

## **MASKING POLICY/COVID-19 STATEMENT**

We know from existing data that wearing a mask in public can help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the community (Lyu & Wehby, 2020; CDC, 2020; Johns Hopkins Medicine, 2020). Penn State University requires everyone to wear a face mask in all university buildings, including classrooms, regardless of vaccination status. **ALL STUDENTS MUST** wear a mask appropriately (i.e., covering both your mouth and nose) while you are indoors on campus. This is to protect your health and safety as well as the health and safety of your classmates, instructor, and the university community. **Anyone attending class without a mask will be asked to put one on or leave. Instructors will end class if anyone present refuses to appropriately wear a mask for the duration of class.** Students experiencing any illness and especially COVID-19 related symptoms should not attend class in person.

Failure to comply with university policies related to COVID-19 may result in a violation of the [Student Code of Conduct](#). If you feel you cannot wear a mask during class, please speak with your adviser immediately about your options for altering your schedule. **The format of this class is exclusively in person; class sessions will not be offered via Zoom or virtually in any other manner.**

In the event that the instructor of this class is unable to teach in person, due to illness or need to quarantine, classes will be met by a temporary instructor, delivered remotely and synchronously (via Zoom), or addressed through asynchronous assignments and activities. If classes are remote and synchronous, students can bring their own devices to the classroom during the scheduled class time to connect to class from that location.

### **Italian 497**

**The Pennsylvania State University**

**Fall 2021**

### ***Growing Up in the Italian Renaissance: Family, School, Sport***

**Prof. Michele Rossi**

#### **Course Description**

Imagine growing up in the Italian Renaissance. How would that be different from our current lifestyle? This course will explore topics such as family, education (with special attention to the physical training), and ethical values through various literary genres and authors: the epistle (Francesco Petrarca), the treatise (Pier Paolo Vergerio, Leonardo Bruni, Leon Battista Alberti), the short story (Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron*), the poem (Laura Battiferri, Veronica Franco, Gaspara Stampa), and the comedy (Machiavelli). We will also watch and discuss a movie (*Wondrous Boccaccio* by Paolo and Vittorio Taviani, 2015), and investigate the intersections between literature and art, with the final goal of illuminating the fascinating process of growing up during the Italian Renaissance.

**The course will be taught in English. Prerequisite: fifth-semester standing**

## Contacts and Information

Michele Rossi, Ph.D.

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Office: 44 Burrowes Bldg.

Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday, 2:00pm-3:00pm, and by appointment

Class Schedule: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, 10:10am-11:00am, Engineering Unit B 112



### Major Readings:

1. Petrarca, *Letters on Familiar Matters* (selections)
2. Vergerio, *Book on the Character and Studies Befitting a Free-Born Youth* (selections)
3. Bruni, *The Study of Literature* (complete)
4. Alberti, *The Family in Renaissance Florence* (selections)
5. Boccaccio, *The Decameron* (selections)
6. Battiferri, *Poems* (selections)
7. Franco, *Poems in Terza Rima* and *Familiar Letters* (selections)
8. Stampa, *Poems* (selections)
9. Machiavelli, *The Mandrake Root* (complete)

**All the readings (even secondary readings) will be posted on Canvas. You must read the assigned texts before class.**

## Movie:

1. *Wondrous Boccaccio* by Paolo and Vittorio Taviani (2015)

## Course Requirements

- **Attendance (5%).** Class participation is not the same as attendance and constitutes a substantial part of your final grade (see below), and you cannot participate in class unless you are present. **You are not permitted to miss class** with the exception of absences due to officially documented, university-approved curricular and extracurricular activities. 4 late arrivals (or two late arrivals of 15 minutes or more) are equivalent to one absence. **You are responsible for all material covered in class, regardless of whether you are present.** If you do miss class, you should get in touch with your instructor or a classmate as soon as possible to find out what assignments you missed. Absence from class is NOT an excuse for the late submission of work; it should be recognized that not all work can be “made-up” and that absences can affect student performance in a class. **If an evaluative event will be missed due to an unavoidable absence, you must contact your instructor as soon as the unavoidable absence is known to discuss ways to make up the work. An instructor might not consider an unavoidable absence legitimate if you do not contact the instructor beforehand.** Students will be held responsible for using only *legitimate, unavoidable reasons* for requesting a make-up in the event of a missed class or evaluative event ([Policy 42-27](#)). Requests for missing class or an evaluative event due to reasons that are based on false claims may be considered violations of the policy on Academic Integrity (Policy [49-20](#)). [University Health Services may provide verification for significant prolonged illnesses or injuries lasting at least a week resulting in absence from classes.](#)
- **Class Participation (18%).** Class participation is vital in order to complete successfully this course, and you will be graded weekly. Highest grades are earned by students who come to class regularly (see the Attendance Policy above), participate actively, and are well prepared every time, having read the materials for each class. In class you will also work and present in pairs / small groups: it is essential that you provide an effective contribution and collaborate in a positive way with your classmates.
- **In-class Short Oral Presentation (7%).** During the semester one week will be devoted to short oral presentations (about five minutes) by students. You will pick-up a topic of your interest, present it to the class, and be ready to answer questions/comments both from your classmates and the professor.
- **Quizzes (24%).** There will be **four (4) written quizzes** throughout the semester during class time. Guidelines will be provided.
- **Midterm Project (12%).** Midterm projects are **due on Friday, October 8**. Detailed guidelines will be provided. You will have the possibility to decide your own project. Some options: a book review, a comment/description of art images connected to the topic of our class, a creative work (poem, short story), etc. Highest grades are earned by students who show originality and a deep analysis of the topics covered in the first part of our course.

- **In-class Final Oral Presentation (12%).** The last two weeks of our class will be dedicated to individual class presentations. You will decide a topic with the professor and present it in class. Detailed guidelines will be provided.
- **Final Paper / Final Project (22%).** Final papers/projects are **due on Friday, November 19 (first draft) and Friday, December 10 (final draft).** You can write a classic research paper (minimum 5 pages, maximum 8, double space, in English, with detailed bibliography), or create your own final project (for example: film a video, create a graphic novel, create a work of art, etc.). In both cases you need to discuss ideas, topics, structure of the project, etc. with me. Your final paper/project needs to be well connected with the readings and the topics we cover and discuss in class. Highest grades are earned by students who submit original, well-finished, and meaningful final papers/projects.

**Grading Scale** (based on departmental guidelines)

There is **no curving or rounding** of the grades in this course

**A:** 95.0-100.0    **A-:** 90.0-94.9    **B+:** 87.7-89.9    **B:** 83.3-87.6    **B-:** 80.0-83.2

**C+:** 75.0-79.9    **C:** 70.0-74.9    **D:** 60.0-69.9    **F:** 0.0-59.9

***There is no extra credit in this course***

**Late Work:** Work that is handed in late automatically receives a lower grade.

**Academic Integrity** - In accordance with *PSU Senate Policy 49-20*, plagiarism, cheating, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor may lead to lowered course grades, a failing in the course, or more severe measures, depending on the gravity of the individual case according to the judgment of the Academic Integrity Committee. Visit <http://www.psu.edu/dept/oue/aappm/G-9.html> for further information. For other general university policies regarding Academic Code of Conduct, please read <http://www.sa.psu.edu/ja/conduct.shtml>.

**Cell Phones:** Cell phones are to be turned off and stored before class begins. The professor reserves the right to penalize a student's final grade for continued cell phone interruptions (including sending and receiving text messages).

**Laptops/Tablet Computers:** Any use of laptops or tablet computers unrelated to coursework is prohibited and the professor reserves the right to penalize a student's final grade for disregarding this policy.

**University Policy on Disabilities** – Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University's educational programs. If you have a disability-related need for reasonable academic adjustments, contact the Office for Disability Services (ODS) at 814-863-1807(V/TTY). For further information regarding ODS, please visit the Office for Disability Services website at <http://equity.psu.edu/ods/>. In order to receive consideration for course accommodations, you must contact ODS and provide documentation (see the documentation guidelines at <http://equity.psu.edu/ods/guidelines/documentation-guidelines>). If the documentation supports the need for academic adjustments, ODS will provide a letter identifying appropriate academic

adjustments. Please share this letter and discuss the adjustments with your instructor as early in the course as possible. You must contact ODS and request academic adjustment letters at the beginning of each semester.

## CLASS SCHEDULE

(note: this is a tentative schedule. You will find updated versions of this syllabus on Canvas)

### *Introduction: What is Renaissance? Francesco Petrarca: The Father of Humanism?*

#### WEEK 1

##### **Monday, August 23**

Course Introduction. What is the Renaissance? Examples of Renaissance art.

##### **Wednesday, August 25**

Francesco Petrarca, *Letters on Familiar Matters* (IV, 1: on climbing the Windy Mountain).

Readings: Diane Wolfthal, *The Bed in the Arnolfini Portrait*; Petrarch 1

##### **Friday, August 27**

Francesco Petrarca, *Letters on Familiar Matters* (VII, 17, and XII, 3: on education).

Readings: Petrarch 2; Bartlett, *Petrarch*

#### WEEK 2

##### **Monday, August 30**

Francesco Petrarca, *Letters on Familiar Matters* (XXII, 1: on marriage; XXIV, 13: conclusion of the book)

Reading: Petrarch 3

##### **Wednesday, September 1**

#### **QUIZ 1**

Francesco Petrarca: conclusions

Readings: review all the readings done until now in preparation for Quiz 1

##### **Friday, September 3**

Pier Paolo Vergerio, *Book on the Character and Studies Befitting a Free-Born Youth*. Introduction and reflections about family.

Readings: Vergerio 1; Bartlett, *Humanism and Education*

### *Humanist Treatises: Vergerio, Bruni, Alberti*

#### WEEK 3

##### **Monday, September 6**

Labor Day – No Classes

**Wednesday, September 8**

Pier Paolo Vergerio, *Book on the Character and Studies Befitting a Free-Born Youth*. Education and liberal studies.

Reading: Vergerio 1

**Friday, September 10**

Pier Paolo Vergerio, *Book on the Character and Studies Befitting a Free-Born Youth*. Physical education in the Italian Renaissance.

Reading: Vergerio 2

**WEEK 4****Monday, September 13**

Female education in the Italian Renaissance. Leonardo Bruni, *The Study of Literature*.

Reading: Bruni 1

**Wednesday, September 15**

Female education in the Italian Renaissance. Leonardo Bruni, *The Study of Literature*.

Reading: Bruni 2

**Friday, September 17****QUIZ 2**

Female education in the Italian Renaissance: Conclusions.

Readings: review all the readings about Vergerio and Bruni (plus Bartlett, *Humanism and Education*) in preparation for Quiz 2

**WEEK 5****Monday, September 20**

Physical education and female education in Leon Battista Alberti's *The Family in Renaissance Florence*.

Readings: Alberti 1; Bartlett, *Humanism and Women*

**Wednesday, September 22**

Marriage in Leon Battista Alberti's *The Family in Renaissance Florence*.

Reading: Alberti 2

**Friday, September 24**

Leon Battista Alberti's *The Family in Renaissance Florence*: conclusions.

Readings: Bartlett, *Marriage and the family*; review Alberti 1 and 2

**WEEK 6****Monday, September 27**

Short presentations

**Wednesday, September 29**

Short presentations

**Friday, October 1**  
Short presentations

***Boccaccio's 'Decameron'***

**WEEK 7**

**Monday, October 4**  
Giovanni Boccaccio: Introduction  
Reading: Boccaccio 1

**Wednesday, October 6**  
Familiar honor and passionate love: Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron* IV, 1 (Ghismunda and Guiscardo).  
Reading: Boccaccio 1

**Friday, October 8**  
The misadventures of a noble lover: Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron* V, 9 (Federigo degli Alberighi).  
Reading: Boccaccio 2  
**MIDTERM PROJECT DUE**

**WEEK 8**

**Monday, October 11**  
Painters and ghosts in the Italian Renaissance: Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron* VIII, 3 (Calandrino).  
Reading: Boccaccio 3

**Wednesday, October 13**  
Religion and desire: Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron* IX, 2 (The abbess and the priest's pants), and X, 4 (Messer Gentil de' Carisendi and Monna Catalina).  
Reading: Boccaccio 4

**Friday, October 15**  
**QUIZ 3**  
Boccaccio's *Decameron*: conclusions  
Readings: review Boccaccio 1, 2, 3, and 4 in preparation for Quiz 3

**WEEK 9**

**Monday, October 18**  
Movie: *Wondrous Boccaccio* by Paolo and Vittorio Taviani (2015). Introduction and vision of the first part.

**Wednesday, October 20**  
Movie: *Wondrous Boccaccio* by Paolo and Vittorio Taviani (2015). Vision of the second part and discussion.

**Friday, October 22**

Movie: *Wondrous Boccaccio* by Paolo and Vittorio Taviani (2015). Vision of the third part and final discussion.

*Courtship in the Italian Renaissance*

**WEEK 10**

**Monday, October 25**

Guest Teacher: Prof. Sherry Roush (Pennsylvania State University). Caviceo.

Reading: Caviceo

**Wednesday, October 27**

Guest Teacher: Prof. Sherry Roush (Pennsylvania State University). Corfino.

Reading: Corfino

**Friday, October 29**

Courtship in the Italian Renaissance: conclusions.

Start to work on your final project!

*Italian Female Poets of the Renaissance*

**WEEK 11**

**Monday, November 1**

Italian Female Poets of the Renaissance: Gaspara Stampa.

Reading: Stampa Intro + Poems

**Wednesday, November 3**

Italian Female Poets of the Renaissance: Gaspara Stampa.

Reading: Stampa Intro + Poems

**Friday, November 5**

Italian Female Poets of the Renaissance: Laura Battiferri.

Reading: Battiferri Intro + Poems

**WEEK 12**

**Monday, November 8**

Italian Female Poets of the Renaissance: Laura Battiferri.

Reading: Battiferri Intro + Poems

**Wednesday, November 10**

Italian Female Poets of the Renaissance: Veronica Franco.

Reading: Franco Introduction + Letters



**Friday, November 12**

**QUIZ 4**

Italian Female Poets of the Renaissance: Veronica Franco.

Readings: review all the readings of Stampa, Battiferri, and Franco in preparation for Quiz 4; Franco Poems

***Machiavelli's 'The Mandrake Root'***

**WEEK 13**

**Monday, November 15**

Machiavelli's *The Mandrake Root*: song, prologue, act 1.

Readings: Machiavelli 1

**Wednesday, November 17**

Machiavelli's *The Mandrake Root*: acts 2 and 3.

Reading: Machiavelli 2

**Friday, November 19**

Machiavelli's *The Mandrake*: acts 4 and 5.

Reading: Machiavelli 3

**FINAL PAPER/PROJECT DUE (FIRST DRAFT)**

**THANKSGIVING BREAK: no classes on November 22-26**

**WEEK 14**

**Monday, November 29**

Course Conclusions

**Wednesday, December 1**

Course Conclusions

**Friday, December 3**

Final Oral Presentations

**WEEK 15**

**Monday, December 6**

Final Oral Presentations

**Wednesday, December 8**

Final Oral Presentations

**Friday, December 10**

Final Oral Presentations

**FINAL PAPER/PROJECT DUE (FINAL DRAFT)**