

## Italian Treasures: Art & Architecture from Antiquity through the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

3 credits

Teacher responsible: tbd

Department of Humanities, University of Pavia

20 hours

### DESCRIPTION:

The course examines the development of Italian art and architecture as a history of people, images and ideas, which can be followed in an unbroken story as nowhere else in Europe. Ever since antiquity, the Italic peninsula served as an important cultural crossroads and its history is reflected in the monuments, paintings and sculptures that are still considered to be landmarks of Western art. The course discusses material spanning three millennia, from Etruscan art through the avant-garde movements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Therefore, it is structured around a set of research questions which focus on the relationship between artists, works of art and their social, political, religious and historical meaning and context. Students also have the opportunity of exploring the art-making process by learning about specific techniques, materials and styles.

The first part of the course investigates the origins of Italian art and follows its development in antiquity by looking at three important regional and historical centres: Etruria, Roman Pompeii and Byzantine Ravenna. We then explore the spectacular achievements of Florentine Renaissance artists, discussing their friendships and rivalries as well as the role played by their patrons. Baroque and Neoclassical art are examined in connection with technical innovations and the Classical tradition. The last lectures focus on the impact that political ideologies and social concerns emerged in the 20<sup>th</sup> century had on artistic creativity and expression.

### METHOD OF PRESENTATION:

The first half of each lecture situates works of art within their cultural context, whereas the second half offers close examination of a single or a small group of pieces that can serve as case studies to acquire and practice skills of visual and historical analysis.

### LEARNING OUTCOMES:

This course aims to introduce students to the history of Italian art and, most importantly, provides them with a set of archaeological and art historical skills that will enable them to appreciate and analyse artistic monuments, use them in their research, and think critically about Italian culture and history.

### Lecture List

1. Life and Afterlife in Etruscan Art
2. Digging up Ancient Pompeii
3. Ravenna: A Centre of Byzantine Splendour
4. Giotto di Bondone: The First Renaissance Painter?

5. Patrons and Artists in 15<sup>th</sup> Century Florence
6. The Art of Paragone: Invention and Competition in the High-Renaissance
7. A Matter of Light: Art and Architecture in 17<sup>th</sup> Century Rome
8. Classical Ruins to Neoclassical Art
9. The City Rises: Conceptualizing Urban Landscape from Futurist Art to Modernist Architecture
10. Shaping Essence: Alternatives to Reality in 20<sup>th</sup> Century Painting and Sculpture