

Dr. Max Grossman
Fox Fine Arts A460
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ARTH 3315
Fall 2025
CRN# 15900
T/Th 10:30-11:50am
Fox Fine Arts A458

Early Renaissance Italian Art

The two centuries between the birth of Dante Alighieri in 1265 and the death of Cosimo de' Medici in 1464 witnessed one of the greatest artistic revolutions in the history of Western civilization. The unprecedented economic expansion in major Italian cities and concomitant spread of humanistic culture and philosophy gave rise to what has come to be called the Renaissance, a complex and multifaceted movement embracing a wide range of intellectual developments. This course will treat the artistic production of the Italian city-republics in the late Duecento, Trecento and early Quattrocento, with particular emphasis on panel and fresco painting in Siena, Florence, Rome and Venice. The Early Italian Renaissance will be considered within its historical, political and social context, beginning with the careers of Duccio di Buoninsegna and Giotto di Bondone, progressing through the generation of Gentile da Fabriano, Filippo Brunelleschi and Masaccio, and concluding with the era of Leon Battista Alberti and Piero della Francesca.

INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Grossman earned his B.A. in Art History and English at the University of California-Berkeley, and his M.A., M.Phil. and Ph.D. in Art History at Columbia University. After seven years of residence in Tuscany, he completed his dissertation on the civic architecture, urbanism and iconography of the Sienese Republic in the Middle Ages and Early Renaissance. He served on the faculty of the School of Art and Design at San Jose State University in 2006-2009, taught art history for Stanford University in 2007-2009, and then joined the Department of Art at The University of Texas at El Paso, where he is Associate Professor of Art History. During summers he is Director of the Roma Aeterna study abroad program while he conducts research in Italy for his publications. He has presented papers and chaired sessions at conferences throughout the United States, including at the annual meeting of the Renaissance Society of America, and in Europe, at the biennial meetings of the European Architectural History Network. In May 2015, the Italian Art Society sponsored his triple session, "Civic Foundation Legends in Medieval Italian Art," for the 50th International Congress on Medieval Studies in Kalamazoo, Michigan. The following October, he gave a lecture at Humanities West in San Francisco, "Italian Civic Palaces in the Age of the City Republics." In April 2016, at the 62nd Annual Conference of the Renaissance Society of America in Boston, he presented his paper, "The Castle of Bracciano and the Advent of Artillery: Francesco di Giorgio Martini in Latium"; and in November, he chaired a session on medieval Florentine architecture at the Ladis Trecento Conference in New Orleans. In March 2017, he served as a discussant on a panel at the annual meeting of the Society for Applied Anthropology in Santa Fe. His article "A Case of Double Identity: The Public and

Private Faces of the Palazzo Tolomei in Siena” was published in the *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* in March 2013. His conference paper “Sienese Fortifications in the Age of the Guelph Commune” was published in *Investigating and Writing Architectural History: Subjects, Methodologies and Frontiers* (Turin, Italy: Politecnico di Torino, 2014). His article “Saving Downtown: An Architectural Survey and National Register Nomination for El Paso, Texas” appeared in *The Alliance Review* in February 2017. His proposal for a co-edited volume entitled *Condottieri and Courty Culture in Renaissance Latium: The Orsini of Bracciano* has just been published by Peter Lang (August 2019). His book, *El Paso Architecture*, which treats the architectural history of El Paso and the surrounding region from 1659 through 1945 is under contract with Arcadia Publishing and will be published in summer 2019. He has submitted a book proposal stemming from his doctoral thesis, the first synthetic treatment of the total architectural production of an Italian city-state, to Brepols Publishers and it is currently under review. At present, his research focuses on the political iconography of the Sienese commune, as manifest in painting, sculpture, architecture, coinage, seals and manuscripts. In addition, he is studying the development of the Italian civic palace, from its origins in the twelfth century through its final transformations in the quattrocento, with the aim of challenging and revising accepted paradigms while forming a new critical apparatus for interpreting the architecture and urbanism of medieval and Renaissance city-states. Off campus, Dr. Grossman served for several years as Vice-Chair of the El Paso County Historical Commission. He currently serves on the Board of Directors of Preservation Texas in Austin and on the Executive Board of The Trost Society, the only non-profit institution in West Texas focusing on historic preservation. He presides over the group’s Architectural Preservation Committee, whose mission is to formulate and implement strategies for protecting the architectural heritage of El Paso while promoting the economic development of the historic districts of both the City and County. Finally, he is the founder and Director of Operations of the El Paso History Alliance, a virtual cultural community with more than 89,000 followers.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. To acquire a deep appreciation of the artworks of the Early Italian Renaissance, and an understanding of the diverse historical, cultural and socio-political conditions of their creation.
2. To master the basic art historical terminology of the Renaissance period and attain the necessary analytical and critical skills for describing, dating and interpreting Renaissance artworks.
3. To understand how Renaissance artists developed innovative methods for communicating meaning and truth, and how their visions and aims evolved over time.
4. To analyze critically the conceptual meaning of the “Renaissance” in the period immediately following its invention in the fourteenth century.
5. To improve one’s ability to respond to works of art both analytically and affectively, and to write clearly, concisely, coherently, and with grammatical correctness.

6. To build a solid intellectual foundation on which to expand one's knowledge of art history in other specialized upper-division courses.

COURSE PREREQUISITES

There are no prerequisites for this course, although completion of ARTH 1306 is recommended.

COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS

Please stay home if you have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. If you are feeling unwell, please let the instructor know as soon as possible, so that he can work on appropriate accommodations. If you have tested positive for COVID-19, you are encouraged to report your results to covidaction@utep.edu, so that the Dean of Students Office can provide you with support and help with communication with your professors. The Student Health Center is equipped to provide COVID-19 testing.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that people in areas of substantial or high COVID-19 transmission wear face masks when indoors in groups of people. The best way that Miners can take care of Miners is to get the vaccine. If you still need the vaccine, it is widely available in the El Paso area, and will be available at no charge on campus during the first week of classes. For more information about the current rates, testing, and vaccinations, please visit epstrong.org.

All faculty, staff, and students are highly encouraged to

- Get vaccinations to protect against COVID-19 infection,
- Wear face coverings when in common areas of campus or when others are present,
- Maintain a minimum separation of six (6) feet between yourself and others, when possible, and arrange spaces to make this possible in almost all circumstances,
- Adhere to room/space limitations on number of occupants, and
- Wash hands frequently.

COURSE FORMAT AND GRADING

All lectures will be accompanied by PowerPoints with images of artworks. In addition to regular readings, students will be required to take two scheduled midterms, write a paper of at least seven pages on a topic to be assigned in class, and take a cumulative final examination. The final grade will be determined as follows:

Midterm #1	20%
Midterm #2	20%
Term paper	25%
Final examination	25%
Attendance/Participation	10%

Make-up examinations will only be permitted following a documented emergency or illness. Papers must be submitted at the start of class on the due date or will not be accepted. Unexcused failure to submit the paper on time or to show up for an exam will automatically result in a grade of 0% (F). There will be no extra-credit assignments. All grades will be calculated as follows:

94-100%	A	84-86%	B	74-76%	C	64-66%	D
90-93%	A-	80-83%	B-	70-73%	C-	60-63%	D-
87-89%	B+	77-79%	C+	67-69%	D+	<60%	F

Those students earning a post-curve grade of below 55% on both the first and second tests will be assigned a failing grade (F) for the course and dropped immediately.

Those students who will earn a failing grade (F) in the course no matter how well they perform on the final examination will not be permitted to take the final examination and will be assigned a failing grade (F) for the course.

CLASS ATTENDANCE AND BEHAVIOR

Attendance at all class meetings is absolutely mandatory as well as essential for success in this course since a substantial portion of the material on the midterms and final examination will be discussed only in lectures and will not be available in the assigned readings. Students who do not plan to attend every single lecture (and punctually) are advised to drop the course immediately and re-register in the future, when perfect attendance will not be an issue. Role will be taken at the start of every class. Students are required to arrive on time, refrain from talking, eating, sleeping, kicking up their feet, and using electronic devices; and they must remain for the duration of the class. The following rules are expected to be observed:

1. Students who arrive late must see the instructor after class in order to be marked as present. Arrival in class 30 minutes late or more will be counted as an absence.
2. If a student must leave early and has a documented excuse, the instructor must be informed before the start of class; otherwise the student will be marked as absent. Only serious illness or an actual emergency are legitimate excuses.
3. In the event of an excusable absence requiring missing an entire lecture, the instructor must be notified via email within 24 hours and written documentation of the absence must be sent to him within one week.

Each unexcused absence will result in a 2% reduction of the final grade. Each late arrival will be counted as half an unexcused absence and thus result in a 1% reduction of the final grade. Five

unexcused absences will automatically result in a failing grade (F) for the course. Two unexcused absences between the first class and Census Day (September 10) will result in an automatic and permanent drop from the course.

Any student who engages in disrespectful behavior may be expelled from the classroom and marked as absent. In the event of a second offense, that student may be permanently dropped from the course and assigned a final course grade of “F”.

ADDING, DROPPING, WITHDRAWALS, PASS/FAIL, INCOMPLETES

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about adding and dropping, and for withdrawing from the course in a timely manner if it becomes necessary. The instructor will not add students after the first week of class who failed to attend both the first and second lectures. Students are responsible for understanding that October 31 is the last day to drop the course. An incomplete grade (I) can be assigned at the discretion of the instructor and approval of the department chair; but in order to be granted an “Incomplete”, the student must be passing the course *and* encountering a legitimate emergency beyond his/her control that requires extra time to complete the coursework.

LAPTOP COMPUTERS AND NOTE-TAKING

The use of computers and other electronic devices (including recording devices) are prohibited during class. It is important that students focus their attention on the lectures and projected images without distractions and that they take careful and detailed notes. Students should write down and memorize key terms, phrases and dates. Any student caught using an electronic device during class will be marked as absent and expelled from the classroom.

LIBERAL ARTS HONORS PROGRAM

This class has been designated as a Liberal Arts Honors Program [LAHP] course. It has received this designation because it features at least five of the Honors course criteria, which include student leadership, advanced readings and/or reviews, opportunities for intensive writing, opportunities for intensive research, opportunities to utilize technology, opportunities to make extensive use of campus resources, community-based experiences, pre-professional opportunities, and development of critical thinking. In broader terms, this course is honors-designated because of its creativity and/or intellectual rigor, both of which are integral components of the Liberal Arts Honors Program. No additional coursework is necessary for this course to count towards the LAHP Honors minor. If you are not a member of the LAHP, and are interested in the program, please visit the LAHP website at <https://www.utep.edu/liberalarts/lahp> or contact LAHP at lahp@utep.edu. If you join the Liberal Arts Honors Program, this course will count towards the LAHP minor!

BLACKBOARD

All files posted on Blackboard are the intellectual property of the instructor and may only be used for Art History 3315, except with his written consent. These include but are not limited to:

- 1) The course syllabus.
- 2) Supplementary reading assignments.
- 3) A study sheet listing key artworks in the order in which they appear in the course and textbook. This should be brought to class so that lectures may be followed easily.
- 4) PowerPoint lecture files corresponding to each section of the course. These include all key artworks from the lectures, as well as dates, terms, and other information.
- 5) PowerPoint flashcard files that contain all the study sheet images that must be memorized for exams.

PREPARATION FOR EXAMS

Attendance at all lectures, punctual completion of all assignments, and regular review and memorization of key artworks are essential for earning a passing grade on examinations. The two midterms and final will each consist of four sections:

- 1) Image identifications
- 2) Multiple-choice questions
- 3) Fill-in-the-blanks
- 4) Essays

To prepare for the exams, students should use the PowerPoint lectures files along with their notes and textbook to review all the course material very thoroughly. The major artistic periods and themes should be well understood, as well as all chronological sequences and vocabulary terms (in yellow in the PowerPoint lecture files), and other important facts discussed in lectures.

Furthermore, the artworks on the study sheet must be completely memorized: the names of artists (when listed), the titles of artworks or buildings, locations (when listed), dates of execution (within a margin of error of 10 years), and mediums (when listed). The PowerPoint flashcard files are designed to help with memorization.

APPOINTMENTS WITH INSTRUCTOR

The instructor will be available to meet with students online by appointment and can best be reached via his email address: megrossman@utep.edu.

TEACHING ASSISTANT

The teaching assistant for this course is Eric Chavez. He will assist the instructor with grading exams, provide training on Chicago Manual of Style documentation, and administer make-up exams for students who have permission to take them. His email is echavez24@miners.utep.edu.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

Frederick Hartt and David Wilkins, History of Italian Renaissance Art: Painting, Sculpture and Architecture, 7th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2010). ISBN-10: 0205705812; ISBN-13: 9780205705818.

Recommended History Texts:

Burckhardt, Jacob, The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy (1860; reprinted London: Penguin, 1990).

Burke, Peter, The Italian Renaissance: Culture and Society in Italy, 2nd ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999).

Larner, John, Culture and Society in Italy, 1290-1420 (New York: Scribner, 1971).

Martines, Lauro, Power and Imagination: City-States in Renaissance Italy (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1988).

Najemy, John, Italy in the Age of the Renaissance: 1300-1550 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

Waley, John, The Italian City Republics, 4th ed. (London: Longman, 2010).

Recommended Writing Aids:

Barnet, Sylvan, A short guide to writing about art, 8th ed. (New York: Pearson/Longman, 2005).
Bernstein, Mashey and George Yatchisin, Writing for the Visual Arts (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2001).

Chicago Manual of Style, 16th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

Sayre, Henry M., Writing About Art, 5th ed. (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson/Prentice Hall, 2006).

Strunk, William, Jr. and E. B. White, The elements of style, illustrated by Maira Kalman (New York: Penguin Press, 2005).

Troyka, L. Quitman, Simon & Schuster handbook for writers, 6th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2002).

Turabian, Kate L., A manual for writers of term papers, theses, and dissertations: Chicago style for students and researchers, 7th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

THE UTEP LIBRARY AND COURSE RESERVE SHELF

The university's main library is an invaluable resource and contains many relevant books and periodicals. Students are welcome to contact the library staff for assistance with research.

POLICY ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY

Cheating, plagiarism or collusion on any assignment or test will be reported to the Dean of Students and may result in a failing grade for the course and/or other disciplinary action. All papers must be original to the course (with no recycling of work from another class), meet all the requirements of the assignment, and properly cite all sources, including from the internet. Most importantly, all direct citations must be set in quotations and footnoted. See the [UTEP policy](#) on academic integrity and scholastic dishonesty.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ESSAY GENERATORS

The use of artificial intelligence essay generators for student papers is cheating and strictly prohibited in this course. Student papers will be analyzed with AI-detection software in order to ensure the content is authentic.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with limitations due to disabilities provided that they contact the [Center for Accommodations and Support Services \(CASS\)](#) and procure the proper documentation: (tel: 747-5148). Students with disabilities documented by CASS must notify the instructor to inform him of any special needs. If particular accommodations are required for the midterms and final examination, the instructor must be informed and presented with the appropriate CASS documentation or no accommodations will be provided. The teaching assistant will contact CASS students needing accommodations by email about a week before scheduled exams in order to make special arrangements.

COURSE SYLLABUS

The textbook and supplemental readings are intended to complement the lectures. The instructor may announce modifications to the syllabus during the semester, with fair notice. It is expected that the reading assignments will be completed each week in a timely manner (by the Tuesday after they are assigned) in order that students are adequately prepared for the corresponding lectures as well as the examinations.

Hartt and Wilkins, chap. 1. (to be read by Aug. 28)

Aug. 26	The Legacy of Rome
Aug. 28	The Age of the City-Republics

Hartt and Wilkins, chap. 2 (41-57).

John Larner, "Cultural Change: 1290-1340" and "Government and Patronage: I", Culture and Society in Italy, 1290-1420 (New York, 1971), 7-34, 62-96.

Cennino Cennini, "The Craftsman's Handbook," A Documentary History of Art, vol. 1, The Middle Ages and the Renaissance, ed. Elizabeth G. Holt, (Princeton, NJ, 1981), 136-50.

Sep. 2 **Duecento Art in Tuscany and Rome**
Sep. 4 **Duecento Art in Tuscany and Rome**

Hartt and Wilkins, chap. 2 (57-71).

Giorgio Vasari, "Preface to the Lives", "Cimabue", in Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors and Architects (1550-1568).

Colin Cunningham, "For the honour and beauty of the city: the design of town halls," in Diana Norman, ed., *Siena, Padua and Florence: Art, Religion and Society 1280-1400*, vol. II (New Haven/London, 1995), 29-53.

Sep. 9 **Duecento Art in Tuscany and Rome**
Sep. 11 **Duecento Art in Tuscany and Rome**

Hartt and Wilkins, chap. 4 (103-09), chap. 3 (73-86)

Diana Norman, "'A Noble Panel': Duccio's *Maestà*," in Diana Norman, ed., Siena, Florence and Padua, 55-80.

Sep. 16 **Duccio di Buoninsegna**
Sep. 18 **Giotto di Bondone**

Hartt and Wilkins, chap. 3 (86-101).

Vasari, "Giotto", in Lives, op. cit.

Sep. 23 **Giotto di Bondone**
Sep. 25 **Florentine Art of the Early Trecento**

Hartt and Wilkins, chap. 4 (110-18).

Sep. 30 **Sieneese Art of the Early Trecento**
Oct. 2 **MIDTERM #1**

Hartt and Wilkins, chap. 4 (119-35).

Randolph Starn, "Introduction", Ambrogio Lorenzetti: The Palazzo Pubblico, Siena (New York, 1994), pp. 15-New York, 1994), 9-37.

Oct. 7 **Sienese Art of the Early Trecento**
Oct. 9 **Sienese Art of the Early Trecento (PAPER ASSIGNED)**

Hartt and Wilkins, chap. 5.

Larner, "Italy in Crisis, 1340-1380," in Culture and society, op. cit., 121-57.

Oct. 14 **Later Gothic Art in Tuscany and Northern Italy**
Oct. 16 **Later Gothic Art in Tuscany and Northern Italy**

Hartt and Wilkins, chap. 6 (159-74).

Richard Goldthwaite, "The Reasons for Building: Needs and Taste," The Building of Renaissance Florence: An Economic and Social History (Baltimore, 1980), 67-90, 102-12.

Oct. 21 **Filippo Brunelleschi**
Oct. 23 **Filippo Brunelleschi**

Hartt and Wilkins, chap. 6 (174-79), chap. 7.

Vasari, "Ghiberti", in Lives, op. cit.

Oct. 28 **Early Quattrocento Architecture in Florence**
Oct. 30 **Early Quattrocento Architecture in Florence**

Hartt and Wilkins, chap. 8 (203-15).

Vasari, "Masaccio", in Lives, op. cit.

Nov. 4 **Early Quattrocento Sculpture, Gentile da Fabriano**
Nov. 6 **MIDTERM #2**

Hartt and Wilkins, chap. 8 (215-20).

Christopher Hibbert, The House of the Medici: Its Rise and Fall (New York, 1974), 30-63.

Nov. 11 **Masaccio**
Nov. 13 **Masaccio**

Hartt and Wilkins, chap. 9.

Vasari, “Fra Angelico”, in Lives, op. cit.

Nov. 18 **Fra Angelico and Fra Filippo Lippi**
Nov. 20 **Fra Angelico and Fra Filippo Lippi**

Hartt and Wilkins, chap. 10 (239-49).

Leon Battista Alberti, in John R. Spencer, *On Painting: Revised edition*,
(New Haven, CT, 1966).

Nov. 25 **Fra Angelico and Fra Filippo Lippi**

Hartt and Wilkins, chap. 10 (249-61).

Laurie Schneider, “Donatello’s Bronze David,” The Art Bulletin, 55:2
(Jun., 1973), 213-16.

Dec. 2 **Leon Battista Alberti**
Dec. 4 **Leon Battista Alberti (PAPER DUE)**

Dec. 11 **FINAL EXAM: 10:00-12:45pm**