

Format revised 2025  
Syllabus revised 2025

Florence University of the Arts (FUA) is an academic institution for study abroad in Florence, Italy. FUA collaborates with The American University of Florence (AUF), an international university offering US-style undergraduate and graduate degrees, in a cooperation to offer study abroad programs with a diverse breadth and depth of academic curriculum.

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**SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS; SCHOOL OF GLOBAL STUDIES**  
**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY; ART HISTORY; URBAN STUDIES**  
**COURSE TITLE: FLORENTINE ART WALKS**  
**COURSE CODE: LAHSFW280; LAAHFW280; GSUSFW280**  
**3 semester credits**

## **1. DESCRIPTION**

This course examines the city of Florence with themed walks offering a comprehensive approach to the city as an open-air cultural, historical, and artistic research site from its Roman foundation to its contemporary Zeitgeist. Students will learn the history of the city through its art: they will understand how buildings, streets, squares, and monuments can be mapped as living traces of multiple, overlapping layers of a complex past, and how to encode them in their personal appropriation of the city. Starting from learning how to decode the artistic environment of the city and to unveil its traces – both visible and invisible – the course aims at understanding the main social and cultural reasons underlying the existing shape of the city. The course explores traces and evidences from Roman times through Middle Ages, Renaissance, Mannerism and Baroque, up to Art Nouveau and contemporary Florence. Students will be provided with a consistent theoretical background related to relevant historic-artistic landmarks and their social and cultural context and main characters (Guelphs vs. Ghibellines, the Florentine Guilds, Dante, the Medici family, Botticelli, Michelangelo, Ghirlandaio, Ammannati, Pontormo, etc.). Students will be encouraged to develop their own experiential tools and strategies to approach the city through guided field learning activities that assess research, on-site involvement, and academic outcome for each themed walk in Florence.

The approach of this course is based on experiencing the city of Florence as the academic space for learning and engagement. Classes are not held in a traditional, frontal-style setting; each lesson is carefully mapped for curricular content and featured locations: lectures, observations, exercises, analysis, and reflections on presented topics are held in relevant sites that are accounted for in the academic planning, syllabus, and related course material. Coursework and submissions will be regularly assessed on the MyFUA platform through daily assignments in addition to exams, papers, and projects. Learning through the on-site classroom approach fosters a deeper understanding of the cultural environment of Florence and how it is related to the subject of study represented by the course, and allows the overall experience to contribute to the students' academic and personal enrichment.

## **2. OBJECTIVES**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Display knowledge related to the city of Florence and its historical and artistic value.
- Refer to specific buildings, streets, squares and monuments in the city of Florence and explain their historical and artistic relevance.
- Retrace the history of the city of Florence and its urban evolution from the Middle Ages to present day.
- Outline the distinctive traits in the historical and artistic periods of the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, Mannerism, Baroque and Art Nouveau.

### **3. REQUIREMENTS**

There are no prerequisites for this course.

### **4. METHOD**

This course consists of lectures, discussions, and site visits within the local community. Mediums for instruction used will include, but are not limited to, interactive and hands-on activities which challenge thought processes, academic texts and studies, and experiential and/or field learning activities where applicable. As described in point 1, lessons are not held in traditional classroom settings but are based on the city of Florence as the academic space for learning and engagement. Please review the course description for the structural approach and method of coursework.

### **5. TEXTBOOK – FURTHER READINGS – RESOURCES**

TEXTBOOK (Copy available at the university library):

Dickerson, Madelynn. *The Handy Art History Answer Book*. Detroit: Visible Ink Press, 2005.

The textbook is mandatory for course participation and completion. Where applicable additional materials may be provided by the instructor.

### **FURTHER READINGS**

- Abulafia, David. *Italy in the Central Middle Ages*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Angela, Alberto. *A Day in the Life of Ancient Rome*. New York: Europa Editions, 2009.
- Bazin, Germain. Broque and Rococo. New York: Thames and Hudson, 1964.
- Murray, Linda. *The High Renaissance and Mannerism*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1997.
- Pollard, John. *The Fascist Experience in Italy*. New York: Routledge, 2005.
- Sacerdoti, Annie. *The Guide to Jewish Italy*. Rizzoli, 2004.
- Sherman, John. *Mannerism*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967.
- Stamburgh, John. *The Ancient Roman City*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1988.

### **LIBRARY**

Course participants may access the campus library. Please consult the posted schedules for official opening times. Texts may be consulted on-site, and scanning/internet services available.

### **6. COURSE MATERIALS**

No additional course materials are necessary.

### **7. COURSE FEES**

Course fees cover course-related field learning activities, visits, and support the instructor's teaching methodologies. Book costs are not included in the course fee. If this course requires a fee, the exact amount is communicated prior to enrollment.

### **8. GRADING AND EVALUATION & ATTENDANCE**

10% Attendance

10% Participation

15% Reflection Journal

15% Midterm Assessment

25% Final Exam

25% Final Paper

The above grade breakdown percentages reflect the grading scale standards in the “Grading and Evaluation System” section of the catalog.

### **Attendance**

Class participation is mandatory. Based on the hours defined in the Academic Catalog’s attendance policy, students may miss up to 2 class encounters delivered as lecture hours. A third absence constitutes a course failure.

Please note that absence hours may vary according to the learning methodology, as per the academic catalog policy on credit hours: [https://catalog.fua.it/standard\\_regulation](https://catalog.fua.it/standard_regulation)

## **9. EXAMS / PROJECTS / ASSIGNMENTS**

The **Reflection Journal** accounts for 15% of the final course grade. Students submit the reflection journal in two parts (mid and end of the semester). There are three phases for successful journal writing: 1) Active observation 2) Research 3) Writing.

1) Active observation: whilst observing, develop your critical thinking skills by answering some of the questions below (not all questions might be relevant to what you are observing):

- What is more important in urban planning: functionality of spaces and building, or the form and beauty of the structures?
- Explore the relationship between the exterior and interior of a building. In what ways do they affect one’s “experience” of the building?
- Explore the relationship between architecture and environment. Think about how buildings exist within a space, climate, and culture. How does architecture contribute or distract from its environment?
- Explore the connections between different artistic currents (Renaissance, Mannerism, Baroque, Art Nouveau, Modernism) and different fields (philosophy, psychology, technology, etc).
- Explore the connections between different artistic currents and lifestyles.
- What is the relationship between technology and art/architecture?
- Compare and contrast the design of the buildings seen so far.

Note: You are not limited to these questions and are welcome to include in your journal any other thoughts. Take pictures of what you see so that you can refer to these at a later stage when writing your journal. You may want to include these pictures in your journal but, notice, these will not be assessed.

2) Research: Each walk must be accompanied by appropriate reading (compulsory texts must be read before the walk and are indicated in the syllabus). Additional reading and research on the internet (from reliable sources) will help you answer some of the above questions more thoroughly. You may also want to ask locals for any additional information. To demonstrate you have read the daily assigned chapters, include references from the book in your journal entries.

3) Writing: Look back at your notes and pictures, think about what you have read and for each walk, write a short text of 300-350 words. Before submitting, ensure the final product of your journal is well-presented (work must be typed and in a readable font, quotations and citations (if any) must be referenced appropriately). Your journal will be assessed on the basis of completion, originality of content and demonstrated critical thinking skills.

The **Final Paper** accounts for 25% of the final course grade. Choose ONE of the essay questions below and write a paper between 2500 and 3000 words. Make sure your paper conforms to academic standards in terms of style and register. Your paper must include at least four quotations and/or

citations from scholarly books, journals, or articles. Ensure your paper is properly referenced and includes a bibliography. Include a word count at the end of the paper (you may go 10% above or below the word limit).

1. Although city planning as an organized profession has existed for less than a century, all cities display various degrees of forethought and conscious design in their layout and functioning. Discuss ancient Roman city planning, the factors that influenced it, benefits and challenges encountered at the time.
2. Is architecture art in itself? Argue in favor or against such a statement and present alternative views. Refer to as many relevant examples encountered throughout the course as possible.
3. “Architecture should speak of its time and place, but yearn for timelessness”. Discuss this quotation by Frank Gehry by referring to as many relevant examples encountered throughout the course as possible.
4. Choose one artist encountered in this course and discuss how political, cultural, economic and other relevant factors of the time influenced the artist whilst creating a piece of artwork.

*\* The instructor may provide alternative essay topics.*

The **Midterm Assessment** accounts for 15% of the final course grade. This Midterm Assessment requires two deliverables for your final paper: a comprehensive 400-word Introduction and a robust Annotated Bibliography. Your Introduction must present a clear, explicit thesis statement that defines your central argument. The Annotated Bibliography must feature five academic sources that are relevant to your topic. Crucially, these sources must be integrated correctly as in-text citations within your Introduction, in addition to being listed in the full bibliography. Please confirm the specific citation style (e.g., MLA, Chicago) with your instructor to ensure adherence to standards.

The **Final Exam** accounts for 25% of the final course grade. The exams consists of 10 open-ended questions, and they will be uploaded on the course website MyFUA and are to be completed by the student at home under exam conditions. This means that:

- The exam must be taken completely alone. Showing it or discussing it with anybody is forbidden, including (but not limited to) the other students in the course in current or previous years.
- You may use any publicly available material you want, including books, the internet, etc. However, you are NOT allowed to submit questions to internet discussion groups.
- Use your own words. If you find a solution of a question in a book or online, cite it in your submission and do not copy it as-is. Make changes which demonstrate you understand what you are writing. Plagiarism will be severely penalized.
- You may take as much time as you need to complete the exam. You may start the exam and return to it at a later stage. Note, you will no longer have access to the exam once the deadline has passed.

The solved exam must be uploaded on MyFUA before the deadline. Late submission will be penalized; technical problems will not be accepted as an excuse for late submissions. It is your responsibility to make sure that your computer and internet connection work properly and that the solved exam is uploaded on time.

## 10. COURSE OUTLINE

Lesson 1	
<b>Meet</b>	Corso Tintori 21
<b>Lecture</b>	Roman Florence: City Life and Ancient Walls.
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate understanding of the urban arrangement of the ancient Roman city (regular conformation).</li> <li>• Display knowledge of contemporary street names in Florence with specific attention to different terms such as 'via', 'por' and 'borgo'.</li> <li>• Gain knowledge of the ancient Roman city wall</li> <li>• Learn about the most typical public structures of the Roman city</li> </ul>
<b>Visit</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vía Roma, Calimala (Decumanus)</li> <li>• Vía del Corso and via degli Strozzi (Cardo)</li> <li>• Baptistry (probably the former temple of Mars / Roman domus)</li> <li>• Colonna di Piazza della Repubblica (Foro and Campidoglio)</li> <li>• Via delle Terme and Piazza della Signoria (Baths and Fullonica)</li> <li>• Por Santa Maria (access to Ponte Vecchio and way out to Rome)</li> <li>• Vía dei Leoni (theater)</li> <li>• Via del Proconsolo (ancient city walls, east side)</li> <li>• Vía Torta and Vía de' Bentaccordi (amphitheater)</li> </ul>
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	<p>Stamburgh, John. <i>The Ancient Roman City</i>. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1988. pp:1-35.</p> <p>Angela, Alberto. <i>A Day in the Life of Ancient Rome</i>. New York: Europa Editions, 2009. pp: 15-41.</p>

Lesson 2	
<b>Meet</b>	Corso Tintori 21
<b>Lecture</b>	Places of worship from Roman to Medieval Florence
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate understanding of the connection between religion, art and power.</li> <li>• Demonstrate understanding of the importance of ancient places of worship and their evolution within the historical, social and artistic development of Florence.</li> </ul>
<b>Visit</b>	<p>This walk will take students to the following places:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Piazza San Firenze (temple of Egyptian goddess Isis (no longer visible, San Fiorenzo built on it, then absorbed by San Firenze).</li> <li>• San Miniato al Monte</li> </ul> <p>Additional/optional visits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Santa Felicita (originally a basilican-plan oratory next to an early-Christian cemetery; probably built after the Syrian Greek merchants who are thought to have brought Christianity to the region in 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE).</li> <li>• San Lorenzo (the most ancient basilica, maintained its former plan).</li> <li>• Santa Maria in Campidoglio (disappeared, formerly where the Feltrinelli Red now is).</li> </ul>
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Textbook: <i>The Handy Art History Answer Book</i> . Chapter 3, The Medieval World, pp: 99-134
Lesson 3	

<b>Meet</b>	Corso Tintori 21
<b>Lecture</b>	Florentine Guilds: Medieval Florence
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decode existing artistic signs of the power of medieval guild in the streets of Florence</li> <li>Demonstrate understanding of street names and their connection with social topography</li> <li>Demonstrate understanding of guilds' influence on the history of Florence and the city's development into one of the richest cities of late Medieval Europe</li> </ul>
<b>Visit</b>	<p>This walk will take students to the following places:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Orsanmichele (focus on the saints and the arts represented)</li> <li>Arte dei Mercatanti o di Calimala (via Calimaruzza)</li> <li>Arte della Lana: Palazzo dell'arte della Lana (via Calmala, via Orsanmichele, via dell'arte della lana)</li> <li>Arte della Seta o di Por Santa Maria (via di Capaccio 3)</li> <li>Arte dei Vaiai e Pellicciai (via Lambertesca corner with Chiasso Baroncelli)</li> <li>Giotto's Beltower (panels featuring representations of the guilds)</li> </ul> <p>Additional/optional visits:</p> <p>Minor arts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arte dei Tintori (Tintori district and corso dei Tintori)</li> </ul> <p>Major arts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arte dei Giudici e Notai: Palazzo dell'Arte dei Giudici e Notai (via del Proconsolo)</li> <li>Arte del Cambio (Piazza della Signoria, angolo via Vacchereccia (no longer existing)</li> <li>Arte dei Medici e Speziali (via dei Cavalieri)</li> </ul>
<b>Readings/Assignments</b>	<p>Abulafia, David. <i>Italy in the Central Middle Ages</i>. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. pp: 42-56. Available in FUA library.</p> <p>Guelph and Ghibellines Explained. Full text available <a href="#">here</a>.</p>

<b>Lesson 4</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	Corso Tintori 21
<b>Lecture</b>	Guelphs and Ghibellines, Florentine Tower Houses and Private Places of the Middle Ages
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Display knowledge of the ancient factions dividing Guelphs and Ghibellines (White Guelphs vs Black Guelphs / Cerchi vs Donati).</li> <li>Identify key features of private architecture in the Middle Ages.</li> <li>Demonstrate understanding of the role of private architecture as symbol of power and defense.</li> </ul>
<b>Visit</b>	<p>This walk will take students to the following places:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Start from Via Ghibellina + Palazzo del Bargello</li> <li>Palagio dei Capitani di Parte Guelfa (Piazza della parte Guelfa)</li> <li>Santa Margherita dei Cerchi (Via Santa Margherita)</li> <li>Casa Museo di Dante (Via Santa Margherita)</li> <li>Torre della Castagna (Via Dante Alighieri)</li> <li>Torre dei Ghiberti (Via del Corso)</li> <li>Torre dei Ricci (Via del Corso)</li> <li>Piazza della Signoria</li> </ul>

<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Sacerdoti, Annie. <i>The Guide to Jewish Italy</i> . Rizzoli, 2004. pp: 11-15, pp 136-142. FINAL PROJECT OVERVIEW.
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<b>Lesson 5</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	Corso Tintori 21
<b>Lecture</b>	Jewish Florence: history, legacy, today.
<b>Objectives</b>	<p>By the end of this walk students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Display knowledge of the history of the Jewish community in Florence</li> <li>• Locate ancient remains and present-day buildings testifying to the presence of a Jewish community in Florence</li> </ul>
<b>Visit</b>	<p>This walk will take students to the following places:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Piazza della Repubblica (where the old ghetto was before it was destroyed as a result of the demolition of Florence capital)</li> <li>• Piazza San Marco (The ground floor of San Marco Museum: section containing reliefs, coats of arms, stone lintels, columns and architectural fragments with Hebrew inscriptions that belonged to late nineteenth century buildings)</li> <li>• Via Farini (The Synagogue)</li> </ul>
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	<p>Textbook: <i>The Handy Art History Answer Book</i>. Chapter 4, The Early Modern World, pp: 99-134.</p> <p>MIDTERM ASSESSMENT ASSIGNED, due prior to next class meet.</p>

<b>Lesson 6</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	Corso Tintori 21
<b>Lecture</b>	Renaissance Private Palaces
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the role of private palaces in the Renaissance</li> <li>• Trace the evolution of Renaissance architecture in private palaces</li> <li>• Demonstrate understanding of the relation between the new conception of private dwellings and the rise of new wealthy families in Florence</li> </ul>
<b>Visit</b>	<p>This walk will take students to the following places:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start from Palazzo Nonfinito (corner via del Proconsolo / Borgo Albizi)</li> <li>• Palazzo Gondi</li> <li>• Palazzo Medici Riccardi (via Cavour)</li> <li>• Palazzo Rucellai (via della Vigna Nuova)</li> <li>• Palazzo Strozzi (piazza degli Strozzi)</li> <li>• Palazzo Pitti (piazza de' Pitti)</li> </ul>
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Murray, Linda. <i>The High Renaissance and Mannerism</i> . London: Thames and Hudson, 1997. pp: 7-32, pp 144-170.

<b>Lesson 7</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	Corso Tintori 21
<b>Lecture</b>	Sgraffiti: Decorated Palaces
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the artistic trend of the 15<sup>th</sup> century sgraffito technique still visible in Florence</li> <li>• Display knowledge of the stories behind the decorated facades of private dwellings</li> </ul>
<b>Visit</b>	This walk will take students to the following places:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Palazzo Corsini (Corso dei Tintori)</li> <li>• Palazzo dell'Antella (Piazza Santa Croce)</li> <li>• Palazzo Spinelli (Borgo Santa Croce)</li> <li>• Palazzo Ramirez de Montalvo (Borgo Albizi)</li> <li>• Palazzo di Bianca Cappello (Via Maggio)</li> <li>• Palazzo Nasi (Via dei Mozzi)</li> </ul>
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Sherman, John. <i>Mannerism</i> . Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967. Pp 49-79. Available at FUA library.

<b>Lesson 8</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	Corso Tintori 21
<b>Lecture</b>	From Renaissance to Mannerism: Ghirlandaio, Pontormo, Ammannati
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Locate the landmarks of three main artists whose work and lives straddled between Renaissance and Mannerism</li> <li>• Demonstrate understanding of the main stylistic features of Mannerism and their role in the artistic environment of Florence</li> <li>• Trace back the artists' footsteps as citizens of Florence through their work</li> </ul>
<b>Visit</b>	<p>This walk will take students to the following places:</p> <p><i>Ghirlandaio</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Santa Trinita (Sassetti Chapel)</li> <li>• Porta della Mandorla (mosaic)</li> </ul> <p><i>Pontormo</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• San Michele Visdomini (Via Bufalini, via dei Servi) and Pala Pucci</li> <li>• Santissima Annunziata (cloister)</li> <li>• Santa Felicita (the Deposition of the Cross)</li> <li>• Pontormo's house (via Laura)</li> </ul> <p><i>Ammannati</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ponte Santa Trinita</li> <li>• Fountain of Neptune</li> </ul>
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Textbook: <i>The Handy Art History Answer Book</i> . Chapter 5, Baroque and Beyond, pp: 135-170. Bazin, Germain. <i>Baroque and Rococo</i> . New York: Thames and Hudson, 1964. pp: 6-10, 167-184.

<b>Lesson 9</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	Corso Tintori 21
<b>Lecture</b>	Baroque Florence
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Locate examples of Baroque art and architecture in Florence</li> <li>• Display knowledge of the main personalities related to Baroque style in Florence</li> <li>• Describe the peculiar features of Baroque in Florence and the ways it differs from Baroque in Rome and in Europe</li> </ul>
<b>Visit</b>	<p>This walk will take students to the following places:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Piazza San Firenze (Church and convent)</li> <li>• Chiesa dei Santi Michele e Gaetano (Piazza degli Antinori)</li> <li>• Piazza Santa Annunziata (Fountains by Pietro Tacca)</li> <li>• Basilica della Santissima Annunziata (Piazza SS Annunziata)</li> </ul>

<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Textbook: <i>The Handy Art History Answer Book</i> . Chapter 6, From the Industrial Revolution to World War I, pp: 171-202. FINAL PROJECT DUE.
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<b>Lesson 10</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	Corso Tintori 21
<b>Lecture</b>	Art Nouveau in Florence
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognize architectural elements of Art Nouveau in Florentine Buildings</li> <li>Display knowledge of the influence of the European taste for Art Nouveau in Florence</li> </ul>
<b>Visit</b>	<p>This walk will take students to visit the following places:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Villino Uzielli (Piazza d'Azeglio n°39)</li> <li>Villino Brogi Caraceni (Via Scipione Ammirato n°99)</li> <li>Villino Ravazzini (Via Scipione Ammirato n°101)</li> <li>Casa Antonini (Via Orcagna n° 53)</li> <li>Galileo Chini's studio (Via del Ghirlandaio n°52)</li> </ul>
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Textbook: <i>The Handy Art History Answer Book</i> . Chapter 7, The Modern World During and After the World Wars, pp: 203-236. Pollard, John. <i>The Fascist Experience in Italy</i> . New York: Routledge, 2005. pp: 1-17, 55-74.

<b>Lesson 11 Final Exam</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	MyFUA
<b>Lecture</b>	FINAL EXAM