



UNIVERSITÀ  
DEGLI STUDI  
FIRENZE

CENTRO DI SERVIZI  
CULTURALI  
PER STRANIERI

**History of Art II**  
**Italian Modern and Contemporary Art from 16th century to 20th century**

***Dr. Marco Calafati***

**Description**

The four centuries between the death of Michelangelo Buonarroti in 1564 and the first half of the 20th century witnessed one of the greatest artistic revolutions in the history of Western civilization.

This course will survey painting, sculpture, and architecture in the major artistic centers of Italy: Florence, Rome, Naples, Venice, and Milan. It will cover works by many of the most important artists of the period, consider themes raised by these works, and give attention to the conditions in which they were originally produced and viewed.

The class begins with the art in the second half of the 16th century in Florence and Rome followed by the Baroque, the immediate successor of the second Renaissance. We will examine this period by Italy's regions. Next, the course moves on to explore the development of two opposing styles that emerged in the 18th century: Rococo and Neoclassical art. After the Macchiaioli Art Movement in Tuscany, the course culminates with Futurism and Metaphysical in the 20th century. Crucial to this course is the emergence of characteristics (artistic, social, political, scientific, philosophical, and religious) that anticipate the issues faced by Modern society.

The careers and achievements of many figures from this period are examined. In particular, a part of the course is dedicated to the art in Florence. Emphasis is placed on works of art and architecture with which the student can have a direct experience. Most discussions are conducted in front of the original paintings and sculptures or inside the works of architecture. A special importance will be given to key works of art, sites of production, techniques, patrons, and audiences. In particular, between the 16th and 20th century, the role of the artist was changed. Other topics of the course are: the comparisons between literary culture, art, and architecture of



the major Italian cities and other European countries; the history of the landscape and garden in Italy; and the perception and emotion of the visual arts.

### **Objectives**

The study of History of Modern and Contemporary Art and Architecture opens up the everyday environment to individuals in different ways and for different reasons. The goal is to provide students a way to navigate the main themes of art and to recognize and comment on the most representative artworks of the different movements.

During this course, students will gain knowledge of some of the most important painted, sculpted, and constructed works of Italian art. Students will examine and develop solid understandings of the following:

- Basic concepts of symbols and allegories in Italian art,
- Problems of proportions and universal harmony in architecture,
- Connections between sculpture, painting, and architecture,
- Analysis of the relevant technical aspects of art, painting, stone and bronze cast sculpture, construction and ornamental materials,
- Visual analysis and interpretation, and
- Social and cultural contexts of Art.

### **Methodology**

My approach to Art History is trans-disciplinary. I believe that a historical structure is useful to students and an important benefit of a liberal arts education. I provide dossiers, image databases, powerpoint with photographs, and helpful links in order to work with artworks/images. I design group projects on history of the construction of Florentine palaces and churches from the Renaissance to the Twentieth Century. Students always benefit by visits to construction sites, campus locations, museums, galleries, archives and studios. A focus of the course is bringing students into contact with the contemporary status of the works they are studying.

I love the opportunity to work with technology programs for art history and to explore how new tools can improve traditional class objectives. The availability of Youtube and podcasts allow me to integrate more film and video sources into my history of art courses.



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## Course outline

### Introduction

Topic 1. Michelangelo and Raphael in Florence and Rome

Topic 2. Florence Under Cosimo I de' Medici, the Council of Trent, and the Counter Reformation

Topic 3. Classicism and Naturalism in Italian Painting: the Carracci and Caravaggio

Topic 4. Spectacle in Rome of Pope Urban VIII: sculptural and architectural innovations of Bernini and Borromini

Topic 5. From Rococò to Neoclassicism: Giovambattista Tiepolo, Canaletto, and Antonio Canova

Topic 7. The Macchiaioli in Tuscany and the relationship with the French Impressionists

Topic 8. Two Italian avant-garde: Futurism and Metaphysical

### Texts and bibliography

Reference manuals:

C. Bertelli, G. Briganti, A. Giuliano, *Storia dell'arte italiana*, Milano, Electa Mondadori.

R. Wittkower, *Arte e architettura in Italia, 1600-1750*, (ed italiana: Torino, Einaudi).

Other useful dossiers and encyclopedias:

*Maestri del colore*, Fratelli Fabbri; *Classici dell'arte*, Rizzoli; *Maestri della scultura*, Fratelli Fabbri; *Storia dell'architettura italiana*, a cura di F. Dal Co, Electa, 2000-2006, in particolare i volumi: *Il primo Cinquecento*, *Il secondo Cinquecento*, *Il Seicento*, *Il Settecento*, *Storia visiva dell'architettura italiana, 1400-1700*, pp. 109 e seguenti.