NEW COURSE PROPOSAL

Course Title
HON 300?: Power and Imagination in the Italian Renaissance

Course Description
The European Renaissance marked a time of a heightened quest for truth in different fields and of a conscious and deliberate attempt to change the way people thought and acted in the world. During this revolutionary period, Italy served as the crucible for the formation of new ideals and values as well as a new understanding of the role the intellectual, writer, and artist should play in society. By analyzing and contextualizing a variety of representative texts—including poetry, visual arts, and scientific and political treatises—we will examine the complex relationship between imagination and power dynamics of a political and religious nature. The dilemmas of caution and resoluteness, simulation and dissimulation, heroism and conformity, orthodoxy and innovation, will be considered as some of the themes shaping early modern western literary and cultural production. The emphasis will focus upon epoch-making thinkers and artists such as Petrarch, Boccaccio, Alberti, Ariosto, Machiavelli, Leonardo, Michelangelo, Bruno, and Galileo.

Honors Program Learning Outcomes
Upon completing a course in the University Honors Program students will have:

a. obtained a starting point for integrative exploration of the development of cultures and intellectual achievements through a variety of disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives;
b. sharpened their ability to critically analyze and synthesize a broad range of knowledge through the study of primary texts and through engagement in active learning with fellow students, faculty, and texts (broadly understood);
c. understood how to apply more integrative and interdisciplinary forms of understanding in the advancement of knowledge and in addressing complex challenges shaping the world;
d. developed effective communication skills.

Course Learning Outcomes
Upon completing this course students will be able to:

• Demonstrate familiarity with classics of Renaissance thought such as: Petrarch’s Canzoniere, Boccaccio’s Decameron, Mirandola’s Oration on the Dignity of Man, Machiavelli’s Prince, and Alberti’s Books of Family.
• Describe and discuss important historical, cultural, and artistic aspects of the Italian Renaissance and its international influence.
• Analyze central themes and issues across the work of representative writers, thinkers and artists.
• Extend Renaissance debates to the contemporary questions and challenges.
• Discern between the universal value of certain ideas and the relativity of their application and interpretation.
• Improve critical thinking, reading, writing skills while examining excerpts of the texts using a variety of media.

Content
• Major characteristics of the historical and cultural context of the Italian Renaissance.
• Intersections between scientific, philosophic, and artistic developments, as shown by representative works of art and literature.
• The philosophic dialogue as literary genre.
• The concepts of fortune, intelligence, madness, heroism, simulation, and dissimulation.
• Representative works by Petrarch, Boccaccio, Alberti, Ariosto, Machiavelli, Leonardo, Michelangelo, Bruno, and Galileo.

Texts

GE
AI, SI

Teaching Strategies
• Interactive lectures
• Class discussions and activities
• Critical essays
• Collaborative presentations
• Reading reports

Assessment Strategies
• Class discussions and activities
• Critical essays
• Collaborative presentations
• Reading reports