

History 4344.002
THE ITALIAN CITY STATES
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History 3312 explores the political, social, religions, economic and cultural experience of the city-states of northern and central Italy from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries. Italy's urban centers during this time period have been described as "workshops of politics and government, engines of wealth, and innovative centers of culture as no European cities had been since antiquity."¹ The late medieval communes developed unique political ideologies as they struggled to maintain their freedom from papal and imperial encroachments and grapple with endemic civil strife. In light of their own experiences, inhabitants of the city-states found new meaning in Aristotle's discussion of "political life." They also identified with republican Rome as a model for political and cultural developments, thus setting the stage for a new interest in and assessment of the classical past. The precocious economic development of north and central Italy also gave rise to new religious traditions, as the growth of capitalism challenged older paradigms of spirituality. Although many of these free, self-governing communes had fallen to powerful *signori* by the early fourteenth century, those which retained their republican liberty and independence continued and developed these intellectual and cultural trends and thus exerted an extraordinary influence on the culture of Renaissance Italy and ultimately Western Europe. Close attention will be paid to the works of Italian artists, chroniclers, hagiographers, novelists, humanists, political theorists and historians

Course Requirements

1. Regular attendance, participation and daily evaluation. Reading in primary sources have been assigned for every week. Students are expected to come to class prepared to participate in discussions and complete daily evaluations based on these texts. (10%)
2. One in-class midterm exam will be given on October 23. It will consist of essay and objective questions. (30%)
3. One final exam will be given during finals' week which will consists of essay and objective questions which will cover the entire course.(30%)
4. Two short papers (5-7 pages) will be required. These will be based on a close reading of the primary sources (indicated with an * in the syllabus below). The first will be due in class *no later than* Thursday, September 24 and the second *no later than* Thursday, November 19. Paper topics will be selected from study questions which will be provided for primary readings. Papers will be due at the beginning of class on the Thursday on which the chosen text has been assigned. *Late papers will not be accepted.* Papers may not be rewritten but students may write additional papers, following the guidelines above. The two best papers will be considered in the final course grade. (30%)

¹ John Najemy, *Italy in the Age of the Renaissance*, p. 4.

Texts to Purchase

- Trevor Dean, *The Towns of Italy in the later Middle Ages*, Manchester University Press, 2000. ISBN 0-7190-5204-1
- John M. Najemy, ed., *Italy in the Age of The Renaissance*, Oxford University Press, 2004. ISBN 978-0-19-870040-1
- John Wright, trans., *The Life of Cola Di Rienzo*, Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1975. ISBN 0-88844-267-X
- Gene Brucker, ed., *Two Memoirs of Renaissance Florence: The Diaries of Buonaccorso Pitti and Gregorio Dati*, Waveland Press, 1991. ISBN 0-88133-662-X

Course Outline

I. (August 20) Medieval Italy

Recommended: John M. Najemy, "Introduction: Italy and the Renaissance," in *Italy in the Age of the Renaissance*, 1-17.

II. (August 25 and 27) The Rise of the Communes

- Edward Coleman, "Cities and communes," in *Italy in the Central Middle Ages*, pp. 27-57. (electronic reserve)
- Selections from Villani, pp.108-113, John of Viterbo, pp.121-123, and "The Statutes of Volterra" pp.154-157. (electronic reserve, please print out)
- * Boncompagno da Signa, *The Siege of Ancona*, (electronic reserve, please print out)
- Trevor Dean, *The Towns of Italy in the later Middle Ages*, pp. 5-10 and documents 1-3, 17-25 and 98

III. (September 1 and 3) Magnates and Popolani

Andrea Zorzi, "The popolo," in *Italy in the Age of the Renaissance*, pp.145-164

Dean, pp.141-145 and documents 4-12, 114-16, 36, 58-66, 71, 73-76, 96.

IV. (September 8 and 10) The Rise of the Signori : Padua and the rhetorical defense of liberty

- J. K. Hyde, *Padua in the Age of Dante*, 193-219 (electronic reserve)
- Trevor Dean, "The rise of the signori," in *Italy in the Central Middle Ages*, pp. 104-124.(electronic reserve)
- Dean, pp. 213-216, documents 101-104
- *Albertino Mussato, *Ecerinis* (electronic reserve, please print out)
- *Rolandino of Padua, *Cronica*, Book. I, chapters I, III-V; Bk. III, chap. I-III; Bk. IV, chap. VII-IX and XV; Bk. VII, chap. XIII; Bk. VIII, chap. VIII, XII-XIV; Bk. IX, chap. II; Bk. XII, chap. VIII, IX, XVII-XIX, (electronic reserve, please print out)

V (September 15 and October 17) The Scholastic defense of liberty

- *Bartolus of Sassoferrato, *De Tyrannia*, (electronic reserve, please print out)
- *Marsilius of Padua, selections from *Defensor Pacis*, (electronic reserve, please print out)
- *Remigio de Girolami, excerpts from *De Bono Communi* (electronic reserve, please print out and bring on Tuesday)

VI. (September 22 and 24) Urban Spirituality

- Daniel. R Lesnick, *Preaching in Medieval Florence*, pp. 35-45 and 63-65 (electronic reserve)
- *Thomas of Celano, excerpts from *The First Life of St. Francis*, Bk. I chapters 1, 2, 4-10, 12-16, 20-24, 28-30; Bk. II chapters 3 & 8. *The Second Life of St. Francis*, Bk. I, chapters 9 & 11; Bk. II chapters 7, 8, 25-42, 57, 58, 73, 74. (handout)

VII. (September 29 and October 1) Civic Religion

- Augustine Thompson, O.P, "The Holy City," in *Cities of God: The Religion of the Italian Communes 1125-1325*, pp.103-140 (electronic reserve)
- Dean, pp. 63-71, documents 26-35 and 37-43.

VIII. (October 6 and 8) Communal Economies, The Flowering of the Vita Civile and the crises of the fourteenth century

- Dean, documents 41, 44-46, 48, 77, 78, 79
- Boccaccio, *Decameron* VI, 6 "The nobility of the Baronci" and VI, 7 "The Wit of Madonna Filippa" <http://books.google.com> (search for Decameron) pp.87-93
- Giovanni Villani, *The Chronicle of Giovanni Villani*, Book XI, Chapter xciv, from Lopez and Ryamond, *Medieval Trade in the Mediterranean*, pp. 71-74 (electronic reserve please print out)

Midterm

IX. (October 13 and 15) The Renaissance City-States: Milan

- John Najemy, "Governments and governance," in *Italy in the Age of the Renaissance*, pp.184-207
- Dean, documents 13, 86, 87, 89, 90, 91, 106, 107, 108
- Ordinances of Alborno*, in E. Emerton, *Humanism and Tyranny*, pp. 217-226, 229-240, 246-251 (electronic reserve please print out and bring to class)
- D.M. Bueno de Mesquita, "The place of despotism in Italian politics," pp. 301-31. (electronic reserve)

X. (October 20 and 22) Rome: The Revival of a popular republic

Paul Hetherington, *Medieval Rome: A Portrait of the City and its Life*, pp.30-48
(electronic reserve)

**The Life of Cola di Rienzo*

XI. (October 27 and 29) Humanism and Urban culture

Robert Black, "Education and the emergence of a literate society," in *Italy in the Age of the Renaissance*, pp.18-33.

Francesco Petrarca, *The Ascent of Mt. Ventoux* (electronic reserve, please print out and bring to class)

Dean, documents 23-25

XII. (November 3 and 5) Florence: Civic Humanism and the Ideal of Republican Liberty

Carol Everhart Quillen, "Humanism and the lure of antiquity," in *Italy in the Age of the Renaissance*, pp. 37-54.

Leonardo Bruni, *Life of Dante* (electronic reserve, please print out)

* Leonardo Bruni, *Panegyric on the City of Florence* (electronic reserve, please print out)

XIII. (November 10 and 12) Urban Elites and the Representation of Power

Franco Franceschi, "The economy: worth and wealth," in *Italy in the Age of the Renaissance*, pp. 124-144.

Dale Kent, "The power of the elites: family, patronage, and the state," in *Italy in the Age of the Renaissance*, pp. 165-183

*Buonaccorso Pitti & Gregorio Dati, *Two Memoirs of Renaissance Florence*.

XIV. (November 17 and 19) The Crisis of the Fifteenth Century

Allison Brown, "Rethinking the Renaissance in the aftermath of Italy's crisis," in *Italy in the Age of the Renaissance*, pp. 246-265.

*Machiavelli, *The Prince*, www.constitution.org/mac/prince00.htm and selections from *The Discourses*, Bk I, Introduction, chapters 1-6, 9, 12, 17, 58, 59; Bk. II, Introduction, chapter 2, Bk.III, chapters 8 and 9 (electronic reserve, please print out)

*Lodovico Alamanni, "The Making of a Courtier" (handout)

XV. (November 24) Venice: Myth and Reality

Dean, document 97

Edward. Muir, "The Myth of Venice," in *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice*, pp.13-61.

Poggio Bracciolini, "In Praise of the Venetian Republic" (handout)

XVI. (December 1 and 3) The Legacy of the Italian City States