

### **Assignments, Engagement, and Evaluation**

*Review the questions on this unit syllabus before reading each session’s materials. Those questions function to guide your understanding and to orient your note-taking; addressing them will deepen your comprehension and prepare you for written work, class discussions, and quizzes. Take notes if necessary, but annotate the primary sources in particular. They will often be central to our seminars. In general, however, do what you think will help bring clarity to the content.*

*For each session, you are expected to offer ideas; to present arguments; to ask and answer questions; and to respond to classmates’ comments. You will fully engage with others by listening critically and by finding your voice. To succeed, you must massage the text, looking for strengths and tensions in language, patterns and trends, tone and voice, and connections to historical moments we have covered.*

*Individual and collective evaluations will be determined by (1) class engagement, (2) in- and out-of-class writing assignments, and (3) other assessments.*

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### **Session 1 – European Geography; Renaissance Causes**

#### Materials

- Secondary – Beck et al., 471-472
- European Map

#### As You Read

- Why does the Renaissance occur in Italy and not elsewhere?
- Beck and his co-authors argue that “people of the Renaissance created something new.” What were those new things?
- How did the Crusades and the bubonic plague bring about city-states?
- Why did Renaissance scholars look to Greece and Rome for inspiration?

### **Session 2 – Humanism (Part One)**

#### Materials

- Secondary – Beck et al., 472-473, 475-476
- Primary – “A Letter to Boccaccio: Literary Humanism” by Francesco Petrarch
- Secondary – “We need a revival of humanism” by Michael Gerson

#### As You Read

- How does humanism distinguish itself from medieval scholasticism?
- Beck and his co-authors argue that the wealthy patronized the arts to “demonstrate their own importance.” Why else might the wealthy be patrons of the arts?
- How does the vernacular affect learning in general in Italy?

#### As We Discuss

- What might Petrarch’s commentary about literature tell us about the European world?
- Your contributions and [open-ended] questions to discuss

### **Session 3 – Humanism (Part Two)**

#### Materials

- Primary – “Oration on the Dignity of Man” by Giovanni Pico della Mirandola

#### As We Discuss

- How does Pico’s oration redefine Christianity? How might it unsettle the Church?
- Your contributions and [open-ended] questions to discuss

### Session 4 – Florence and the Medici

#### Materials

- Secondary – “The Medici: Rulers of Florence”
- In-Class Video on “Medici: Godfathers of the Renaissance”

#### As You Read

- Why did Renaissance people have more of a chance to improve their lives than medieval people?
- What were guilds? Name some of the market rules set up by the guilds?
- How did the Medici earn their wealth? On what kinds of things did they spend it?

### Session 5 – Political Developments (Niccolò Machiavelli and *The Prince*)

#### Materials

- Primary – Excerpts from Machiavelli’s *The Prince*
- Secondary – “Machiavelli’s ‘The Prince’ is looking pretty good in the Trump era” Mitch Horowitz in the Washington Post (9 January 2019)

#### As We Discuss

- Evaluate Machiavelli’s political philosophy. To what extent is his portrait of politics accurate?
- Is Machiavelli’s analysis consistent with the way politics functions?
- Do we make it in this world with “deception, ruthlessness and even brutality”?
- Your contributions and [open-ended] questions to discuss

### Session 6 – Renaissance Art

#### Materials

- Skim and complete “The Renaissance: The Beginning of Modern Painting” Packet and Questions
- In-Class Image Analysis on Renaissance Art