Medieval and Early-Modern Literature in Florence and London
April 4 – April 17, 2010
The European Odyssey

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Objectives of the course: to deepen our understanding of the complex currents of Renaissance thought through a multi-faceted lens: historical, social, political, and artistic. During our week in Florence, we will explore the political and social conditions in medieval Italy that led to the burst of interest in the classics, and we will focus on the flowering of art and literature in the early Italian Renaissance. We will follow the wave of humanist ideas as they spread to England, and during our time there we will keep the backdrop of Florence in mind as we notice the similarities and differences in the ways that two very different cultures shaped--and were shaped by--new ideas. Through the changes in English political and religious thought, as well as its art and literature, we will observe the metamorphosis from medieval to Renaissance culture.

In Italy, we will study the works of poets Petrarch and Poliziano, philosophers Ficino and Pico della Mirandola, historian Guicciardino and political writer Machiavelli, and we will focus on the historical importance of the Medici family to the Renaissance. A study of the art and architecture of Florence will lead us to the works of such artists as Giotto, Ghiberti, Brunelleschi, Leonardo, Botticelli, Michelangelo, and many others. We will also read the poems of Michelangelo and letters of Machiavelli.

In England, we will begin with the writers who first brought the tradition of Italian poetry to England, Wyatt and Surrey. We will trace the development of language and literature during the sixteenth century and early seventeenth century as it intertwines with historical thought and religious upheavals. Developments in art and architecture will also be a part of our focus, especially the rediscovery of linear perspective, and we will take advantage of the collections of artwork in London. Writers will include More, Sidney, Spenser, Raleigh, Marlowe, Queen Elizabeth, Shakespeare, and Milton.

Field trips in Florence will include the Medici Palace, the Duomo and Baptistry, the Uffizi Gallery, Santa Croce, Galleria dell’Accademia, and the Palazzo della Signoria. Tours in London will include the National Gallery of Art, Westminster Abbey, British Museum, British Library, Hampton Court Palace, and the Globe Theatre. We will see at least one live performance in the city. (See itinerary for details.)

We will also take trips to sites outside of London, such as Stratford-upon-Avon and Cambridge.

COURSE WORK
Paper: Your formal paper should reflect an in-depth, analytical study of some aspect of Renaissance
literature, in its relationship to politics, history or art. Paper length and specific requirements will vary according to whether you are enrolled in English 211 or English 396. Further details are forthcoming.

**Short writing assignments and quizzes:** For most of our readings and many of our site visits you will be given a list of questions requiring short answers. In addition, you will be required to keep a journal of your site visits. To receive credit for the assignments and journal entries, you must turn in your answers at the beginning of the class on the day they are due. Each assignment and each quiz is potentially worth 10 points. Quizzes may cover your reading, class discussion, and information gathered from the sites we visit.

**Class writing:** Occasionally in class I may ask you to write in response to questions about the day’s reading, or to work on a particular question in a small group. In terms of your grade, this work will be included in your “writing assignments” as described above.

**Exams:** Each of the exams will each consist of an objective section and an essay question. In your final essay exam you will need to draw from concepts developed over the two-week course.

**Oral reports or presentations:** Each student will be expected to give one short presentation to the class.

**GRADES:**
- two exams: 15% each = 30%;
- formal paper: 15%;
- writing assignments and quizzes: 40%;
- reports or presentations and participation: 15%.

**Calendar**


**Tuesday, April 13 – Sonneteers and Other Poets:** Wyatt and Surrey, Sir Philip Sidney, Shakespeare. Excerpts from Marlowe’s *Dr. Faustus*. Poems by Queen Elizabeth, Marlowe, and Raleigh. Queen Elizabeth’s Speech to the Troops at Tilbury. Artist

**Wednesday, April 14 – The Renaissance flowers in England:** Shakespeare play (to be determined). Artist and architect: Inigo Jones.

**Thursday, April 15 – Shakespeare play continued (Trip to Kenilworth and Stratford)**

**Friday, April 16 – Clouds Gather as the Renaissance Wanes:** Finish Shakespeare discussion. Selections from Milton. Artist: Bruegel. Exam.