**CSR Advanced Study Option: Critical Foundations of Renaissance Studies**

**Term 2, 2018-19**

Tutor: Professor David Lines

Place and time: Thursdays, 4:30-6:00 pm in H4.50

Description

This module will offer an overview of major developments and live critical methodologies across some disciplines in Renaissance Studies. Its aim is to provide a foundational awareness of selected approaches that have influenced (and continue to influence) the field. Attention will be paid, among others, to the development of the field of Renaissance Studies through to recent trends and orientations. By the end of the module, participants should have a clearer awareness of some of the key personalities and approaches that have shaped the study of the Renaissance, in fields such as history, literature, art history, and the history of classical reception. Although Italy is central to this module, we shall try as much as possible to consider the broader European picture as well.

Outline

**\*Week 1: The rise of Renaissance Studies**

We know that the term 'Renaissance' emerges out of the writings of Giorgio Vasari on the lives of artists, but in fact the study of the Renaissance as a movement and a historical period did not really gain traction until Burckhardt's remarkable work, which still today continues to attract attention and congresses (many events took place, in fact, in 2018, the 200th anniversary of his birth). In this session we look at Burckhardt and at other influential interpreters of the Renaissance, especially Michelet and Huizinga, and ask in what sense their views and concerns continue to influence approaches within Renaissance Studies.

Set text: Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (1860; numerous rpts of the English translation available).

Other texts: Jules Michelet, *Oeuvres complètes: Histoire de France,* vol. VII (Renaissance), definitive ed. of 1895 French original available and downloadable at <http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/michelet_jules/oeuvres_completes_t7_hist_de_france/histoire_de_france_t7.html> ; Johan Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages: A Study of the Forms of Life, Thought, and Art in France and the Netherlands from the XIV to the XV Century* (Dutch, 1919; numerous rpts. of the English translation, retitled in 1996 *The Autumn of the Middle Ages*); Georg Voigt, *Die Renaissance: Italien* (Berlin: Paul Aretz, 1932).

Selected criticism: Jo Tollebeek, ‘“Renaissance” and “Fossilization”: Michelet, Burckhardt, and Huizinga’, *Renaissance Studies*, 15.3 (2001), 354-366; William J. Courtenay, ‘Huizinga’s Heirs: Interpreting the Late Middle Ages’, in *Herbst des Mittelalters? Fragen zur Bewertung des 14. und 15. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2004), pp. 25-36; ‘Renaissance, Interpretations of’ in *Encyclopedia of the Renaissance* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1999), V, 288-291, 302, etc.

**\*Week 2: Developments in art history from Aby Warburg (†1929) onward**

Aby Warburg is known for his influential views in art history among other fields, and these were carried forward by a number of other important scholars at the Warburg Institute, who had a strong interest in symbolism and iconology; among this group one should consider at least Ernst Cassirer, Erwin Panofsky, and E.H. Gombrich (but also Raymond Klibansky, Michael Baxendall, Fritz Saxl). In this session we look at how these views, sometimes mixed with Neoplatonism, affected the direction of art history, although we should always recall that Warburg's influence went far beyond the domain of art.

Set text: Erwin Panofsky, *Renaissance and Renascences in Western Art* (1960) or *Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance* (1962).

Other texts: Aby Warburg, *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity: Contributions to the Cultural History of the European Renaissance,* transl. by David Britt, with intro. by Kurt W. Foster (Getty Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1999), Ernst Cassirer, *The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy* (1963); idem, *The Warburg Years (1919-1933): Essays on Language, Art, Myth, and Technology* (transl. Yale University Press, 2013), and E.H. Gombrich, *Studies in the Art of the Renaissance*, vol. *Symbolic Images* (1966; 1972).

Selected criticism: *Essays in Honor of Erwin Panofsky*, ed. by M. Meiss, 2 vols (New York University Press, 1961); E. H. Gombrich, *Aby Warburg: An Intellectual Biography*, 2nd ed. (Phaidon, 1986); \*Carlo Ginzburg, ‘From Aby Warburg to E.H. Gombrich’, in idem, *Clues, Myths, and the Historical Method* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989); Dieter Wuttke, *Aby Warburgs Methode als Anregung und Aufgabe: mit einem Briefwechsel zum Kunstverständnis* (Wiesbaden: O. Harassowitz, 1990); Rossella Malagò, ‘L’interpretazione dell’ideale classico del Rinascimento negli scritti di Aby Warburg e Jacob Buckhardt’, in *L’ideale classico a Ferrara e in Italia nel Rinascimento* (Florence: L. Olschki, 1998), pp. 239-252; \*Giorgio Agamben, 'Aby Warburg and the Nameless Science', in *Potentialities: Collected Essays in Philosophy* (Stanford University Press, 1999), pp. 89-103; *Art History as Cultural History: Warburg’s Projects* (Amsterdam: G+B Arts International, 2000); \*Georges Didi-Huberman, *L'image survivante. Historie de l'art et temps des fantômes selon Aby Warburg* (Editions de Minuit, 2002); Christopher D. Johnson, *Memory, Metaphor, and Aby Warburg’s Atlas of Images* (Cornell University Press, 2012); Audrey Rieber, *Art, histoire et signification: un essai d’épistémologie d’histoire de l’art autour de l’iconologie d’Erwin Panofsky* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2012); Maud Hagelstein, *Origine et survivance des symboles: Warburg, Cassirer, Panofsky* (Hildesheim: Olms, 2014). **On Warburg see also the website** https://live-warburglibrarycornelledu.pantheonsite.io/readings

**\*Week 3: Renaissance Studies in the immediate aftermath of WW II: Kristeller, Garin, Yates**

After World War II, several scholars turned to the Renaissance period (and to humanism in particular) in search for solutions to the horrors of the war and what they saw as an unhealthy and reductive focus on science and technology. Paul Oskar Kristeller and Eugenio Garin emerged as the two most influential champions of Italian Renaissance humanism, yet they held very different ideas about how to define it and how it related to other aspects of Renaissance culture and society. This session will examine how different their conceptions were, how a Warburg historian (Frances Yates) offered yet a different model and focus, and why their respective views still today strongly influence interpretations of humanism, especially along linguistic and national lines.

Set texts: P.O. Kristeller, 'Humanism and Scholasticism in the Italian Renaissance'; Eugenio Garin, *Italian Humanism: Philosophy and Civic Life in the Renaissance*, trans. Peter Munz (1965; Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1975).

Other texts: Frances Yates, *Occult Philosophy in Elizabethan England* (1979).

Selected criticism: Michele Feo, ‘Eugenio Garin: il Burckhardt italiano’, *Quaderni petrarcheschi*, 17-18 (2007-08), 1177-1181; Cesare Vasoli, ‘Garin, Burckhardt e la concezione storiografica del Rinascimento’, in *Eugenio Garin: dal Rinascimento all’Illuminismo. Atti del convegno: Firenze, 6-8 marzo 2009* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2011), pp. 1-36; \*James Hankins, 'Two Twentieth-Century Interpreters of Renaissance Humanism: Eugenio Garin and Paul Oskar Kristeller,' *Comparative Literature* 23 (2001), 3-19; *Kristeller Reconsidered: Essays on his Life and Scholarship*, ed. by John Monfasani (New York: Italica Press, 2006); Stephan Toussaint, ‘Kristeller e Garin: polemiche umanistiche’, *Historia Philosophica: An International Journal*, 12 (2014), 11–24; Jill Kraye, ‘Beyond Moral Philosophy: Renaissance Humanism and the Philosophical Canon’, *Rinascimento*, 56 (2016), 3–22. **See also** entries on Kristeller and Garin in *Oxford Bibliographies.*

**\*Week 4: The *Annales* School**

Starting in 1929 the so-called Annales School in France offered a different approach in history from that of previous historians, who concentrated on politics, diplomacy, and high actors in history. Championing a 'total' history and of thementalities of the periods they studied, they were influential through the works of historians such as Fernand Braudel, Marc Bloch, Lucien Febvre, and others (reaching most recently to Roger Chartier). Here we shall look especially at the work of Jacques Le Goff, who as a medievalist presented a richly textured picture of who intellectuals were in the period, but also questioned practices of periodization.

Set text: Jacques Le Goff, *Intellectuals in the Middle Ages* (1955; Blackwell, 1993).

Other texts: Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, 2nd rev. ed. (Fontana, 1975); Marc Bloch, *The Historian's Craft* (1949); Lucien Febvre, *The Problem of Unbelief in the Sixteenth Century: The Religion of Rabelais* (1942; Harvard University Press, 1982); Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood* (1960).

Selected criticism: *The Annales School: Critical Assessments*, ed. by Stuart Clark, 4 vols. (Routledge, 1999); André Burguière, *The Annales School: An Intellectual History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009); Peter Burke, *The French Historical Revolution: The Annales School, 1929-2014*, rev. 2nd ed. (Polity, 2015).

**\*Week 5: Social/cultural history and microhistory**:

Although several of the themes of the Annales school were welcome to later historians, particularly with their focus on the more marginal elements of society, the emphasis of that school on *longue-durée* history was rejected by the architects of the social and cultural history that arose in the 1960s and 1970s. This session examines in particular their investigation of much more focused aspects, personalities, and events. One of the famous examples was Carlo Ginzburg's *Il formaggio e i vermi* (1976, transl. as *The Cheese and the Worms*), which – though not his best book – centred on the trial for heresy of a miller in Friuli and quickly gained an international audience. Also highly engaging is Natalie Zemon-Davis's *The Return of Martin Guerre* (1983) – a story of identity theft in sixteenth-century France. Our set text gives a sense of how interest in social and cultural history has evolved in more recent years.

Set text: Beat Kümin, *Drinking Matters: Public Houses and Social Exchange in Early Modern Central Europe* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

Other texts: Carlo Ginzburg, *I benandanti: ricerche sulla stregoneria e sui culti agrari tra Cinquecento e Seicento* (1966; transl. as *The Night Battles: Withcraft and Agrarian Cults in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*); Natalie Zemon-Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre* (1983); Edward Muir, *Mad Blood Stirring: Vendetta and Factions in Friuli during the Renaissance* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993); Guido Ruggiero, *Binding Passions: Tales of Magic, Marriage, and Power at the End of the Renaissance* (Oxford University Press, 1993).

Selected criticism: *Microhistory and the Lost Peoples of Europe*, ed. by Edward Muir and Guido Ruggiero (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991); *Small Worlds: Method, Meaning, and Narrative in Microhistory*, ed. by James F. Brooks, Christopher R.N. DeCorse, and John Walton (School for Advanced Research Press, 2008); special issue (*Microhistory and the Historical Imagination: New Frontiers)* of *The Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 47.1 (2017).

**(Week 6: Reading Week)**

**Week 7: Literary Theory and the New Historicism**

This session will look at influential developments especially related to literary criticism and theory, from structuralism (e.g., the New Criticsm) and post-structuralism (Deconstruction) to the theories of Foucault, Greenblatt, and the New Historicism. Michel Foucault – one of the most influential thinkers of the twentieth century – was strongly affected by currents in literary theory as well as by the thought of Nietzsche. He advocated an 'archeological' approach to the past and emphasized the relationships between knowledge and power as well as the incommensurability of the past in relationship to the present. Stephen Greenblatt, an American literary critic especially known for his study of Shakespeare, has been hugely influential in taking up several of Foucault's themes and stressing the interconnections between literature, politics, and history. He offers a contextual and historical reading of literature, in which the fixity and naturalness of various conceptions are called into question.

Set text: Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (1966, selections); Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1980).

Other texts: Cleanth Brooks, *The Well Wrought Urn: Studies in the Structure of Poetry*, rev. ed. (1968); Paul Ricoeur, *The Conflict of Interpretations* (1969; Northwestern University Press, 1974).

Selected criticism: \*Vincent B. Leitch, *American Literary Criticism from the Thirties to the Eighties* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988); Richard Danson Brown, ‘From Burckhardt to Greenblatt: New Historicisms and Old’, in *The Renaissance in Europe: A Reader*, ed. by Keith Whitlock, pp. 4-11; John Martin, ‘Inventing Sincerity, Refashioning Prudence: The Discovery of the Individual in Renaissance Europe’, *American Historical Review*, 102.5 (December 1997), 1309-42 (extracts in *The Renaissance in Europe: A Reader*, ed. by Keith Whitlock, pp. 11-31); \*Catherine Gallagher and Stephen Greenblatt, *Practicing New Historicism* (Chicago University Press, 2001).

**\*Week 8: The history of science and Thomas Kuhn**

The appearance of Kuhn's book in 1962 caused consternation and debate among philosophers and historians of science for a number of reasons: one was his view of the messiness of the scientific process, which he saw as not nearly as smooth and progressive as had been assumed by Whig historians, but as proceeding by periods of revolution and (more often) of stasis. Kuhn also described 'normal science' in ways that many practitioners and theorists found unflattering, and argued that there was no neat way of evaluating different scientific 'paradigms'. It is thanks to Kuhn that the latter word entered the lay vocabulary, and that historians of science came to give increasing attention, not only to the 'correctness' of the theories enunciated in the past, but the frameworks and communities in which they had been developed, thus giving rise for instance to the sociology of science.

Set text: Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962; 4th ed., 2012).

Other texts: Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air-Pump: Hobbes, Boyle, and the Experimental Life: Including a Translation of Thomas Hobbes,* Dialogus physicus de natura aëris *by Simon Schaffer* (Princeton University Press, 1985); Mario Biagioli, *Galileo, Courtier: The Practice of Science in the Culture of Absolutism* (University of Chicago Press, 1993).

Selected criticism: K. Brad Wray, *Kuhn's Evolutionary Social Epistemology* (Cambridge University Press, 2011); *Kuhn's* The Structure of Scientific Revolutions *Revisited*, ed. by Vasso Kindi and Theodore Arabatzis (New York: Routledge, 2012); *Kuhn's* Structure of Scientific Revolutions--*Fifty Years on*, ed. by William J. Devlin and Alisa Bokulich (Cham: Springer, 2015);  *Kuhn's* Structure of Scientific Revolutions *at Fifty: Reflections on a Science Classic*, ed. by Robert J. Richards and Lorraine Daston (University of Chicago Press, 2016)

**\*Week 9: Intellectual history: the Cambridge School and beyond**

In the mid-1960s, Quentin Skinner started to write a series of influential essays and books on the interpretation of political works, particularly in the English context (e.g., Hobbes). Writing against historians who wanted to limit their interpretation of works to the text itself (cf. New Criticism), and implicitly rejecting the approach of former historians of 'pure ideas' such as Arthur Lovejoy, he argued for a strong contextualism, particularly in approaching a work's language and audience. In this session we shall look at some of Skinner's methodological assumptions and practices, which have strongly influenced what is known as the Cambridge School of intellectual and political history and has been at the basis of the book series 'Ideas in Context' (Cambridge University Press). We shall also ask whether there are other ways of dealing with context, and what some problems with the 'Cambridge School' approach might be, particularly by considering the contribution of Pocock.

Set text: Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, 2 vols. (Cambridge University Press, 1978); idem, 'Some Problems in the Analysis of Political Thought and Action', *Political Theory*, 2.3 (1974), 277-303 (or select another essay in his *Vision of Politics*, vol. 1 (2002), such as 'Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas' or 'Interpretation and Understanding of Speech Acts').

Other texts: Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea* (Cambridge, 1936); J.G.A. Pocock, 'The History of Political Thought: A Methodological Enquiry' (1962), rpt. in idem, *Political Thought and History: Essays on Theory and Method* (Cambridge University Press, 2009; **Warwick JA71.P58**); Janet Coleman, *A History of Political Thought*, 2 vols. (Blackwell, 2000).

Selected criticism: *Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and his Critics,* ed. and introd. by James Tully (Polity, 1988); B.W. Young, 'Enlightenment Political Thought and the Cambridge School', *Historical Journal* 52.1 (2009), 235-251; Annabel Brett, 'What Is Intellectual History Now?', in *What Is History Now?*, ed. D. Cannadine (London: Palgrave, 2002); Mark Jurdjevic, 'Hedgehogs and Foxes: The Present and Future of Italian Renaissance Intellectual History', *Past and Present*, 195 (May 2007), 241-268; Michael Edwards, 'Philosophy, Early Modern Intellectual History, and the History of Philosophy', *Metaphilosophy*, 43.1-2 (Jan. 2012), 82-95 (available on JSTOR); Richard Whatmore, *What Is Intellectual History?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016).

**\*Week 10: History of scholarship and classical reception**

The study of the ancient (and, especially, classical) world (*Altertumswissenschaft*) used to be viewed as an effort to recover the pure past, without the accretions brought about by (mis)interpretations across time and space. In the past few decades, however, much attention has come to be given to the *reception* of classical texts, a burgeoning field that has been the site for broader reevaluations and new methodologies on multiple levels: the turn toward cultural studies, the understanding of more active processes of interpretation (indicated for instance by marginalia), the consideration of the wider ancient world as opposed to just Greece and Rome, the study of forgeries as well as works of genuine scholarship, of Christian as well as pagan ideas, the impact of global history, the study of the vernacular as well as Greek and Latin, etc. This session will look at some of this complexity by considering in particular the interest in reading strategies and marginalia sparked by a seminal article by Lisa Jardine work of Anthony Grafton, which led to important research projects just now coming fully to fruition, including the ‘Archaeology of Reading’ project, and to new perspectives on the issue of reception. Other scholars have devoted themselves to studying the art of note-taking, from books but also from experience and observation.

Set text: Lisa Jardine and Anthony Grafton, ‘“Studied for Action”: How Gabriel Harvey Read his Livy’, *Past & Present*, 129 (Nov. 1990), 30–78; also see archaeologyofreading.org.

Other texts: Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine, *From Humanism to the Humanities: Education and the Liberal Arts in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Europe* (London: Duckworth, 1986); Roger Chartier, *The Order of Books* (selections); Ann Blair, ‘The Rise of Note-Taking in Early Modern Europe,’ *Intellectual History Review*, 20.3 (2010), 303–316; Charles Martindale, ‘Thinking through Reception’, in *Classics and the Uses of Reception*, ed. by Charles Martindale and Richard F. Thomas (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2006), pp. 1-13; idem, 'Reception', in *A Companion to the Classical Tradition*, ed. by Craig Kallendorf (Blackwell, 2007), pp. 297-311;.

Selected criticism: Robert C. Holub, *Reception Theory: A Critical Introduction* (London: Methuen, 1984); James Hankins, 'Forging Links with the Past', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 52.3 (1991), 509-518; Charles Martindale, *Redeeming the Text : Latin Poetry and the Hermeneutics of Reception* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Presss, 1993); Lorna Hardwick, *Reception Studies* (Oxford University Press, 2003); Christopher S. Wood, 'Reception and the Classics', in *Reception and the Classics: An Interdisciplinary Approach to the Classical Tradition*, ed. by William Brockliss et al. (Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 163-173. Also see the *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*; edited volume *Translation and the Classic: Identity as Change in the History of Culture* (Oxford University Press, 2008).