



University of  
New Haven

## A Cultural History of Florence

### Section I: Course Overview

**Course Code:** HIS325

**Subject Area(s):** History

**Prerequisites:** None

**Language of Instruction:** English

**Total Contact Hours:** 45

**Credits:** 3

### Course Description

This course introduces students to the cultural history of Florence. Along with describing historical events, it examines the development of the Florentine cultural identity. The course is organized along chronological and thematic lines. Chronologically, it documents developments and key turning points in Florentine History from the Renaissance to the present times. Thematically, the course investigates key patterns of the Florentine cultural identity paradigm. These include politics, economics, social class, religion and more. In addition, this course examines lines of continuity and discontinuity between Florentine, Tuscan, Italian, European, and world cultural patterns.

### Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students are able to:

- Identify the main turning points in the Cultural History of Florence from Renaissance to contemporary times
- Compare key cultural Florentine characteristics with Italian, European, and global ones
- Describe all factors that contributed to the making of Florentine cultural identity

### Section II: Instructor & Course Details

#### Instructor Details

**Name:** TBC

**Contact Information:** TBC

**Term:** TBC

**Course Day and Time:** TBC

**Office Hours:** TBC

## Grading & Assessment

The instructor assesses students' mastery of course learning objectives by using the forms of assessment below. Each of these assessments is weighted toward the final grade. The Assessment Overview section provides further details for each.

**Engagement - 20%**

**Short Assignments (4) - 20% (5% each)**

**Mid-Term Exam - 20%**

**Research Project (Oral Presentation & Paper) - 20% (10% + 10%)**

**Final Exam - 20%**

## Assessment Overview

This section provides a brief description of each form of assessment listed above. Forms of assessment may be slightly modified in the term syllabus.

**Engagement (20%):** Students are expected to be engaged in class, and to have read the [CEA CAPA Engagement Policy](#), and to understand the [Class Engagement Rubric](#) that outlines how engagement is graded.

**Short Assignments (20%):** Four short presentations (5% each)

- 1) first impressions about Florence: one page;
- 2) brief presentation on a Medici family member (to be inserted in a collective PPP);
- 3) brief presentation on an artist/a work of art (in a collective PPP);
- 4) brief presentation on a Florentine guild (in a collective PPP).

**Midterm Exam (20%):** Short answers and essay style questions concerning all topics covered until that point in the class. Part I include 8 short answer questions (40 points, 8 x 5); Part II is an essay question (3 pages, 60 points).

**Research Project (20%) – Oral presentation & Paper.**

**Oral presentation (10%):** The topics for the oral presentations are proposed by students and confirmed by the professor by Week 5, the outline approved by Week 9. Students can focus on a topic of their liking. Each presentation should not exceed 10 minutes (for very large classes –5 minutes).

**Research Paper (10%):** Students should transform the presentation into a paper of about 2000-2500 words. The paper should include clear references to at least four secondary academic sources. Criticism and personal opinions are particularly encouraged.

**Final Exam (20%):** Essay style questions concerning all topics covered after the mid-term exam (all questions require an answer). Part I is a main essay (1500–1800 words) and concerns the topics covered in class (3 pages, 60 points). Part II is a secondary essay (800–1000 words): personal reflection on the future of Florence (40 points) – *A Manifesto for Florence!* – to be written in advance and briefly presented on the exam day.

## Active Learning

Experiential learning is an essential component of education abroad, and participation in field studies is a required part of coursework. In this course, students explore the city in which they are studying using a variety of methods. This provides the opportunity to gain nuance and perspective on the host context and course content, as well as to collect information and resources for assigned papers, projects, and presentations.

- Walking tour in the centre of Florence
- Orsanmichele
- San Marco Museum
- Duomo Complex (Baptistry & Museo dell'Opera del Duomo)
- Palazzo Vecchio
- Loggia dei Lanzi & Piazzale degli Uffizi
- Galileo Galilei Museum

## Readings and Resources

The below readings and resources are representative of what will be assigned as required in this course, but may vary slightly in the term syllabus.

All students are given access to the online library of the University of New Haven (UNH), accessible [here](#), and are expected to comply with [UNH Policies](#) regarding library usage.

Wherever possible, required readings are made accessible through the online library or Canvas. Students are responsible for obtaining all required readings.

Each course utilizes Canvas as its LMS. Students are expected to check Canvas regularly for updates and deadlines. Canvas is also the primary platform for contacting your instructor in case of questions or concerns about the course.

### Required

Cochrane, E. W. (1973): *Florence in the Forgotten Centuries. 1527-1800 A History of Florence and the Florentines in the Age of the Grand Dukes*, Chicago–London: The University of Chicago Press

Cronin, V. (1996): *The Florentine Renaissance*, London: Collins

[http://brianrwilliams.com/lesson\\_plans/HNLA101/FA12/week%207/Political%20Content%20in%20Italian%20Architecture%20Fascist%20Era-Doordan.pdf](http://brianrwilliams.com/lesson_plans/HNLA101/FA12/week%207/Political%20Content%20in%20Italian%20Architecture%20Fascist%20Era-Doordan.pdf)

Gilbert, F. (1966): *Machiavelli and Guicciardini: Politics and History in Sixteenth-Century Florence*, Princeton: Princeton U.P.

Kent, F. W. (2013): *Princely Citizen. Lorenzo de' Medici and Renaissance Florence*, James, C. (ed.), Turnhout (Belgium): Brepols.

Martines, L. (2002): *Fire in the City: Savonarola and the Struggle for the Soul of Renaissance Florence*, Oxford: Oxford U.P.

Parks, T. (2006): *Medici Money*, NY–London: W. W. Norton & Company.

### **Recommended:**

Adamson, W. L. (1993): *Avant-garde Florence: from Modernism to fascism*, Cambridge Mass: Harvard U.P.

Burr Litchfield, R. (2008): *Florence Ducal Capital, 1530–1630*, NY: ACLS Humanities e-book:  
<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=acls;cc=acls;view=toc;idno=heb90034.0001.001;rgn=full%20text>

Fremantle, R. (1992): *God and Money, Florence and the Medici in the Renaissance*, Firenze: L.S. Olschki.

Ginsborg, P. (2003): *A History of Contemporary Italy: Society and Politics 1943-1988*, London: Penguin.

Goldberg, E. (2011): *Jews and Magic in Medici Florence: the Secret World of Benedetto Blanis*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Goldthwaite, R.A. (2009): *The economy of Renaissance Florence*, Baltimore: John Hopkins U.P.

Hale, J. R. (1977): *Florence and the Medici*, London: Thames & Hudson.

Hibbert, C. (1993): *Florence: the Biography of a City*, London–NY: W. W. Norton & Company

Kaborycha, L. (2011): *A Short History of Renaissance Italy*, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Machiavelli, N. *The Prince*; available at <http://www.constitution.org/mac/prince00.htm>

Mauro, T. de (1996): “Linguistic varieties and linguistic minorities,” in Forgacs, D. and R. Lumley (eds.), *Italian Cultural Studies*, Oxford: Oxford U.P., 88–102

Najemy, J. M. (2006): *A History of Florence 1200-1575*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Nevola, F. (2007): *Siena: Constructing the Renaissance City*, London: Yale U.P.

Piccolino, M. & N. Piccolino (2014): *Galileo's Visions: Piercing the Sphere of the Heavens by Eye and Mind*, Oxford: Oxford U.P.

Rosenberg, Ch. M. (ed.) (2010): *The Court Cities of Northern Italy: Milan, Parma, Piacenza, Mantua, Ferrara, Bologna, Urbino, Pesaro, and Rimini*, Cambridge and NY: Cambridge U.P.

Trexler, R. (1980): *Public Life in Renaissance Florence*, NY: Academic Press.

Van Veen, H. Th. (2006): *Cosimo I de Medici and His Self-Representation in Florentine Art and Culture: from Lofty Ruler to Citizen Prince*, NY: Cambridge U.P.

Yousefzadeh, Mahnaz (2011): *City and Nation in the Italian Unification: the National Festivals of Dante Alighieri*, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

## Course Calendar

Session 1	
Topics	History of Florence – an overview The Birth of Modern Florence The Heart of Florence
Activity	Lecture and Discussion Syllabus review and class schedule City Center Tour
Readings & Assignments	Short Assignment 1: Describe the first impact of Florence upon you. You can do it in a letter, a figurative representation, a reflection, 10 pictures, or a literary form (1 page, due Week 2)

Session 2	
Topics	The Idea of Renaissance. Florence in the 15th Century. The Medici – from citizens to dictators-like rulers.
Activity	Lecture & Discussion
Readings & Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cronin, Ch. 4, pp. 61–84.</li> <li>• Kent, Ch. 3, pp. 199–225</li> <li>• Gilbert, Ch. 1, pp. 7–48.</li> </ul> <p>Short Assignment 1 due</p> <p>Short Assignment 2: one-slide PPT on one member of the Medici family or an aspect of their rule (due Week 3)</p>

Session 3	
Topics	Lorenzo il Magnifico
Activity	Lecture & Discussion
Readings & Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cronin, Ch. 4, pp. 61–84.</li> <li>• Kent, Ch. 3, pp. 199–225</li> <li>• Gilbert 1966: Chap. 1, pp. 7–48.</li> </ul> <p>Short Assignment 2 due</p>

	Short Assignment 3: one-slide PPT on one member of the Medici family or an aspect of their rule (due Week 4)
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Session 4	
Topics	The birth of the Renaissance art and the rise of the artist
Activity	Lecture & Discussion
Readings & Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cronin, Ch. 8, pp. 165–189; ch. 9, pp. 190–211; ch. 10, pp. 212–39.</li> </ul> Short Assignment 3 due Short Assignment 4: one-slide PPP about one artist, an artwork, or a specific Renaissance artistic technique (due Week 5)

Session 5	
Topics	The other 'Arts' Florence and the art of making money
Activity	Visit to Orsanmichele
Readings & Assignments	Parks, Ch. 1, 1–28. Short Assignment 4 due Short Assignment 5: one-slide PPT on a specific area of Florentine economy under the Medici (due Week 6)

Session 6	
Topics	The Duomo Art, Engineering, and Magnificence
Activity	Visit to Duomo Complex
Readings & Assignments	Short Assignment 5 due

Session 7	
Topics	Florence and religious affairs - The Savonarola moment
Activity	Review for the Mid-term exam Visit to San Marco Museum

Readings & Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Martines, Ch. 8, pp. 85–110; Ch. 11, pp. 140–55.</li> </ul> <p>Topic of Research project due</p>
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Session 8
Mid-term

Session 9	
Topics	<p>The art of inventing politics and the art of writing history.</p> <p>Machiavelli and Guicciardini</p>
Activity	<p>Mid-Term Exam Results</p> <p>Lecture &amp; Discussion</p>
Readings & Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gilbert, Ch. 4, pp. 153–200.</li> </ul> <p>Research Project outline due</p>

Session 10	
Topics	<p>16th Century Florence.</p> <p>Cosimo I de' Medici. Second Renaissance. Vasari invents Cultural History</p>
Activity	<p>Student Presentations</p> <p>Lecture &amp; Discussion</p> <p>Visit to Piazza della Signoria, Loggia dei Lanzi, Piazzale degli Uffizzi</p>
Readings & Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cochrane, Book I, Ch. 5, pp. 67–87</li> </ul>

Session 11	
Topics	<p>Cosimo I de' Medici &amp; Eleonora di Toledo</p>
Activity	<p>Student Presentations</p> <p>Visit to Palazzo Vecchio</p>
Readings & Assignments	<p>Prepare for your presentations</p>

Session 12
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Topics	17th Century Florence. Science Galileo Galilei
Activity	Student Presentations Lecture & Discussion Museo Galilei (TBC)
Readings & Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cochrane, Book III: Prologue, Preface, &amp; Cp. 1, pp. 165–88.</li> </ul> Oral Presentations continue

Session 13	
Topics	Florence in the 18th Century. The end of the Medici. Lorena. Pietro Leopoldo. Deregulation. Reformation
Activity	Lecture & Discussion
Readings & Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cochrane, Book VI, Chap. 4, pp. 428–53; Chap. 5, pp. 454–83</li> </ul> Oral Presentations continue

Session 114	
Topics	19 <sup>th</sup> to 20 <sup>th</sup> Century Florence Risorgimento. Futurism. Fascism. Post-WW2
Activity	Lecture & Discussion Gelato in Via dei Neri
Readings & Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cochrane, Book VI, Ch. 4, pp. 428–53; Ch. 5, pp. 454–83.</li> </ul>

Session 15	
Final exam	



## SECTION III: CEA CAPA Academic Policies and Standards

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#### Academic Policies

Students are expected to review and understand all CEA CAPA student policies, including our [Academic Policies](#) and [Engagement Policy](#). CEA CAPA reserves the right to change, update, revise, or amend existing policies and/or procedures at any time. Additional requirements that may be associated with a specific course or program are addressed in the term syllabus.

#### Student Learning & Development Objectives

CEA CAPA has identified [Student Learning and Development Objectives \(SLDOs\)](#) for all programs in all locations: content in context, navigating differences, power and equity, critical thinking and intellectual curiosity, career and professional development, and sustainability and migration.

These are meta-level learning objectives that transcend coursework and are infused across all elements of program delivery, beyond specifics of course offerings, addressing student learning holistically and framing it a larger learning context.