



Drawing by Rodrigo Perez de Arce

Course Syllabus

Honors Italy: ITALIAN URBAN CULTURE

ARC 1413 02S; CSH 1213 01S; HON 3233 01S

JULY 13—August 2, 2010

Instructors:

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This Syllabus is provided for informational purposes regarding the anticipated course content and schedule of this course. It is based upon the most recent information available on the date of its issuance and is as accurate and complete as possible. I reserve the right to make any changes I deem necessary and/or appropriate. I will make my best efforts to communicate any changes in the syllabus in a timely manner. Students are responsible for being aware of these changes.

Course Description and Goals:

The course is an introduction to Italian urban culture as embodied in seven Italian hill towns and cities: Castiglion Fiorentino, Cortona, Venice, Florence, Siena, Assisi, and Rome. We will be focusing on the medieval and classical urban culture of these cities. By urban culture we are referring to the interrelation between the aesthetic form, political/civic narrative, and social behavior embodied in the artifacts of urban culture: the churches, palaces, houses, streets, squares, gardens, fountains, paintings, and sculpture. Our objective is to provide you with the basic concepts and knowledge for reading these urban artifacts. Such concepts include Central Place Theory and the Urban Culture Model¹.

¹ Every urban artifact is a palimpsest as it is a layering of forms, political narratives, and social behaviors. Young cultures have only a few layers; old cultures are dense with countless layers of forms, narratives and behaviors. In some cases forms stay the same but narratives and behaviors change. In any event, an urban artifact is composed of a chain of previous forms, narratives, and behaviors.

We also expect you to savor the beauty and humanity of Italian cities and compare them with the car-dominated American urban culture, based on your experience with San Antonio. To assist you in understanding the breadth and depth of urban life, we will be making field trips to these cities to provide concrete examples of ways to analyze and appreciate the artifacts of Italian culture.

Course Requirements:

The final grade will be based on an averaging of *four* grades, each weighted 25%, for the final grade:

1. Attendance and participation in all lectures, field trips, and daily assignments
2. The final essay question: deploying Central Place Theory and the Urban Culture Model, describe and discuss one urban artifact, i.e. an architectural work, urban space, painting or sculpture, that we visited as a class, that you thought was particularly moving and important, formulate your essay from the knowledge that you assimilated in the reading, lectures, and discussions during the field trips and visits to the museums
3. The course journal. This journal will record your daily notes concerning our lectures, discussions, the assigned reading, and your objective and subjective observations/impressions of the places we will be visiting during our field trips. These notes are important for you to refer to for the final exam
4. Design a crest or coat of arms. This assignment will require you to write a one page narrative and then design a crest that will tell the story that will explain the identifying characteristics and significance of your family through graphic analogies and symbols embodied in visual form. We will expect you to realize that this coat of arms is an artifact and therefore has three dimensions— aesthetic visual form, a narrative, and social behavior—to draw from the visual culture that you are studying on the field trips. Include crest design in your course journal

Please note: the course journal, the coat of arms assignment, and the take-home final will be due on August 6 by 5:00 P.M. in the Honors College Office in JPL.

Proposed schedule of field trip itineraries and reading assignments²

The reading listed for each lesson and field trip must be completed beforehand. While in Castiglion Fiorentino at Santa Chiara, Venice, and Rome we will meet after breakfast in a designated place to discuss the theme and lesson for the day, field trip itinerary, journal and discussion prompts. After dinner we will meet briefly to reflect on the lesson of day and review important concepts.

July 13, Tuesday, day 1 depart SATX for Rome

² Expect some changes in the schedule due to unforeseen circumstances

July 14, Wednesday, day 2 arrival in Rome; bus to CF; student orientation

July 15, Thursday, Day 3 in Castiglion Fiorentino (CF)

- Theme: The Tuscan Hill Town—form, narrative, behavior visit to local museum; tour of town, cappuccino in the Vasari loggia in the Municipal Piazza; Lesson: the Piazza—form, narrative, and behavior; afternoon visit to Cortona by local bus
- Field Trip Itinerary: a morning visit to the Cassero-park for a discussion of the evolution of medieval hill towns in Tuscany, and specifically Castiglion Fiorentino. There will be a study center orientation scheduled in the early evening; look for a confirmation of the time.
- Journal/Discussion Prompts: What are the differences and similarities between **Rome-Castiglion Fiorentino** and **Cortona** as expressions of Italian urban culture? Identify the typical urban elements of the urban armature³ and the public and private building types⁴. What does the form of town and its architecture tell you about the religion, politics, history, private lives of the people who have lived here over the centuries. Which do you prefer and why?
- Reading:

July 16, Friday, day 4 depart CF for Venice

- Theme: Basilica di San Marco, piazza, and campanile
- Field Trip Itinerary: ~~an afternoon~~ **morning** visit to St Mark's basilica, piazza and campanile; ~~an afternoon visit to the~~
- Journal/Discussion Prompts: How is the physical space and architecture of St. Mark's basilica, piazza, and campanile designed for a theatrical display of political order and power?
- Reading: Mayernik pp. 89-132

July 17, Saturday, day 5 in Venice

- Theme: Venetian painting—form, narrative, behavior
- Field Trip Itinerary: a morning visit to the Accademia to see a selection of late Medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque paintings with Marian themes. Refer to Ferguson for Christian iconography. Afternoon is free
- Journal/Discussion Prompts: In the Academia, attempt to identify the Marian themes and read the paintings
- Reading:

July 18, Sunday, day 6 in Venice & C.F.

- morning free and afternoon train to CF

³ Urban armature refers to the organizational structure of the city, i.e. the "castrum" plan, and the primary cross streets--cardo and decumanus

⁴ the Christian basilica, public piazza, town hall, palazzo, apartment buildings, tower

July 19, Monday, day 7 in C.F.

- morning visit to Papini Winery; afternoon free

July 20, Tuesday, day 8 in Florence

- Theme: San Miniato al Monte and Santa Croce
- Field Trip Itinerary: morning departure to Florence for visit to the church of San Miniato al Monte, lunch will be at the Ristorante Pennello. After lunch we will walk through the Santa Croce neighborhood and visit the Franciscan church of Santa Croce. Later we will visit Piazza Signoria and walk to the Duomo (Florence Cathedral); we recommend that you visit the Dominican church of Santa Maria Novella on your return to the train station **if time permits**.
- Journal/Discussion Prompts: What is the hierarchy (i.e., which is the most significant and why, which is second, etc.) among the San Miniato, S. Croce, the Duomo, and Santa Maria Novella? Take notice of the architectural style of each church; identify the style of each one. Read each one. Which one expresses the Humanist culture of the Renaissance? What is it saying? In our walk through the S. Croce neighborhood, what do you notice about the arrangement and use of space in contrast to San Antonio? What might those contrasts say about Italian and American urban culture?
- Reading: Mayernik pp. 133-170; Fusch; Murray pp. 15-30; Lewis pp. 299-302

July 21, Wednesday, day 9 in Florence

- Theme: Late Medieval and Renaissance Painting and Sculpture—aesthetic form, civic narrative, social behavior
- Field Trip Itinerary: visit to the Uffizi and Piazza della Signoria
- Journal/Discussion Prompts: **How does the design (architecture and use of space) of the Piazza della Signoria express political power; how does emergence of merchants and princes as patrons of art the shift affect the subject matter and use of symbolism in paintings from the Medieval era to the Renaissance**
- Readings

July 22, Thursday, day 10 in Siena

- Theme: Palazzo Publica and the Cathedral: aesthetic form, civic narrative, social behavior
- Field Trip Itinerary: a morning visit to Siena and the Basilica of San Domenico, Piazza del Campo, Lorenzetti's "Allegory of Good and Bad Government" in the Palazzo Publica. After lunch we will visit the Cathedral (Duomo).
- Journal/Discussion Prompts: How does the urban morphology of Siena reflect its civic narrative and promotes its social behavior? What are the principal lessons conveyed to the inhabitants by the location and ornaments of the Palazzo Publica and the Cathedral?
- Reading: Mayernik pp. 133-194

July 23, Friday, day 11 in Florence

- Theme: The Renaissance City
- Field Trip Itinerary: a morning departure to Florence to visit Brunelleschi's Foundling hospital and piazza and the Academia to see Michelangelo's "David"; our reservation for the visit is 11:30 am. **[confirmed? This was last summer's reservation]** After lunch we recommend that you visit the Medici family parish church of San Lorenzo designed by Filippo Brunelleschi with some contributions by Michelangelo. There is an excellent outdoor market selling clothes, tourist items, some leather, etc. in the San Lorenzo area.
- Journal/Discussion Prompts: Focus on the ways in which the "David" is a metaphorical palimpsest; there are layers of meaning to any work of art. What are the narratives spoken in this sculpture? How does the Foundling Hospital and piazza reflect a new way of "seeing" and "reading" a city? What is it saying?
- Reading: Murray pp. 165-178; Fusch

July 24, Saturday, day 12 in C.F.

- Free day

July 25, Sunday, day 13 is a free day

- Return to C.F. in the evening

July 26, Monday, day 14 in Assisi

- Theme: The Basilica di San Francesco: Sainly Relics and Urban Centrality
- Field Trip Itinerary: a morning departure for Assisi and visit to the church of San Francesco. A special lunch is planned. Your afternoon will be free. A final reflection activity 5:00-7:30 pm
- Journal/Discussion Prompts: Does the architecture and decoration of the basilica of St. Francis reflect the narrative of his life? **How does faith create centrality?**
- Reading: Murray pp. 15-30

July 27, Tuesday, day 15 in Rome

- Theme: The Roman piazza
- Field Trip Itinerary: afternoon visit to the S. M.[initials for ?] in Trastevere and the piazza, Campo dei Fiori, and the Piazza Navona
- Journal/Discussion Prompts: Compare the three piazza in terms of the UCM[**first time we use this abbreviation; should we spell it out, and, more importantly, should we refer to it more often in the daily prompts?**], i.e. aesthetic form, civic narrative, and social behavior
- Reading: Mayernik, pp. 27-30; Fusch;
www.utsa.edu/architecture/faculty_and_personnel/faculty/robert_baron/CampoDeiFioriResearchProject/index.htm

July 28, Wednesday, day 16 in Rome

- Theme: Ancient and Baroque urban artifacts compared
- Field Trip Itinerary: morning visit to the Pantheon and the Basilica of Santa Maria sopra Minerva; an afternoon visits to San Ignazio and its piazza, Trevi Fountain, and the Spanish Steps
- Journal/Discussion Prompts: deploy the UCM in the analysis of these urban artifacts
- Reading: Mayernik, pp. 27-30; Stambaugh; Fusch

July 29, Thursday, day 17 in Rome

- Theme: Forms of Centrality
- Field trip Itinerary: visit to the Coliseum, Forum, ~~Palatine Hill~~ **Piazza del Campidoglio [which is listed on the current abbreviated itinerary]**
- Journal/Discussion Prompts: While listening to our guide's narrative, think about the ways in which what you are hearing and seeing might relate to the ways in which the Coliseum, Forum and ~~the Palatine Hill~~ **Campidoglio** illustrate the principles of central place theory and the creation of a distinctive Italian urban culture.
- Reading: Mayernik, pp. 54-58

July 30, Friday, day 18 in Rome

- Theme: Baroque Urban Centrality and Theatricality
- Field Trip Itinerary: morning visit to Vatican museum and St. Peter's Basilica; we will walk the *possesso* (Via Papali) from the Vatican, over the Ponte San Angelo, to the Piazza Navona and the Campo dei Fiori; ~~and afternoon visit to San Ignazio and adjoining piazza. We recommend that you visit the Trevi Fountain.~~ **[San Ignazio and the Trevi are scheduled for the 16th]**
- Journal/Discussion Prompts: while on the tour of the museum, try to read the narratives (the iconography) spoken by the art works that the guide discusses; make notes concerning which art works that you found particularly moving, comment on what they say, how they speak, and discuss why you found them important. Also, compare St. Peter's basilica and piazza and San Ignazio and its piazza: how does each define the physical space around them; what do you think is the intent of the external architecture of each church; how does each convey the message of Catholicism in their interior spaces; who is the "audience" for each church?
- Reading: Duffy; Mayernik pp. 44-88; Brittain-Catlin (for reference) pp. 54-68; Canniffe pp. 133-150

July 31, Saturday, day 19 in Rome

- **Field Trip Itinerary:** a morning visit to the Catacombs of Priscilla; and afternoon visit to the church of San Clemente; we recommend the continued walk on the posesso to visit the Lateran Basilica.
- **Theme:** Early Christianity and Medieval Rome
- **Journal/Discussion Prompts:** Attempt to read the Christian iconography in all three sites. Also, consider how these sites, as palimpsests, are literally built out of the spoils of ancient buildings and how this contributes to the layered depth and texture of contemporary Italian urban culture.
- **Reading:** Elsner and Hartwig

August 1, Sunday, day 20 in Rome

- Free day

August 2, Monday, day 21 in Rome

- Early morning departure for SATX

Assigned Reading

Required course text:

David Mayernik, *Timeless Cities: an architect's reflections on Renaissance Italy*, 2003

Reference Books:

Timothy Brittain-Catlin, *Architecture: Learn How to Read a Building*

Suggested:

George Ferguson, *Sign and Symbols in Christian Art with illustrations from painting from the Renaissance*

Selected Articles and Book Chapters in Alphabetical Order:

Eamon Duffy, "Rome of the Pilgrims", *The Pastoral Review* (February 2002)

John Elsner, 1994. "Rome as Palimpsest: The City in Architecture and the Imagination", *Apollo* 140, 389 (July), 18-22

Richard Fusch, "The Piazza in Italian Urban Morphology", *Geographical Review*, Vol. 84, No. 4. (Oct., 1994), pp. 424-438

Michael Hartwig, "The Basilica of San Clemente: Microcosm of Christian Life in Rome" Peter Murray, *The Architecture of the Italian Renaissance*, selected pages

Kristin Jarratt, "Ostia Antica, the better Pompeii", <http://www.initaly.com/regions/latium/ostia.htm>

R.W.B. Lewis, *The City of Florence: Historical Vistas and Personal Sightings*, 1995

John E. Stambaugh, "Ostia", in *The Ancient Roman City*, pp. 268-274

Useful Websites:

<http://nolli.uoregon.edu/default.asp>;

<http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Gazetteer/Places/Europe/Italy/Lazio/Roma/Rome/Texts/Lanciani/home.html>

<http://initaly.com/regions/latium/ostia.htm>

www.utsa.edu/architecture/faculty_and_personnel/faculty/robert_baron/CampoDeiFioriResearchProject/index.htm

<http://www.ostia-antica.org>

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