

## 510:317 The Renaissance

In European history, “the Renaissance” refers both to a historical era – the period from the mid-fourteenth through the sixteenth century that produced such towering cultural figures as Machiavelli, Leonardo da Vinci, and Shakespeare—and to a more specific intellectual movement centered on the “rebirth” of classical studies. In this course we will examine a series of works produced during the Renaissance to evaluate these different definitions: across such areas as commerce, religion, philosophy, art, political theory, drama, and comedic literature, did the Renaissance age exhibit a distinctive, coherent set of concerns that justify naming a historical era after it? How does the Renaissance in Italy (where it began) compare to the Renaissance in northern Europe, where political and religious circumstances were quite different? Virtually every week we will analyze and discuss as a group one primary source from the Renaissance to build up a portrait of the period as a whole. For eight of those weeks, students will write up a one-page reflection on the assigned primary source(s) to be discussed. Assessment is based on the one-page reflections, active in-class oral participation, and a midterm and final paper.