

VIC 241Y1Y: Renaissance Icons and Afterlives

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This course focuses on a handful of the most important masterpieces of the era known as the Renaissance: a period that saw an intense flowering of artistic innovation and cultural change in Western Europe. As we study these works, we will study too their complicated, often surprising, legacies in the centuries after their first appearance. Our investigations will take us from literature to opera to visual art, from ancient Rome to the twentieth century. Along the way, we will ask a few key questions: How does cultural and historical context define a work of art's meaning and determine popular response? What is "authenticity," and how can it, or should it, be preserved? Can a work's "greatness," or quality, ever be critically assessed?

Through readings, discussions, and written assignments, the course will make you think in new ways about the legacy of the Renaissance in modern culture and about your own role as a cultural participant and spectator.

Unit I: Lucretia: Touchstone of the Renaissance and Beyond

Livy, *The History of Rome* (excerpt)
Shakespeare, *The Rape of Lucrece*
Botticelli, *The Death of Lucretia*
Britten, *The Rape of Lucrece* (opera)
Krenek, *Tarquin* (opera)

Unit II: What is an Author? Adaptations and Reinventions

Foucault, "What is an Author?"
Shakespeare, *Hamlet*
Branagh, *Hamlet* (film)
Brook, *Hamlet* (film)
Cervantes, *Don Quixote* (excerpts)
Borges, "Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote"

Unit III: Musical Transformations and The Rise of the Artist

Busoni, "The Value of the Transcription"
Butt, "The Seventeenth-Century Musical 'Work'"
The *La Folia* Tradition: Handel, Vivaldi, Bach, Busoni
Peri, *Euridice* (opera)
Monteverdi, *L'Orfeo* (opera)
Zhurbin, *Orfeo and Euridice* (rock opera)

Unit IV: From Art to Camp

Sontag, "Notes 'On Camp'"
Debord, "A User's Guide to *Detournement*"

Velazquez, *Innocent X*
Bacon, *Study on Velazquez's Portrait of Pope Innocent X*
Michelangelo, *David*
Da Vinci, *La Gioconda*
Duchamp, *L.H.O.O.Q.*
Stoppard, *The Real Thing*

Course Policies

Assignments

Short (2-3 page) response papers will be due each week. At the beginning of the semester I will provide you with prompts, but you will be urged to focus on and analyze whatever aspect of the week's reading you find most compelling. In addition, you will write two 15-page term papers, one due at the end of each semester. These papers will require you to devise a research topic and consult outside sources.

Attendance and Class Participation: The success of this class depends upon the active participation of all of its members. Unexcused absences will negatively affect your grade, and more than three unexcused absences will put you in danger of failing the course. An absence is considered unexcused if you do not contact me at least 24 hours in advance to tell me you are ill or have an emergency, *or* if you do not provide me with a doctor's note or other documentation of an emergency at the class meeting just after the one you missed. Coming late to class consistently will have a negative effect on your grade in the course. Please speak with me if you have any questions or concerns about this policy.

Late Work: All assignments are due on the date indicated on the syllabus. If an emergency or conflict arises which prevents you from turning in an essay on time, please *contact me at least 24 hours in advance*. I understand that in some extraordinary circumstances, such as an accident or family emergency, giving me advance notice may not be possible, and I can make exceptions to this policy in those cases.