

## History 356U: Renaissance and Reformation Europe

Winter 2017 (January 9th-March 19th, 2017)

Professor Jennifer Selwyn



This fully online course explores key themes in the social, cultural, political, and economic history of Western Europe from ca. 1400-1600. Combining a variety of primary and secondary sources, we will consider the emergence and influence of Renaissance Humanism, the artistic movements that accompanied it, the rise of powerful national monarchies, changing ideas of citizenship, gender and family life, religious tensions and movements for reform, and the significant consequences of European exploration and colonization in new lands beyond Europe's borders. While we will range broadly within Renaissance/Reformation Europe, an emphasis will be placed on events and personalities in the Italian city-states of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Please note that the assigned textbook for this course, *The Renaissance and Reformation. A History in Documents*, is very general and intended more to provide historical context for the primary source documents that it provides, so students are urged to consult the Power Point lecture outlines designated for each week to obtain the "big picture" within which to fit the assigned readings. I understand that these outlines are not a substitute for a "live" lecture, but they should be useful to at least skim. Students are also encouraged to ask questions of the instructor, either at the Discussion Board, or via email to clarify any points of confusion.

### Learning Goals

- To gain a substantive knowledge of key personages, institutions, intellectual/cultural trends, and the broad historical development of European societies during the Renaissance/Reformation period.
- To attain historical empathy for peoples and cultures from a distant historical epoch whose values, ways of life, and ideas are often unfamiliar and quite distinct from our own.
- To develop the critical skills to analyze, discuss, and write about primary historical sources, including evaluating author bias, weighing the strengths and limitations of different genres (types) of historical source materials, and comparing contemporaneous sources.
- To understand the myriad perspectives and questions that frame modern historical writing (historiography) on the early modern period and to begin to identify authors' main arguments and the strategies that they use to present supporting evidence.
- To work effectively to synthesize key arguments, evidence, and implications of course material and to link specific information to broader class themes.

I encourage you to contact me with any questions or concerns that you might have. The best way to do so is via email: either [Selwyn@pdx.edu](mailto:Selwyn@pdx.edu), or [Selwyn@D2L.pdx.edu](mailto:Selwyn@D2L.pdx.edu). Please note that webmail and D2L email are not linked, so the best bet is to email me through the D2L mail function, once you are on the site, using webmail as a backup. As you begin to negotiate the D2L course site, which has just been updated by PSU, I will provide you with an opportunity to navigate the site thoroughly through the

Week One activity on the Discussion Board, which is a kind of “scavenger hunt.” If you really need to speak with me, as I am not on campus at PSU and therefore do not hold office hours, email your phone number and a good time to speak and we can arrange a phone conference.

### Required Texts:

Davis, Natalie Zemon. *Return of Martin Guerre*.

*The Italian Renaissance. The Essential Readings*, Paula Findlen, Editor. [Collection of Essays]

Wiesner-Hanks, Merry. *The Renaissance and Reformation. A History in Documents*.

All of the assigned texts for this course may be purchased through the Portland State University Bookstore, or at an online bookseller. Other documents that are available for downloading at our course site are noted as such in the course syllabus and may be found by going to the Weekly Course Modules link from the “Course Content” tab on the Home Page of our course D2L site. Each document will be available at the appropriate Course Module for the week that it is assigned, either as a PDF file, or a web link. The relevant PowerPoint lecture outlines will also be available under each Course Module.

### Course Requirements and Policies:

**Submit All Required Assignments:** You must submit *all required assignments* in order to pass this course. I do not accept late papers, except in extraordinary circumstances. If you need to arrange an extension, due to an *emergency*, please contact me *prior* to the due date.

**Using the Drop box and Submitting Attachments in Proper Format:** I cannot accept papers that are pasted into the Assignment Drop box, because they lack formatting and I do not have time to figure out what you meant without this all-important formatting.

Please do whatever you can to upload your essay onto the Drop box in Word format. I can accept either .doc or .docx. Let me know by email if you face a problem. For those Mac users who normally write in “Pages,” note that you can export files in Word format. Sometimes, it takes a minute or so to upload files to the drop box, so be patient! If all else fails, send the essay to me via D2L email as a Word (or, RTF) attachment. I cannot download obscure, or archaic formats like Works (sorry ;).

**Proper Citation Formats/Plagiarism:** As you know, all of your work must be original. When you cite the work of another author, you must give her/him their due by providing either a parenthetical citation, or a footnote/endnote. You should get into the habit of citing in this way on the Discussion Board and I will remind you of that fact early and often. For the short paper assignments, I will accept either of those two Chicago-style formats only and points will be deducted for failure to use the Chicago style formats. Guidelines for the Chicago Style are provided in an attachment at “Getting Started” on our D2L Home Page, but for your quick reference, here is the webpage:

[http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html)

N.B.: I will *not* accept any papers that lack proper citations, including page numbers.

Presenting another’s work as your own can put you at risk for an accusation of plagiarism and could potentially lead to your failing this course, and facing disciplinary action from Portland State University. When in doubt, always cite any sources from which you borrowed ideas, whether you are quoting directly, or paraphrasing. Always err on the side of caution! For a fuller definition of what constitutes plagiarism and the procedures followed by Portland State University in cases where it is suspected, please go the following website: <http://www.pdx.edu/dos/conductcode.html#Code>

See, especially, the section on “Proscribed Conduct,” Item #2, and “Procedures for Complaints” regarding cases of academic dishonesty. I hate to sound harsh about this, but I take academic honesty *very seriously* and want to help everyone to avoid any stain of suspicion.

**Disabilities:** Students who have diagnosed disabilities are invited to contact me as soon as possible to present a letter from the Disability Resource Center (<http://www.drc.pdx.edu>), listing any necessary accommodations, and to resolve any concerns that they may have. I am happy to work with any students requiring additional assistance to succeed in this course.

**Final Grade Criteria:** The following point totals represent the *maximum* number of points that a student may earn for each category of class performance. Paper prompts (descriptions of the two formal essay assignments) will be available on the “News” section of the course Home Page well in advance of the due dates, for your planning purposes.

**\*Participation/Discussion:** 50 points. (Each discussion will be worth a possible 5 points. After Week One’s Scavenger Hunt, each week’s discussion can earn a student five points, which includes submitting *two* original, substantive posts, worth a possible two points each, and one **substantive** response to a classmate. Students are welcome to contribute additional posts, if so motivated, but these extra posts will not earn you extra points for doing so. All students are expected to post during the week for which the discussion questions are assigned. In case of emergency, a student may contact me by email to request an additional day or two to complete that week’s posts, but please use this privilege sparingly. You will be allowed *one opportunity to go back and complete any incomplete part of a week’s posts/response during the quarter, as long as it is no later than three weeks after the discussion.* It is your responsibility to contact me to make this request and alert me to the late post. I am enforcing these rules firmly this term, as I have had folks abuse the privilege of submitting late posts in the past.

**Critical Response Essays (2): 25 points for each essay.** The two essays should be about six pages long. Both essays will be based upon common course readings and there will be a choice of prompt questions, with an option to develop one’s own topic, as well. The specific criteria for each paper will be posted on the Home Page well in advance of their due dates, as “News” items, along with a document entitled “Tips on Writing a Successful Paper,” which you are encouraged to consult. Individual students may wish to consult with me about the option of creating a Power Point presentation for their second/final assignment and the criteria for such a presentation.

**\*A Note on Discussions (Please Read Carefully and Thoroughly):**

Online courses offer a unique opportunity to build a non-traditional learning community, but because we do not meet face to face, both students and instructor must be that much more committed to making the course atmosphere inclusive, dynamic and truly interactive. In order for our class to achieve our shared learning objectives and be meaningful for each of us, we need to participate actively in the “virtual” classroom environment, as we engage with the readings and with one another online. This means that each of us must participate in *each* discussion with substantive comments/posts that help to illuminate the course readings and the larger themes that they bring to life. Let’s commit ourselves to creating an informal, but intellectually serious, and lively learning community in which all participants can engage. I welcome your feedback throughout the term on ways to improve our class community.

Please refer to the “Discussion Guidelines Module ” icon on the D2L Homepage for general guidelines for online discussion participation and “netiquette.” For my part, I promise to respond attentively and respectfully to all students, read all students’ posts with great care, and participate in all discussions, although I may not respond to each post that you write, each week. There is a “Questions for Professor Selwyn” folder on the Discussion Board, for questions related to course content. If you have an individual question or matter to discuss with me that you do not wish to be public, you are welcome to write me via the D2L Email function. I will check my mail at least twice a day and respond to you in a timely manner (normally within 8-12 hours, but often sooner).

Students can earn *up to five points* for participating in each discussion. Students should plan to respond to *at least two discussion questions* each week and also offer at least *one* substantive response/critique of a fellow student’s post. In cases where there are more than two discussion questions (which may happen frequently), choose those questions that interest you most. Your

responses to fellow students are *not* intended to be personal attacks, but nor should students feel shy about debating points of interpretation from the readings. Rather, they are intended to help each of us to read carefully and thoughtfully and help our classmates to do the same. We are critiquing one another's arguments, *not* individuals. If you feel that a classmate is being vague, or not providing adequate evidence to support their ideas, please say so directly. This will help classmates to become stronger, more critical writers.

**Timely Discussion Posts/Responses:** Students will rely upon one another's participation for their own success, so please do your part! Discussion posts should go up as early in the week as possible to give ample time for responses and *all posts and responses to a classmate should be in by the end of the weekend (Sunday evening)*, so that we can move on to the next topic/set of readings on Monday. Of course, things do sometimes come up, so if you have an emergency and need to post a bit late, let me know ahead of time and we can arrange it. I urge you, however, not to make a habit of this, as you will find yourself falling behind.

If at all possible, try to post at least one of your discussion posts by mid-week! If I find that students are not posting/responding with critiques in a timely manner, I reserve the right to "lock" discussion topics" with ample advanced notice given to all students. I have yet to have to take this step, so please do your part!

Please do not miss a week's discussion posts, as this will have a serious impact on your course grade, not to mention robbing your classmates and me of your insights into the readings. I continue to be amazed that several students fail to submit the "Scavenger Hunt" during Week One, which is the easiest five points that you can earn and offers you the chance to really review course requirements and elements of the web site with care. Students who earn the full 50 points for their discussion grade find that this allows them greater "wiggle room" with the papers, which is important, because I am known to be a tough grader 😊

#### **Successful Posts:**

There is no *exact* formula for writing successful discussion posts, but to earn full points, you must engage with the questions posed and provide specific, detailed evidence from the course readings. Remember to cite from the text by using Chicago in-text citations, including author, date, and page number(s), in order to practice for the papers. Always cite by author, not editor, unless the author is unknown. For example, when citing the primary sources from the Wiesner-Hanks book, cite original authors (if known). Only cite Wiesner-Hanks as author if you are quoting/paraphrasing her own words. Similarly, when you are citing material from the one of the essays in the essay collection *The Italian Renaissance. The Essential Readings*, do not identify the author as Paula Findlen, unless you are quoting or paraphrasing one of her introductory commentaries. This is very important to remember! Obviously, if you are citing a primary source reading from the web, there is rarely pagination, so I do not expect you to include that if it is not available.

#### **The biggest keys to success in this class are the following:**

- \*Pace yourselves and communicate with me early and often, especially if you run into difficulties.
- \*Do all of the required reading.
- \*Choose the discussion questions that most interest you, and integrate evidence from both primary and secondary source readings, where appropriate.
- \*Be sure and give some thought to what you want to highlight in your responses to the discussion questions. (If you want to raise a theme that is not addressed by one of my questions, you may choose to highlight your own topic).
- \*Be expansive in your comments, always providing specific examples to

clarify your ideas, and use text material as often as possible to illustrate and support your arguments. If these specifics are lacking, I will remind you. Points are not given automatically.

\*Feel free to offer your personal interpretations, but remember that one of our goals in this class is to learn to think historically and analytically, so if you are simply “shooting from the hip,” I may very well ask you to elaborate, so be prepared to explain your ideas fully and clearly.

\*Please note that original posts or responses to fellow students’ posts that do not contribute anything substantive, such as: “Great comment, Jane, I hadn’t thought of that;” or, comments that are vague, like: “I agree with you that the Machiavelli source is cool,” will not automatically earn you a point. [If you have not earned the number of points that you had expected, you may feel free to ask why, but you will usually have your answer provided to you from my comments, so be sure to check back to the Discussion Board after posting, in case I am dissatisfied with your post, or response. Then, you are free to go back and expand upon your answer in order to earn full points, at my discretion.]

\*Above all, as I stated above, (but it bears repeating) if you are feeling lost, or getting behind, or are dealing with some life crisis that is interfering with your work in this class, please communicate with me as early as possible, so that we can work together to ensure your success in class!

#### **Paper Due Dates:**

First Paper: Thursday, February 16th, 2017, by 11:59PM

Second Paper: Thursday, March 23rd, 2017, by 11:59PM

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#### **Course Syllabus**

**Week One (Jan. 9<sup>th</sup> -15<sup>th</sup>): Introductions; Scavenger Hunt: Getting Oriented to the Course Website [Worth an easy five points]; Discussion Question on Mohn Article (extra credit for two points).**

**Reading:** Tanya Mohn, “Long Before Twitter, Martin Luther Was a Media Pioneer” [Week One Course Module] <http://nyti.ms/2dUegW5>

Complete “Scavenger Hunt” and post it on the Discussion Board for Week One. Introduce yourself to the class and send me an email in response to the prompt question. Go to Course Modules and then Week One Discussion to complete these activities. [N.B. To avoid frustration, you might like to type your responses first in a Word document, then copy and paste to the Discussion Board].

**Week Two (Jan. 16<sup>th</sup> -22<sup>nd</sup>): The Black Death and Its Implications**

**Reading:** Wiesner-Hanks, *The Renaissance and Reformation. A History in Documents*, Chapter One; Pistoia, “Ordinance for Sanitation in a Time of Mortality;” Boccaccio, “Introduction to Decameron.” This is an alternate reading from the text, since Wiesner-Hanks provides only brief excerpts in Chapter One and some of you may not have received your books yet.  
<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/med/pistoia.asp> /

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/decameronintro.asp>

**Power Point Presentation:** The Impact of the Black Death on Late Medieval Europe, ca. 1347-1350

#### **Discussion Questions/Themes:**

1. What are some of the images of the Plague and its impact on the population that Boccaccio presents in the “Introduction” to his literary work, the *Decameron*? Which aspects of life during the Plague (and its aftermath) does he discuss?
2. Considering the City of Pistoia’s “Ordinance” and other primary sources from Wiesner-Hanks, how did local authorities, physicians and others attempt to cope with the impact of the plague on their

communities? What other “crises” emerged in the wake of the Black Death that also shook fourteenth-century Europe?

### **Week Three (Jan. 23rd-29th): An Emerging Renaissance Movement: Definitions and Conditions**

**Reading:** Merry Wiesner-Hanks, Chapter Two, *The Renaissance and Reformation*; Paula Findlen, “Understanding the Italian Renaissance,” in *Italian Renaissance. The Essential Readings.*, 4-40.; Theodore Mommsen, “Petrarch’s Conception of the ‘Dark Ages,’” in *The Italian Renaissance. The Essential Readings*, 219-236.

**Power Point Presentations:** After the Black Death; *Why Italy?* The Social and Political Context for a New Movement in Early Modern Europe.

#### **Discussion Questions/Themes:**

1. What does Theodore Mommsen argue about Petrarch’s contribution to new ideas about both Antiquity and the medieval world into which Petrarch was born and came of age?
2. Compare authors such as Ficino, Bruni, Petrarch, and Alberti (excerpted in the Renaissance and Reformation text) in terms of how they present the “ideals” of Renaissance Humanism and the humanist. What stands out in their respective accounts?
3. Share a quote from either Mommsen’s essay or one of the primary sources in Wiesner-Hanks’ document textbook and be ready to explain your selection in terms of its relationship to wider themes about the early Humanist movement.

### **Week Four: (Jan. 30th<sup>th</sup>-Feb. 5th) The New Politics of the Renaissance**

**Reading:** Gene Brucker, “Civic Traditions in Pre-Modern Italy;” Anthony Molho, “Cosimo de Medici: *Pater Patriae* or *Padrino*,” both in *Italian Renaissance: The Essential Readings*, 47-63; 64-90; Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince (Excerpts) (Course Module, Week Four)*  
<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/prince-excerpt.asp>

**Power Point Presentations:** Machiavelli and the State as a Work of Art

#### **Discussion Questions:**

1. What, according to Gene Brucker, did social and power relationships look like in the tumultuous world of the pre-modern Florentine Republic?
2. How did the Medici family manage to attain so much power in this environment in the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century? Would Machiavelli have approved of their tactics, based upon your reading of excerpts from *\*The Prince\**? Why or why not? Be specific.
3. What picture of workers’ lives in Florence emerge from Anthony Molho's essay? Examples?

### **Week Five (Feb. 6th-12th): Gender, Family and Sexuality in the Renaissance**

**Reading:** Wiesner-Hanks, Chapter Five, *The Renaissance and Reformation*, esp. pp. 71-74; Laura Cereta, “Letter to Bibolo Semproni,” (Pdf file) at the Week Five Course Module; Lisa Jardine, “Isotta Nogarola: Women Humanists—Education for What?” in *Italian Renaissance*, 273-291; Stanley Chojnacki, “The Most Serious Duty: Motherhood, Gender and Patrician Culture in Renaissance Venice, in *Italian Renaissance*, 173-191;” Michael Rocke, “Gender and Sexual Culture in Renaissance Italy,” also in *Italian Renaissance*, 192-211.

**Power Point Presentations:** Women, Men and the Gender Dynamics of the Renaissance; Family and Power in the Renaissance Era.

#### **Discussion Questions/Themes:**

1. What is Lisa Jardine's argument about the challenges that Isotta Nogarola and other female humanists faced from their society for aspiring to lives as public intellectuals? To what extent does Laura Cereta's late 15<sup>th</sup>-century letter reinforce some of the themes that Jardine raises? Or does her writing provide a different image of a female Renaissance humanist. Explain with reference to specific quotes.
2. What does Chojnacki argue about the role that mothers, in particular, played in elite Venetian families?
3. How does Rocke characterize the sexual culture in Renaissance Italy and the forms of acceptable and unacceptable sexual activities of men and women?
4. Finally, which images of the Renaissance merchant family emerge from Alessandra Strozzi's and Gregorio Dati's letters in Wiesner-Hanks, Chapter Five? Does the image of Strozzi and the female members of Dati's family (Florentines) reinforce and/or depart from Chojnacki's picture of patrician mothers' roles within the Venetian family order?

**First Essay Due: Thurs., Feb. 16th, 2017**

**Week Six (Feb. 13<sup>th</sup>-19th): Artistic Innovation, Patronage and Changing Social Identities for Artists**

**Reading:** Wiesner-Hanks, Chapters 3 & 4, *The Renaissance and Reformation*; "Introduction to Part VI," *Italian Renaissance. The Essential Readings*, 295-297. Melissa Meriam Bullard, "Heroes and their Workshops: Medici Patronage and the Problem of Shared Agency," in *Italian Renaissance*; Rose Maria San Juan, "The Court Lady's Dilemma: Isabella D'Este and Art Collecting in the Renaissance," in *Italian Renaissance. The Essential Readings*.

**Power Point Lecture:** Artistic Innovations and Changing Identities in Renaissance Europe.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. What is Bullard's argument about the relationship between Medici patrons and the artists with whom they worked? What conventional ideas about Medici patronage, in particular, is she challenging and why?
2. What does San Juan argue about how Isabella D'Este's collecting practices have (or have not) been represented by previous scholars? How does she characterize D'Este's contributions?
3. Which images of sixteenth-century artists and their work emerge from the written and visual sources in Wiesner-Hanks' *The Renaissance and Reformation*? Provide specific examples.

**Week Seven (Feb. 20<sup>th</sup>-26th) Assimilating New Worlds in the Early Modern Period**

**Reading:** Wiesner-Hanks, Chapter Nine, *The Renaissance and Reformation*; Anonymous, "Expulsion of the Jews from Spain" (1492); Columbus, "Letter to the King and Queen of Spain (ca. 1494)," [Week Seven Course Module]; Inga Clendinnen, "Disciplining the Indians: Franciscan Ideology and Missionary Violence in Sixteenth-Century Yucatán," Week Seven Course Module.

**Power Point Lectures:** Imperial Spain; Assimilating New Worlds

**Discussion Questions:**

1. What are the justifications that the "Catholic Kings" of Spain offer for expelling Spain's Jewish community from its territories? How does the Jewish community respond to this expulsion order? Select a quotation from this source that you feel evokes the expulsion experience and be ready to justify your choice.
2. What is the content and tone of Columbus' letter to his Spanish monarchical patrons and what does that reveal about how he sees the early colonization process in the Caribbean?

3. Among the various accounts of the indigenous encounters with Europeans in the sixteenth century, which images and/or conflicts stand out and why? In responding to this question, be sure to cite specific sources so that you can offer the necessary context for the interpretation that you are presenting.

4. What does Inga Clendinnen argue about how some Franciscan friars justified their violent actions toward the Mayans whom they were attempting to convert to Catholicism in sixteenth-century Yucatán, Mexico? What larger lessons might she provide us about the cultural motivations of early modern Europeans (especially missionaries) in their encounters with Amerindians?

### **Week Eight (Feb. 27<sup>th</sup>-March 5th) Protestant Reformers and Reformation Movements**

**Reading:** Wiesner-Hanks, Chapter Six and Seven, *The Renaissance and Reformation*; Gerald Strauss, "Success and Failure in the German Reformation."

**PowerPoint Lectures:** Christian Humanism; Luther's Protest; The Expanding Reformation

#### **Discussion Questions:**

1. Which specific ideas of reformed Christianity did Luther, Zwingli, and more radical reformers, like Sattler, offer as challenges to orthodox Roman Catholicism, whether intentionally, or unintentionally? What unintended consequences (think: Peasants Revolt) did the Reformation usher in and how did leaders and common folk alike respond? Provide specific examples from the primary sources in Wiesner-Hanks' *The Renaissance and Reformation*.

2. How does Gerald Strauss approach the question of whether or not the Reformation was a "success?" Which, and/or, whose criteria does he apply to answer that key question and what sorts of evidence does he provide? Are you convinced or not? Explain, using specific examples from the text.

### **Week Nine (March 6th-12th): Return of Martin Guerre**

**Reading:** Natalie Zemon Davis, *Return of Martin Guerre*; Wiesner-Hanks, Chapter Eight, *The Renaissance and Reformation*.

#### **Discussion Questions:**

1. What new ideas about moral reform and the "proper" state of the family emerged out of Reformation, especially in Calvinist areas? Use specific examples.

2. Natalie Zemon Davis's *Return of Martin Guerre* reveals many interesting features about identity, gender, family, religion, and village life in sixteenth-century France. How does Davis use the story of Martin Guerre and Bertrande de Rols to evoke the time and place? Is her book effective, both in telling its story and in suggesting these larger themes? Why or why not? Be specific and be sure to use specific examples (not just one or two) to support your arguments.

### **Week Ten (March 13<sup>th</sup>-19th): Early Modern Catholic Reform**

**Reading:** Loyola, from *Spiritual Exercises* (1541); Teresa of Avila, *Life*, in Wiesner-Hanks, *Renaissance and Reformation*, 113-115 \* Also, please choose to read either Alison Weber, "Spiritual Administration: Gender and Discernment in the Carmelite Reform," or John O'Malley, "Was Ignatius Loyola a Church Reformer? How to Look at Early Modern Catholicism." (Week Ten Course Module).

**PowerPoint Lecture:** Early Modern Catholic Reform Movements

#### **Discussion Questions:**

1. What new ideas do Weber and/or O'Malley provide us with to understand better the complexities of Catholic reform in this period?

2. Loyola and Teresa of Avila were two major figures of Catholic reform in the sixteenth century. Based upon your reading of these two primary sources, what larger assumptions might we make about the nature of Catholic reform ideals and practices?

**Second Critical Essay Due on Thursday, March 23rd, 2017 by 11:59 PM**

**(No late papers will be accepted. No exceptions!)**