and death is at our shoulder.
You are here now: but think of the parting:
how the naked lonely soul
must arrive at the dangerous pass.
As you go through this valley
of tears, lay aside hatred and anger,
running counter to a peaceful life:
and all the time you spend
causing others pain, is more worthy
of actions or thought
in which there is sweet praise,
in which honest study is involved:
so there is joy down here,
and the way to heaven will be open.

Song, I advise you
to speak with courteous words,
since you must go among proud people,
whose will is already
formed by ancient, adverse custom,
always inimical to truth.
Seek your fortune
among those favorable to true peace.
Say to them: 'Who will defend me?
I go calling out: Peace, peace, peace.'

*Non è questo 'l terren ch'i' toccai pria?
Non è questo il mio nido
ove nudrito fui sí dolcemente?
Non è questa la patria in ch'io mi fido,
madre benigna et pia,
che copre l'un et l'altro mio parente?
Perdio, questo la mente
talor vi mova, et con pietà guardate
le lagrime del popol doloroso,
che sol da voi riposo
dopo Dio spera; et pur che voi mostriate
segno alcun di pietate,
vertú contra furore
prenderà l'arme, et fia 'l combatter corto:
ché l'antiquo valore
ne gli italici cor' non è anchor morto.*

*Signor', mirate come 'l tempo vola,
et sí come la vita
fugge, et la morte n'è sovra le spalle.
Voi siete or qui; pensate a la partita:
ché l'alma ignuda et sola
conven ch'arrive a quel dubbioso calle.
Al passar questa valle
piacciavi porre giú l'odio et lo sdegno,
vènti contrari a la vita serena;
et quel che 'n altrui pena
tempo si spende, in qualche acto piú degno
o di mano o d'ingegno,
in qualche bella lode,
in qualche honesto studio si converta:
cosí qua giú si gode,
et la strada del ciel si trova aperta.*

*Canzone, io t'ammonisco
che tua ragion cortesemente dica,
perché fra gente altera ir ti conviene,
et le voglie son piene
già de l'usanza pessima et antica,
del ver sempre nemica.
Proverai tua ventura
fra' magnanimi pochi a chi 'l ben piace.
Di' lor: - Chi m'assicura?
I' vo gridando: Pace, pace, pace.'*

GUIDE TO THE MACHIAVELLI LETTERS

Machiavelli, Niccolo. 1996. *Machiavelli and His Friends, Their Personal Correspondence*. James B. Atkinsons and David Sices ed. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press.

Letter 3: March 9th, 1498

Machiavelli's first-hand account of the conduct of "the friar" i.e. Savonarola. Fra Domenico was a close follower of Savonarola, burned with him when he was executed.

Letter 22: July 16 1501

Agostino Vespucci in Rome to Machiavelli in Florence, discussing a variety of typical topics, including poetry, sodomy trials, the corruption of the pope, and the Turkish threat.

Letter 25: August 25th 1501

Agostino Vespucci in Rome again describes the murder of prominent churchmen under Alexander VI, and Alexander's seizures of property. The Cardinal of Capua, appointed by Alexander himself, had died August 5th. Monreale is Alexander's cousin, Juan de Borja Lanzol de Romaní, whom Alexander made a cardinal and Archbishop of Monreale. The "Great Standard-Bearer" is Cesare Borgia, leading the papal armies. The wedding planned is Lucrezia's to the Duke of Ferrara. Vitellozzo is a captain under Cesare.

Letter 54: November 14th, 1502

Describing the payment of salary to mercenary soldiers. "His Most Christian Majesty" is King Louis XII of France. "Monsignor of Volterra" is Soderini's brother. "His Excellency" is Cesare Borgia. Tomasso is Soderini's nephew.

Letter 69: January 9th, 1503

"The event" was when Cesare rounded up and murdered a large number of his followers who had plotted against him; Biagio, the letter writer, is happy to hear that Machiavelli was not among those killed. Biagio speaks of the terrifying lack of information in the chaos.

Letter 70: after Jan 23rd 1503

Machiavelli to his brother Totto, their attempts to secure a clerical office at San Pietro in Mercato for the family, discussing charges of simony and sodomy.

Event: August 18th, 1503 – Death of Pope Alexander VI, replaced by Pius III

Letter 78: Nov 17th 1503

Letter to Machiavelli from his brother Totto discussing fear of the plague.

Event: October 18th, 1503 – Death of Pius III, replaced by Julius II, end of Cesare Borgia's power

Letter 90: May 29th 1504

Soderini to Machiavelli about the general distrust of Machiavelli's Civic Militia idea.

Letter 91: June 1st 1504

Machiavelli to Giovanni Ridolfi: no one can confirm or deny rumors that Bartolomeo D'Alviano has left Naples with an army, and on his way to attack Florence.

Letter 92: June 4th 1504

Bartolomeo Vespucci to Machiavelli on the question of whether or not a wise man can alter the fate assigned to him by the Stars.

Letter 107: Feb 25th 1506

Ercole Bentivoglio, Captain General of Florence, to Machiavelli, urging him to write more of his *Deccenale primo* describing the history of Florence, so future generations will understand how bad it was.

Letter 110: March 14th 1506

Agostino Vespucci to Machiavelli about the printing of Machiavelli's *Deccenale primo*.

Letter 112: June 12th 1506

Machiavelli's description of the events leading to the attack on Venice after formation of the League of Cambrai (that is the "earlier agreement"). "Duke Valentino," i.e. Cesare Borgia, has been betrayed and imprisoned by Julius II, and the Holy Roman Emperor wants to invade Italy in the consequent power vacuum. Machiavelli tries to help his friend Giovanni Ridolfi make sense of the positions and motivations of the many kingdoms and rulers involved in the negotiations.

- The Emperor here is the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I. also called King of the Romans, because he had not been officially crowned Emperor by the pope, making him merely a king.
- The King of Hungary is the fairly weak king Vladislas II
- The King of Aragon is Ferdinand II, husband of the late Queen Isabella of Castile; Castile and Aragon are the two halves of Spain, so by marrying Ferdinand and Isabella partly united Spain. Their son John married the archduchess of Austria, while their daughter Joana married Philip the Handsome; Joana and her son Carlos (Charles) later inherited Castile and Aragon.
- The Archduke is Philip the Handsome, archduke of Burgundy, son of Emperor Maximilian and husband of Joana, so son-in-law of Ferdinand & Isabella of Spain.

Letter 115: Sept 6th 1506

Biagio Buonaccorsi writing to Machiavelli while Machiavelli is in Rome with the Borgias. Buonaccorsi comments on the growing tension between the pope and emperor, Venice's part in it, and discusses his difficulty in sending Machiavelli his salary safely due to the chaos caused in central Italy by Cesare.

Letter 121: Sept. 3-20 1506 (responding to letter 119)

Lengthy letter of Machiavelli to Soderini discussing history and politics.

Letter 166: June 5th 1509

Machiavelli is the commander in charge of the current attempt to conquer Pisa. Lattanzio Tedaldi, an astrologer and friend of Ficino, writes with astrological advice.

Letter 167: June 8th 1509

Agostino Vespucci to Machiavelli: Florence rejoices at the conquest of Pisa.

Letter 169: June 17th 1509

An educated friend, Filippo Casavecchia to Machiavelli warning that he be complacent with his success in conquering Pisa, because his radical new ideas are still distrusted.

Letter 178: December 8th 1509

Letter of Machiavelli to Luigi Guicciardi including a peculiar, frank discussion of Machiavelli's sexual life.

Event: August, 1512 – the Medici retake Florence, expel Soderini and imprison Machiavelli

Letter 203: After Sept. 15th, 1512

This letter is thought to be addressed to Duchess Isabella D'Este, or possibly to her sister-in-law Elizabetha Gonzaga. It describes the process and events of Soderini's fall when the Medici retook Florence in 1512. The "viceroy" is the commander of the Spanish army helping the Medici. The "Gonfalonier" is Soderini. "His Catholic Majesty" refers to the King of Spain and is one of the hereditary titles of the Spanish monarchy (in contrast, the King of France is "His Most Christian Majesty" and the King of England is "The Defender of the Faith"; these are all titles granted by the pope). "The Magnificent Giuliano" is Giuliano de Medici.

Letters 211-221: Detailed discussions of European high politics, foreshadowing *the Prince*.

Letter 222: August 26th 1513

- Machiavelli (in exile) to his friend in Francesco Vettori (Florentine Ambassador to Rome) entertaining himself by speculating about politics.
- Letter 223: Nov 23rd 1513
Vettori replies to Machiavelli discussing his life in Rome, his love of the ancients.
- Letter 224: undated 1513
Machiavelli describes his life in exile, and his Humanist studies.
- Letters 226-229, 236 & 238, Dec. 24th through August 3rd 1514
Machiavelli and Vettori discuss love affairs, and advice about love.
- Letters 269-274: May 1521
Letters between Machiavelli and his friend the statesman Francesco Guicciardini, written while Machiavelli is in Carpi on a mission to recruit a Lenten preacher on behalf of the Florentine wool guild. This is Machiavelli's first job after his exile, and the two discuss how it is beneath his talents, but while Machiavelli is there they can at least play some tricks on the friars.
- Letter 278: July 30th 1522
Ser Vincenzo (Chaplain in San Quirico alle Sodoro) writes to Machiavelli about the fact that he (Vincenzo, not Machiavelli) has been excommunicated.
- Letter 305: March 15th, 1526
In the ongoing war between France and Spain, "The King" Francis I (King of France) had been captured by "The Emperor" Charles V (who since the last letter has become both Holy Roman Emperor and King of Spain) at the battle of Pavia (Feb. 24 1525). On March 17th King Francis was freed but had to leave his two sons hostage and give many concessions to Charles V. Machiavelli here is trying to predict Francis' future actions. Francis later declared the agreement void since it was made under duress.
- Letter 328: April 7th 1527
Machiavelli to his son Guido, advising him on his education.
- Letter 332: April 17th 1527
Guido Machiavelli to his father, news from home, describing his education, looking forward to seeing his father.
- Machiavelli died in June, 1527.*

TWO SAMPLES OF RENAISSANCE LATIN

These are alternate assignments for the students who can read Latin (see above).

These two short Latin passages are both brief descriptions of the life of Pythagoras, written by two different 16th-century classics scholars working fifty years apart. The latter account is directly modeled on the former, with similar information and even some duplicated phrases. Used together as Latin translation practice, the two short pieces demonstrate how differences in personal style can make one piece of humanist Latin fairly easy and another presentation of the same content far more challenging if the author chooses to try to advertise his mastery of Latin by using intentionally complicated phrases and structure. If you find the first passage reasonably comfortable but the second passage much more challenging, that is, in fact, the authors' intent. These are also good samples to use for learning how different skimming Latin for content can be compared to reading it; for a practiced Latinist it is just as easy to skim the second passage as the first and get a sense of what both are saying about Pythagoras, but it is far more difficult to *translate* the second passage which requires actually untangling its roundabout grammar.

Raffaello Maffei, 1506, *Commentariorum urbanorum XXXXIII libri Raphael Volaterra item oeconomicus Xenophontis, ab eodem Latio donatus* (transcribed from the Gryphius edition, Lyon, 1552. fol. z5^v).

A short entry on Pythagoras, from an alphabetical encyclopedic work dedicated to Pope Julius II:

Pythagoras Samius philosophus patre Demarato locuplete ac negotiatore, in Aegyptum primo, mox Babyloniam discendi siderum cursus gratia profectus est. Inde regressus in Cretam ac Lacedaemoniam pervenit, ut Lycurgi & Minois inclytas ea tempestate leges agnosceret. Ad ultimum in Italiam transmittens Crotone consedit, ubi populos luxuriae adsuertos autoritate ac doctrina ad frugalem cultam revocavit. Matronas ad pudicitiam, iuvenes ad modestiam cohortari coepit. Eius passim sanctitate ac vitae abstinencia inductae mulieres, auratus vestes, ornamentaque lasciviora in tempo Iunoni consecravere. Sed & ex iuvenibus CCC cum sodalitiis iure sacramento quodam nexi separatim a caeteris civibus religionis ac modestiae causa agitent, suspicione clandestinae coniurationis civitatem in se converterunt. Itaque eos in unam domum coactos vulgus cremare contendens tumultu omnia complevit, ubi LX periere, caeteri in exilium profecti. Pythagoras itaque cum multos annos Crotone exegisset, Metapontum migravit, ibique decessit. Cuius tanta fuit admiratio ut ex domo eius templum facerent, eumque pro deo colerent. Haec ex Trogi libro XX Quintilianus autem libro IX Cicero vero ait. Tanta opinio de Pythagora praeiudicata potuit, ut eius etiam sine ratione valeret autoritas. Docuit in Italia regnante Servio Tullo, ut Livius & Dionysius autores. Eius Philostratus in principio vitae Apollonii, pluribus verbis meminit. Quemadmodum ab omnibus abstineret animalibus, animamque reducem putaret. Se propterea Euphorbum Troianum dicebat. Deinde pavonem fuisse, Ex quo Persius noster Pythagoraeum appellat pavonem. De ipsius secta scripsit Iamblycus libros tris qui adhuc extant. In quos commentarios edidit Simplicius, opus utrunque [sic] in bibliotheca Vaticana conspicitur. Ipsius apophthema, φίλων πάντα [sic] κοινά, Amicorum omnia communia.

Neander, Michael ed., 1559, *En Lector, Librum Damas Vere Aureum*. Basil, page 17 (f. c1^r).

Excerpted from a letter dedicating this volume of Pythagorean poetry. The original text of this was printed with footnotes in Latin, reproduced here, which provide Latin explanations of the few phrases of Greek which Neander throws in, a common practice in an era of deeply competitive scholarship when authors vied to demonstrate their mastery of Greek as well as of advanced Latin.

Fuit vero Pythagoras philosophus, ex Samo insula oriundus, Mnesarchi annulorum sculptoris filius. Is cum dicendi amore vehementissimo flagraret, in Aegyptum primo, mox Babyloniam, discendi causa profectus est. unde deinde regressus, in Cretam ac Lacedaemoniam pervenit. id quod pro veteri consuetudine veterum plurimi sequuti sunt, quemadmodum de Platone, Euripide, Solone, Apollonio Tyaneo, Cicerone etiam, & e patribus divo Hieronymo, scriptores prodiderunt: & Galenus, medicorum princeps, de suis profectionibus discendi causa susceptis, ipse meminit. Postea vero cum iam multa ubique vidisset, didicisset, ac audivisset, ac cum doctissimis viris de studiis, iisque rebus de quibus dubitabat, seu quae scire cupiebat, saepe contulisset, ac patriam Samum a Polycrate tyrano teneri intelligeret: ea relicta denuo, Crotone, quae civitas est Italiae, a Milone Crotoniata & aliquot aliis praestantibus viris celebri concedit: ibique aperta schola, & iuventutem & eius loci cives optimis praeceptis ad studium honestatis, probitatis ac frugalitatis, aliarumque virtutum excitavit. Caeterum quibus legibus suos auditors rexit, ad quae etiam praescripta tum ipse vixerit, tum etiam suos omnes vivere voluerit, pluribus exposuerunt, Laertius, Suidas in Pythagora, Philostratus quoque in suo Apollonio, & Iamblichus philosophus, Porphyrii Christianorum hostis discipulus: qui de Pythagorae vita & secta libros tres conscripsit, in quos Commentaria edidit Simplicius Aristotelis interpres. Cicero etiam, ac Plutarchus: & de Graecis veteribus theologis, Clemens Alexandrinus, & Philo Iudaeus: Erasmus etiam in Chiliadibus, & Lilius, ubi symbola interpretantur Pythagorae. Et quis veterum Pythagorae non meminit? ut nec Livii, nec Iustini, nec Gellii, nec Macrobbii, nec Luciani etiam, Virgilii & Ovidii poetarum, hoc loco mentionem faciamus. Inde enim, si qui his non sunt contenti, plura de Pythagora addiscere possunt. Ei autem Pythagorae quidam tribuunt poema, τὸ χρυσᾷ ἐπηκαλούμενον⁽¹⁾: hoc est, Aurea carmina nominatum, (poema vere aureum) quemadmodum it Suidas refert hisce verbis: τινὲς δὲ ἀνατιθέασιν αὐτῷ καὶ τὰ χρυσᾷ ἔπη⁽²⁾. seu quod revera ipse, seu etiam tota schola Pythagorae (quo Gellii inclinare videtur) eius autor fuerit: seu etiam, quod eiusmodi brevibus sententiis solitus fuerit proponere doctrinam de moribus: seu quod id scriptum eius moribus, eiusque vitae sanctimoniae maxime congruere sapiens iudicavit antiquitas. de quo alii aliter sentient: quae nos sub iudice ita in medio indiscussa relinquimus.

⁽¹⁾ Aurea carmina Pythagora (no need to translate the Greek)

⁽²⁾ In Pythagora (no need to translate the Greek)