

The Artist as Genius

LSHS-400-30

Professor:

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Course Purpose: During the European Renaissance, the position of the artist in society changed rapidly. From medieval craftsman, the artist's role was transformed into that of a visionary, creative individual, a genius, in keeping with the tenets of Renaissance humanism. As the contexts of European life became more secular, this sense of artistic genius went beyond imaginative creativity to embrace the priestly role of visionary, seer, conduit to the life of the soul. This course traces that evolution, particularly in the Renaissance. It looks forward to Romanticism and Modernism as well, and considers the relationships of literary and musical arts to the visual arts.

Procedures: Classes will follow the seminar format, with discussion generated from all participants. Students will lead class during regular meetings and in the project seminar. Each class presentation will begin with ten minutes of formal presentation, ending with two discussion questions. The presenter will then lead discussion based on those questions. For the **in-class report**, select some specific aspect of the reading assignments for the week, and hand in your notes. For the **project seminar**, select one aspect of the project to give us a sense of its overall character.

Tips on Giving Reports:

- Narrow your subject. In ten minutes you will be far more comfortable doing a detailed analysis of one work by Piero della Francesca, revealing a few of his central artistic strategies and objectives, than you will doing "The Life and Work of Piero della Francesca."
- Use notes, rather than reading a full text. Any and all appropriate media may be used as part of the presentation.
- Limit your report to 10 minutes. I will "call time" if you go over.
- Focus on creating good discussion questions. They are essential to the success of your report.
- Be prepared to lead the discussion.

Writing: Each student will submit a project topic proposal by **June 10**. Projects may be (a) traditional research papers, including annotated bibliography, or (b) non-traditional modes, such as film, videocassette, drama, music or photography. Non-traditional projects must be accompanied by a 5 to 6 page written description of concept and procedures, plus an annotated bibliography. BLS projects should be 13 to 16 pages; MLS projects 18 to 21 pages. Each project should examine some aspect of the course, not limited to those works on the syllabus. Look around and within yourself. All **seminar projects are due July 22**.

Disabilities Statement: If you believe you have a disability, then you should contact the Academic Resource Center (arc@georgetown.edu) for further information. The Center is

located in the Leavey Center, Suite 335. The Academic Resource Center is the campus office responsible for reviewing documentation provided by students with disabilities and for determining reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and University policies.

Class Assignments:

NOTE: This class will be supported by its Blackboard online site, and some study materials will be available in that medium.

The Renaissance: Italy

- June 3 Alberti, *On Painting*; Piero della Francesca
NOTE: *Please read On Painting before this class.*
- June 10 Vasari, Piero della Francesca; Botticelli
- June 17 Vasari, Leonardo
- June 24 Vasari, Michelangelo

The Renaissance: Northern Europe

- July 1 Van Eyck; Durer; Shakespeare (sonnets to be assigned)

Romanticism

- July 8 Blake; Beethoven
- July 12 **Saturday Class:** Museum Tour at National Gallery, 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Modernism

- July 15 Sargent; Picasso

- July 22 Project Seminar

Grades: Semester grades will be based on class participation, the class report, and the project (about 25%, 25%, and 50% respectively). All late written work will be penalized unless prior arrangements are made.

Texts:

- Alberti, *On Painting*. Ed. Kemp. Penguin Classics. 978-0140433319
- Erdman, *The Illuminated Blake*. Dover. 978-0486272344
- Miller, *Einstein, Picasso*. Basic Books. 978-0465018604
- Partridge, *Art of Renaissance Rome*. Prentice Hall. 978-0131938328
- Tomlinson, *Van Eyck*. Chaucer Press. 978-1904449348
- Vasari, *Lives of the Artists*. Oxford UP. 978-0192834102