Summer, 2016  
Florence Program  
Course Title: Renaissance Florence and the Birth of Modern Europe  
Major authors, artists, scientists, and thinkers

1. COM 2H (4 units) satisfies the GE Arts and Humanities requirement, Civic and Cultural Literacy and the University Writing Requirement  
Dante to Galileo: The European Middle Ages to the Age of Modern Science

INSTRUCTOR: BRENDA DEEN SCHILDGEN (bdschildgen@ucdavis.edu)

Required Texts
Reader on smartsite (includes timelines, terms, dates, and selections from Dante and Alberti)

Scheduled Class Meeting Time: **Monday-Thursday**  
Place: To Be Announced at Pre-Departure Orientation

Writing Requirement: **6000 words (6 essays, two of which are revisions)**

Course Overview and Requirements

This Honors course in Comparative Literature focuses on texts from the Italian Middle Ages and Renaissance written in Italy by Florentine writers. The texts feature the explosive developments in poetry, art and architecture, political theory, and science. We begin with Dante, first major writer in the Italian language, to Machiavelli and Italian politics, the developments in affective and perspectival art and architecture, and finally to Galileo and the advent of modern science. At the same time, the course introduces you to the methods of inquiry we apply to reading and to the practice of writing employing these methods. We will examine these "major works" and situate them in their historical-cultural milieu, that is, the city of Florence, making full use of the artistic and cultural wealth of the city.

In addition to reading all the required books, you will write **four major essays**, one each week with the **fourth essay the final exam submitted online**. Two of these will be revised. Class meets M-R for 3 hours for four weeks (48 hours), with some afternoons taken up with field trips. **You are required to attend class.** I expect you to be prepared
to contribute to the classroom conversation and to advance your observations and interpretations of the works we will read together. **Because the course occurs over merely four weeks, no unexcused absences will be possible.**

Read Loren Partridge, *Art of Renaissance Florence 1400-1600* on the plane coming over.

All field trips are required because they form an essential part of the educational experience. Each week, we will visit one or two of the following sites, sometimes during class hours or in the afternoon:

**Palazzo Vecchio, Bargello, Santa Maria Novella, Santa Croce, Medici Chapels, Uffizi, Baptistery, and Machiavelli’s Inn and Winery in Percussina; Galileo’s villa in Arcetri; Galileo Museum; La Specola; Siena, Palazzo Civico and Museo**

**Grading:** The grades for all the papers will be averaged, although later papers may be given more weight. This counts as 90% of your grade. Class discussion counts 10% but it is P/NP, so your actual grade is an average of your paper grades unless you fail the class discussion requirement.

**Required Reading:**

Dante, **Inferno** and selections from the **Commedia**

Machiavelli, **The Prince**


Possibly an opera (depending on the season)

**Class Schedule (M-R)**

**Week 1**

Dante, **Inferno** and selections from the **Commedia.** Read entire **Inferno.** Also read “Usury,” Villani, “Guelfs and Ghibellines,” Villani, “Ascent of the Popolo,” “Guild Regulations,” “Regulations of Brothels,” “Local Schools and Elementary Education,” all on Smartsite.

**Monday:** **Inferno**, special attention to 1-6, 10.

**Tuesday** **Inferno** 13, 15, 17, 19; **Inferno 26, 33-34.**

**Wednesday** **Purgatorio** 1, 11, **Purgatory 29-30, 32; Paradiso 17, 33 on Smartsite**
Thursday: Visit to Siena, Palazzo Comunale and Museo Opera Duomo

Essay # 1 due

Homework: Machiavelli, The Prince

Week 2

Monday-Wednesday: Machiavelli, The Prince; visit Palazzo Vecchio

Wednesday Revision of Essay # 1 due

Thursday Visit to Machiavelli’s Winery and tavern where he wrote The Prince, in Percussina

Essay # 2 due.

Homework: Monday, “Life of Michelangelo,” in Life, Letters, and Poetry; Tuesday, Letters clustered: to the Medici (1, 50); to his family (2,4,5,6,7,13,37,38,43,44); to friends (23,27, 28); about art, St. Peter’s, Pope Julius’ tomb (2, 30,32,33,45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 51). Wednesday, all the poems, pp.139-60.

Week 3

Tuesday: Michelangelo, Letters. Visit: Bargello

Wednesday: Michelangelo, Poetry. Visit: Medici Chapels, L’Accademia

Thursday: Revision of Essay # 2 due

Homework: Tuesday-Thursday, Galileo, Read Galileo’s “Letter to Castelli,” “Letter to the Grand Duchess Queen Christina,” and “Observations on the Copernican Theory”; selections from “Dialogue on the Two Chief World Systems” (On SMARTSITE)

Week 4

Monday: Video, “Galileo’s Battle for the Heavens.” Essay # 3 due
Tuesday: Galileo’s “Letter to Castelli,” “Letter to the Grand Duchess Queen Christina.” Galileo Museum


We will visit Galileo’s villa in Arcetri

Essay # 4 Final Exam submitted online via e-mail attachment by Friday.

2. COM 180S (also a 4 unit graded course): Research Project on Tuscan history, economics, environment, politics, art, math, natural history
This is an exciting opportunity to do a focused research project. Topics are connected to the city of Florence and the Tuscan region. Among these as examples are the following, organized according to academic disciplines: a) Economics: the beginning of European banking, charging interest, and international capitalism; b) Geology, Economics, Environmental Studies, Astronomy: the history of the River Arno (flows down then up) geologically (Alvarez Gap); economically (Michelangelo’s marble was shipped upstream from Carrara to Florence; Environmental Studies: fishing; river health, flooding; transportation, etc. c) Mathematics and Astronomy: role of Math in perspectival art of the Renaissance; role of Astronomy in the building of churches; d) Natural History: collecting wildlife examples (fish, insects, etc.) beginning in the Renaissance; e) Forestry: exploitation and conservation of forests from 11th century to the present in the region; an insect is killing all the cypress trees in the region, why? f) Political Science: Machiavelli and his afterlife; g) Art History: all major Renaissance artists are Florentines (Giotto, Michelangelo, Donatello, Brunelleschi, Masaccio, Fra Angelico, etc.); h) Religious Studies: literature, art, and music and the role of religion in Renaissance Florence.

**Requirement:** Prior to program start, a proposed research project needs to be approved by the instructor. This is a proposal that includes: a) topic and why important; b) how you propose to research this topic, i.e. your methods.

At week 2, an interim report on the research project (will include topic, problem to be solved, what you are doing, what method you are following) 5 page research report (submitted online) following APA style will include the following:

- Why the topic is important (covered in your introduction)
- What the problem is (also covered in your introduction)
- What you did to try to solve the problem (covered in your methods section)
- What you found (covered in your results section)
- What you think your findings mean (covered in your discussion section)

Thus an experimental report typically includes the following sections.

- Title page
- Abstract
- Introduction
- Method
- Results
- Discussion
- References
- Appendices (if necessary)
- Tables and/or figures (if necessary)

**COM 180S satisfies the GE requirements in Arts and Humanities and World Cultures.**
3. For students who do not want to do a research project, a non-letter graded course (COM 198) is an alternative. For this course (directed group study), students will write a journal of five hand-written pages per week (see Study Abroad Guidelines for advice about a good journal) in which you will record your observations about sites visited in Florence and environs of Italy. Extraordinary work on the journal will be taken into account for the final grade in COM 2H.

Information: Some of the site visits are led by Florentine expert guides and some by museum guides. There may be some activities not as yet scheduled.

Course Summation and Evaluation is online.