Culture and Civilization: Italian Renaissance Philosophy

PHIL 188 – Spring 2019

Instructor: Dr. Stefano Giacchetti
M/W 11.30-12.45 – Office hours M/W 2-3 (by appointment)
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SUMMARY

Short Description: Italian Renaissance is considered as one of the most important cultural revolutions of our civilization. This course will explore the philosophical grounds of this revolution.

Outcome Statement: Students will be able to demonstrate understanding of some of the main philosophers of Italian Renaissance.

PROCEDURES

Full Course Description:
The course focuses on major figures and themes of Italian philosophy in the Renaissance. It entails the examination of some fundamental philosophical and historical issues by reading primary texts of Valla, Ficino, Pico della Mirandola, Machiavelli, Bruno and Campanella. The analysis of their writings will be supported by the historical reconstruction of the formation of Italian renaissance, especially in reference to the influence of the Arabic reading of Aristotle. The very first part of the class will also cover some key ideas of Plato, since he inspired some central ideas supported by early Renaissance. The course will then primarily offer an insight on significant aspects of Italian Renaissance culture, namely civic life, education, social organization, ethics and politics, as well on the revolutionary model of Renaissance art as it can be experienced in Rome. One of the common aspects of all the readings will address the notion of free will and the original idea of humanism as the keystones of the Renaissance revolution.

Required texts:
- E. Cassirer (ed.) The Renaissance Philosophy of Man.
- N. Machiavelli The Prince and the Disourses.
- T. Campanella The City of the Sun.
Assessment Components:
Student’s final grade will be based on:
- Two in-class tests: Midterm and Final (40% of the final grade each).
- In-class presentation (20% of the final grade). Students will be requested to make a presentation (15-20 min.) for one of the scheduled readings assigned.

Grading Policy:
The following grading scale will be applied for determining the final grade:

Presentation: A=20; A-=18; B+=17; B=16; B-=15; C+=14; C=13; C-=12; D+=12; D=11; F=10

Midterm and Final (each): A=40; A-=37; B+=36; B=34; B-=33; C+=32; C=30; C-=29; D+=27; D=26; F=24

Final Grade: A = 94-100; A- = 90-93; B+ = 87-89; B = 84-86; B- = 80-83; C+ = 77-79; C = 74-76; C- = 70-73; D+ = 67-69; D = 60-66; F = 59 and below

Attendance Policy:
Students should plan to regularly attend the class, since we will often broaden the topics contained in the texts to contemporary issues, and since this class is mainly intended to the rousing of students’ personal thoughts and ideas.

In accordance with the JFRC mission to promote a higher level of academic rigor, all courses adhere to the following absence policy:

- For all classes meeting once a week, students cannot incur more than one unexcused absence.
- For all classes meeting twice a week, students cannot incur more than two unexcused absences.
- For all classes meeting three times a week, students cannot incur more than two unexcused absences.

This course meets twice a week, thus a total of two unexcused absence(s) will be permitted. Unexcused absences beyond these will result in a lowering of your final grade.

Academic Honesty: Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are unacceptable at the JFRC and will be dealt with in accordance with Loyola University Chicago’s guidelines. Please familiarize yourself with Loyola’s standards here:
You are responsible for understanding what constitutes plagiarism according to the LUC Student Handbook.

**Accessibility Accommodations**
Students registered with the Student Accessibility Center requiring academic accommodations should contact the Office of the Dean at the John Felice Rome Center, the first week of classes.

**Course Schedule:**

**01/21** Introduction

**01/23** Plato  
*Republic*, Book VII

**01/28** *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man*  
pp. 155-168

**01/30**  
pp. 169-182

**02/04**  
pp. 193-202

**02/08**  
pp. 202-212

**02/11**  
pp. 223-238

**02/13**  
pp. 239-254

**02/18** Machiavelli  
ch. I p.4, II p.5 & III p.6

**02/20**  
ch. IX p. 35, X p.39 & XVII p.60

**02/25**  
ch. XVIII p. 63 & XIX p. 66

**02/27**  
ch. XXI p. 81, XLIII p. 226, XLIV p.227, XLV p.229 & XLVI p.231

**03/03**  

**03/06** Midterm Exam

**03/18** Bruno  
pp. 33-38

**03/20**  
pp. 39-44
03/22 Movie

03/25 “ “ pp. 45-50
03/27 “ “ pp. 81-86
04/01 “ “ pp. 87-93
04/03 Campanella pp. 27-51
04/08 “ “ pp. 53-77
04/10 “ “ pp. 79-103
04/15 “ “ pp. 105-127

04/17 Study Day

04/24 Study Day

Final Exam