



**6. Course prerequisites:** None

**7. Student learning outcomes**

Throughout the course, assignments will develop your ability to think critically and communicate clearly; to analyze and interpret complex texts and works of art; to understand sustained arguments; and to select and organize evidence to support your ideas.

By the end of the course, you will have developed these skills:

- a. to distinguish traditional or generic elements of texts and art works from new or unusual ones.
- b. to compare texts and/or art works in order to recognize, explain, and interpret significant differences that contribute to an understanding of these works and their context
- c. to recognize, explain, and interpret how parts of a work (for example, a set of paintings or sculptural reliefs, a saint's life, Dante's *Divine Comedy*, or Boccaccio's *Decameron*) relate to the whole work and its major themes
- d. As you learn to analyze and interpret texts and art works, their relationships, and contexts, you will gain the knowledge to describe, explain, and debate these aspects of medieval Italy:
  1. religious reform, including the papal reform and the Franciscan and Dominican orders
  2. the political institutions, social life, and culture of urban communes (city-states)
  3. interpretations and uses of the heritage of ancient Rome and early Christianity
  4. cultural exchanges with neighboring communities and those of more distant lands
  5. saints' lives and cults, their social context, and the texts and art works they shaped
  6. how 13th and 14th-century Italian artists (for example, Nicola and Giovanni Pisano, Arnolfo di Cambio, Duccio, Giotto, and the Lorenzetti brothers), created a new visual language with which to tell and reinterpret stories, stimulate devotion and arouse emotions, and communicate social values and religious teachings.
  7. sacred and secular values, literary structures, and diverse voices in Dante's *Divine Comedy* and Boccaccio's *Decameron*
- e. Last, but not least, you will be able to assess modern views of the Middle Ages and its relationship to antiquity and the Renaissance

**8. Required texts and/or course materials**

One required text: **Boccaccio. *The Decameron***. Translated by Guido Waldman (Oxford University Press). I urge you to get that inexpensive and very readable translation which we will read throughout the term. Translations on the internet are older and harder to read.

On Canvas, I post a **textbook (typically 10 to 25 pages a week)** and readings from primary sources (medieval texts) and modern historians; some weeks will have short recorded introductions and image pages and/or recorded videos on the visual arts.

Besides my textbook, **some readings are required for everyone (typically 40 to 70 pages a week)**; others are resources for specific discussion forums—you'll have choices—or A Closer Look.

**9. Course requirements such as exams, assignments, and projected due dates, if any**

- a. **Weekly Schedule:** Each week's topic spans **ten days (Tuesday morning to the Thursday night of the following week)** (*See Course Schedule and Assignments/Assessment*)

- b. Readings:** The weekly page, available by Tuesday, has and introduces required readings.
- c. Weekly Quizzes:** Required quizzes (30 minutes, open book, normally 16 to 20 multiple choice questions) **open 7PM, Tuesday, close 11PM, Sunday.** Guidelines explain what's covered.
- d. Weekly Discussion Forums:** Choose two forum topics. Make one posting of at least two full paragraphs for each, following the guidelines and prompts, and based on the indicated course readings. I post topics by Tuesday. **Forums open Friday morning. Your first of two postings is due 11PM, Monday. Forums close 11PM, Thursday.**

In Modules 3 (Oct. 28 - Nov. 17), the weekly requirement changes to ONE posting of at least three paragraphs, due 11PM, Thursday. (*See Discussion Forum Guidelines*)

**e. "A Closer Look":** In Module 4, you will make two postings, each at least four paragraphs, to designated forums. These will count for BOTH weekly discussion forum credit and A Closer Look. They will require some additional reading or research. I will provide resources and suggest topics and questions during the term. You will consult with me to select your topic, get my approval, and shape your posting before we reach module 4. General topic areas may include Boccaccio's Decameron, the Passion of Jesus in medieval Italian art, selected saints' lives in texts and the visual arts.

## 10. Grading scale

The final grade is based on **1000 points**. This is how I assign letter grades:

A+	990+	B+	870-899	C+	770-799	D	650-699
A	930-989	B	830-869	C	730-769	F	<650
A-	900-929	B-	800-829	C-	700-729		

## 11. Grade categories and weights

- a. Quizzes (240 points/20 points each): 24% of final grade** (best 12 of 14 weekly quizzes, with 50% more weight to your best 4 scores, and 50% less to your lowest 4)
- b. Discussion Forums (600 points/50 points each): 60% of final grade** (12 required weeks, 50 points each; 50% more weight to your best 3, 50% less weight to your lowest 3)
- c. A Closer Look (160 points): 16% of final grade** (2 required postings in Module 4, 50 points each; 20 additional points based on the best posting; 40 points based on the overall assignment, including your work to select and develop a topic in consultation with me, find resources, and respond to comments)
- d.** On top of those 1000 points (100%), everyone gets **up to 2% (20 points) added to your final grade** based on your strongest assignment category. This is on top of any earned extra credit.

## 12. Course schedule

There are **two schedules** to remember: the **semester-long schedule of topics and readings** (visible in Canvas under Modules) and the **ten-day "weekly" schedule of assignments from Tuesday through the following Thursday** for each topic. The "Course Schedule" lists week-by-week topics and readings in more detail. Here is a short outline.

- a. Weekly Schedule (there will be minor modifications in the first week and final two weeks) -Tuesday:** The week's page (with an introduction, readings, and forum topics) is available; the quiz opens at 7 PM

**-Friday morning:** Discussion forums open

**-Sunday (11 PM):** The quiz closes

**-Monday (11 PM):** Your first forum posting is due.

**[-Tuesday:** The next weekly page becomes available and the next quiz opens]

**-Thursday (11 PM):** The forums close.

**b. Semester Schedule (weekly materials are available on the Tuesday listed here)**

**8.22-25:** Getting Started! First Week Attendance Assignments (**Practice Quiz + Personal Introduction due by 6 PM, Thursday, August 25**)

**Week 1: 8.23-9.1:** Fundamentals: Maps of Medieval Italy/Looking at Medieval Christian Art  
**MODULE 1: WORLDS OF CHANGE: CHURCH REFORM, URBAN COMMUNES, DISTANT HORIZONS**

**Week 2 (1.1): 8.30-9.8:** Reform and Renewal in the Roman Church and the Arts c.1100

**Week 3 (1.2): 9.6-15:** Medieval Italian Cities: Communes and Citizens, Cathedrals and Christians

**Week 4 (1.3): 9.13-22:** The Legacy of Rome: Urban Legends and Recycled Antiquities

**Week 5 (1.4): 9.20-29:** Wider Horizons: Byzantium, Islam, and the Exotic East

**MODULE 2: SAINTHOOD AND DEVOTION: FRANCIS OF ASSISI IN CONTEXT**

**Week 6 (2.1): 9.27-10.6:** Spiritual and Worldly Wealth: The Making and Selling of Saints

**Week 7 (2.2): 10.4-13:** The Life and *Lives* of Francis of Assisi: Conversion and Vocation

**Week 8 (2.3): 10.11-20:** Sts Francis and Dominic in the Arts: San Francesco, Assisi and the Santa Caterina altarpiece

**Week 9 (2.4): 10.18-27:** Religious Women in Art and Life

**MODULE 3: TUSCAN ART c. 1300: A REVOLUTION?**

**Week 10 (3.1): 10.25-11.3:** Nicola and Giovanni Pisano: Antiquity Made New

**Week 11 (3.2): 11.1-10:** Giotto and the Scrovegni Chapel: Stories Re-Imagined

**Week 12 (3.3): 11.8-17:** Duccio's Maesta: Siena and the Painted Altarpiece

**MODULE 4: A CLOSER LOOK**

**Week 13 (4.1): 11.15-11.27:** Closing Thoughts on the Visual Arts (specific topics will be linked with your topics for A Closer Look)

**Week 14 (4.2): 11.22-12.2:** Closing Thoughts on Dante and Boccaccio (specific topics will be linked with your topics for A Closer Look)

**There is NO FINAL EXAM**

### **13. Course-specific grading policies (e.g., late work, extra credit, etc.), if any**

Each week's quiz and forums are a small portion of your final grade. I give your high scores more weight, reduce the weight of lower scores, and drop the two lowest quizzes. Everyone gets up to 20 points (2%) added to your final grade based on your best assignment category.

With small-scale, weekly assignments, these adjustments will offset a few low scores or even missed assignments in a way that is consistent for everyone. The best response to a low score or missed assignment is to move forward and earn higher scores which get more weight.

Because of this, I do not reopen quizzes or forums after the deadlines. There are no exceptions, retakes, or makeups (unless these are mandated by specific USF policies).

There are modest extra credit opportunities (limited to 2%) in addition to the "up to 2%" that

everyone receives. Penalty points are deducted for missing any required assignment. For one or two assignments, those are little more than a “heads up” that will be offset by the extra points and weighting of high grades. Missing multiple assignments, however, will have a serious impact on your grade, as it reasonably should, and it is, in fact, the most common cause of failure. (See “Assignments/Assessment”)

**17. Course-specific attendance and punctuality policies, if any**

This course is conducted entirely online. It is “asynchronous”, with no fixed “meeting” times. *You are, however, required to complete a “First Week Attendance” assignment (Practice Quiz + Personal Introduction) by 6 PM, Thursday, Aug. 25, or you will be dropped from the course.*

**18. Course-specific technology and media policies (e.g., recording class, expected email response time, etc.), if any**

All course materials, including the textbook, assigned readings, assignments, images, recordings,, and videos which I provide are intended solely for your use within this course. They are protected by copyright and must not be distributed outside this course (*except, as specified under HB 233, within a formal complaint to the university or in relevant civil or criminal proceedings*). *Distributing these materials on the internet, posting them on social media, or contributing them to digital repositories is specifically prohibited* by USF Regulation 3.027 (Academic Integrity of Students), 4.I.8, p. 7, and USF Policy 10.048 (Course Notes and Recordings), 2.C, p. 2. Violations may be sanctioned.

**19. [USF Core Syllabus Policy Statements](#)**

The core policy statements listed on the linked website apply to all USF courses. This course is a USF course. Therefore, these policies apply to this course. That’s an example of a syllogism.

I look forward to the course!