

Building the Myth of Venice: Art, Architecture and Venezianità in the Renaissance
ARTH 5050 640

MLA Program
History of Art
University of Pennsylvania
Fall 2023

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Course Description

What made Renaissance Venice remarkable? Why was this city-state a driving force in early modern art and architecture? Why is the Venice of the Renaissance different from other centers such as Florence and Rome? How might we understand the importance of Titian, Palladio and Bellini to their peers and for future generations? Many of these questions are connected to the “myth” of Venice and the calculated construction of a history of the city and its idiosyncratic place in the political and social landscape as a hinge between west and east. In this seminar we will examine how artists and patrons used art and architecture to transform the capital city of an early modern empire into a powerful vehicle for the transmission of *venezianità* or “Venetian-ness.”

Required Texts (Available at Penn Book Store)

David Rosand, *Myths of Venice: The Figuration of a State* (UNC 2005)
Patricia Fortini Brown, *Art and Life in Renaissance Venice* (Prentice Hall: 2005)
Deborah Howard, *The Architectural History of Venice* (Yale, rev. ed. 2004)
Peter Humfrey, *Painting in Renaissance Venice* (Yale 1997)
J. Martin and Dennis Romano, *Venice Reconsidered: The History and Civilization of an Italian City-State, 1297-1797* (Johns Hopkins 2000)

Recommended Texts (copies on Canvas – otherwise available on Amazon)

David Chambers and Brian Pullan, Eds., *Venice: A Documentary History 1450-1630* (Toronto, 2001)
Sarah Quill, *Ruskin's Venice: The Stones Revisited* (Lund Humphries 2003)
Mary McCarthy, *Venice Observed* (Harvest, 1963)
John Julius Norwich, *A History of Venice* (Vintage 1989)
Frederic Chapin Lane, *Venice, A Maritime Republic* (Johns Hopkins 1973)
Elizabeth Crouzet-Pavan, *Venice Triumphant* (Johns Hopkins 2005)

N.B. Required selections from these recommended texts are available on Canvas; however, these complete works are important supplementary material and may be of interest to students for research and further reading.

Additional Reading

These readings are listed in the syllabus and consist of selected reprints and articles. These will be posted on Canvas.

Assignments

Bibliographic Annotations: Students will prepare annotated responses to the assigned readings each week of term. These short observations may summarize, address the main points of the readings or consider the thesis and argument as it relates to their own experiences, other material they have read or the art of other eras. These annotations should be posted on Canvas under the heading of the readings and will serve in turn as points of discussion and issues of concern for your colleague. These annotations must be posted by noon on Tuesday prior to class on Wednesday.

Book Review: A 750 Word Review (samples will be included in Canvas in the Modules) on a book of your choosing on a subject pertinent to our studies of Renaissance Venice. Your review should be submitted in a hard copy and also as a Word file via email to me to be posted on Canvas for the entire class.

Research Paper: The other writing assignment consists of a 12-15 page research paper on an approved topic. The essay should incorporate your keen observations and visual analysis as well as concepts gleaned from the assigned readings and additional research. As a research paper, any ideas based on your readings and other materials must be carefully cited.

Class Presentation: You will present a preliminary version of your research paper during a seminar meeting. This 15-minute presentation should be supported by slides and should define the territory of your research, introduce the main theme, review the relevant literature, evaluate the evidence for your thesis and close with your working hypothesis or conclusion.

Grading

Class Participation: 25%, Bibliographic Annotations: 10%; Book Review: 10%; Class Presentation: 15%; Research Paper: 40%. Attendance is mandatory. More than one unexcused absence will begin to lower your grade by 1/2 of a grade for each subsequent absence. Two unexcused late arrivals will count as one absence. Class Participation will be given based on your participation in classroom discussion about the readings.

Schedule

August 30	Introduction Brown 9-38, 143-167 Johnson, "Myth in Opera" Martin & Romano 1-66
September 6	The Venetian State Rosand 1-95, Brown 39-63 Grubb "When Myths Lose Power" Brown "Painting and History" Finlay "Immortal Republic"

- September 13 Martin & Romano 137-167
The City and its People
Brown 117-141
Martin & Romano 263-364
- September 20 **The New Rome**
Brown “Bellini’s Antiquarianism”
Rosand 117-151
Brown 65-115
Paper Topic due in class – please submit a brief statement about the nature of your essay and a minimum of 5 sources that you have consulted in the development of your thesis
- September 27 **Venice and Her neighbors**
Howard “Venice and Islam”
Martin & Romano 454-487
- October 4 **Painting pt. 1**
Humfrey
Martin & Romano 365-388
David Alan Brown “Invention”
Book Review Due in Class
- October 11 **Painting pt. 2**
Goffen “Sex, Space and Social History”
Goffen “Sacred and Profane Love”
Hills “Titian’s Fire”
Schier “Tempesta”
Lettieri “Tempesta”
- October 18 **NO CLASS – Travel Conflict**
- October 25 **Architecture**
Ackerman 19-35, 160-185
Howard 2-7,90-208
Radke “Nuns and Their Art”
- November 1 **Sculpture**
- November 8 **Villas and Gardens**
Ackerman “Palladio’s Villas” 89-107
Cosgrove “Villa: the Palladian Rural Landscape”
Pastore ?
- November 15 **Venice Now**
Horodowich “Venice in the 21st Century”
- November 22 **NO CLASS THANKSGIVING BREAK**
- November 29 Student Presentations (Group 1)

December 6 Student Presentations (Group 2)