Serenissima Repubblica: The Art and History of Renaissance Venice

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Schedule of topics:

Week 1:
Introducing Renaissance Venice: The first lecture in this series will focus on the history, geography, and basic information about Venetian society and politics during the renaissance. It will also incorporate information on the main artistic trends in Venice in terms of medium and mythological content.

Week 2:
Society: This topic will show what we can learn about the structure of Venetian society and the people of Venice through their art. We will look at paintings of social events and learn how to distinguish between the members of different social hierarchies in Venetian society.

Week 3:
Religion: Renaissance Venice was a very religious place and this is obvious in how Catholic imagery permeated every corner of the city. This lecture will study images of key religious figures and explain how and why they were so important to the Venetians of the time.

Week 4:
Politics and Trade: This session will examine artistic representations of political figures as well as the effects of Venice’s extensive trade industry on their art. It will also look at how Venice eventually created its own distinct political iconography.

Week 5:
The Great Council Hall I: For centuries this was the largest room in Europe, and for a very good reason, it was the chamber in which all eligible citizens would gather to vote. Every inch of the walls and ceiling are covered in art propagandizing Venetian culture. How was this room decorated, and why was that so important? This lecture will focus on those questions as well as an analysis of the historical cycles that circle the walls.

Week 6:
The Great Council Hall II: Building on the previous lecture, this final one will be comprised of a visual analysis of the grand Paradise mural and the massive, allegorical ceiling paintings.

Did you know? Your registration in the LinR program allows you to borrow materials from Carleton University’s MacOdrum Library. To receive a temporary borrowing card, visit the circulation desk and identify yourself as a participant of LinR.
Recommended readings for continued learning:

A seminal work on renaissance Venice:

A good introductory text for the history of art:

A website with individual articles and short videos about the history of art:
Harris, Beth and Steven Zucker. *Smart History*. Website. [www.smarthistory.org](http://www.smarthistory.org)

Other interesting resources:

If you’re looking for a fun, but historically accurate, fiction author, try Sarah Dunant. Here is a list of her books, all of which take place during the Italian renaissance.
- *In the Company of the Courtesan* (Takes place mostly in Venice after the sack of Rome of 1527)
- *The Birth of Venus* (Takes place in Florence during the time of Savonarola)
- *Sacred Hearts* (Takes place in a convent in Ferrara)
- *Blood and Beauty* (The story of the Borgia family)