



Texts and Ideas: Power, Political Leadership, and the Renaissance

Course Number
CORE 9400 F01

Brightspace course site <https://brightspace.nyu.edu/d2l/home/381708>

Fall 2024

Please contact florence.academicssupport@nyu.edu if you have trouble accessing the Brightspace site.

Syllabus last updated on: 26-09-2024

Lecturer Contact Information

Matteo GIGLIOLI
matteo.giglioli@nyu.edu
OH: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 1:00pm to 2:00pm (by appointment), Villa Ulivi, office 5

Prerequisites

None

Units earned

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Course Details

- Class meeting day/time: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 3:00pm to 4:15pm
- All times are Central European Time (CET). Please note that in Europe, Daylight Saving Time ends on Sunday, October 27, 2024 and clocks will be set back one hour.
- Location: Villa Colletta, Room CAPPONI.

Course Description

Politics is about power and leadership, but over whom? Historically, political communities have been united by language, religion, and culture in complex ways and with long-term consequences. The course aims to explore these relationships. It is an overview of topics in intellectual history, presented through a close reading of major texts in the Western canon. The study of philosophical and literary sources is complemented by reference to masterpieces in the visual arts present in the city of Florence, with a view to explore the importance of imagery in personifying communities.

Texts and Ideas introduces students to the ideals of liberal education. Students become acquainted with some of the works that have been most influential in shaping the contemporary world and with significant instances in which the ideas in these works have been debated, developed, appropriated, or rejected. Texts and Ideas is an examination of how texts influence each other, create traditions, and reflect societal ideals.



Course Objectives

- Introduce students to different methodologies and forms of textual analysis
- Acquaint students with certain seminal texts, following the arc of intellectual traditions
- Explore how literary genre and cultural context affect the transmission of ideas
- Encourage critical reflection on the role of humanistic study for ethical/civic growth
- Recognize the areas of conflict and exclusion embedded in the Western canon, as well as the resources present within it to overcome them.

Examples of some questions we will ask in this course are:

- Who is part of the political community?
- What is the relationship between political belonging and war?
- How has the notion of political identity changed over time?
- Are strong ties necessary for a thriving society?
- How important is historical tradition for political life?
- What makes the government of a political community legitimate?
- How are images connected to collective identities and group stereotypes?

Assessment Components

Assessment will be based on in-class participation and seven pieces of individual work; their relative contribution to the overall class grade is as follows:

- Participation: 15%
- Critical analysis take-home paper 1: 7.5%
- Critical analysis take-home paper 2: 7.5%
- Critical analysis take-home paper 3: 7.5%
- Critical analysis take-home paper 4: 7.5%
- In-class midterm: 20%
- In-class presentation: 10%
- Final take-home paper: 25%

– The critical analysis take-home papers are short (2-3 pp.) pieces of writing, asking students to reflect upon certain texts and themes discussed in each part of the course. The topics will be circulated at the beginning of the third, sixth, tenth, and thirteenth full week of class, respectively, and the assignments will be due four days later, i.e. on **Thursday, September 19th, Thursday, October 10th, Thursday, November 7th, and Wednesday, November 27th, at 5:00pm.**

– The midterm is a 60-minute, closed-book exam with multiple short essay questions related to material in the first part of the course; it will be held in session 14, i.e. on **October 15th.**

– The in-class presentation is a 10-minute, 5-slide oral account of an individual research activity linking a theme or reading in the course with an element of the built environment of Florence. Presentations will be scheduled in sessions throughout the **second half of the semester**. The rest of the class will be expected to participate actively in the discussion of the presentations: feedback on presentations by others will be a major component of each student's in-class participation grade.

– The final paper is a 7-to-8-page essay covering the reading and in-class discussion material from the course. No further reading or bibliographical research is required. The topic will be circulated on **November 29th** and the assignment will be due two weeks later, on **Thursday, December 12th at 5:00pm.**

In addition to the mandatory assignments, the assessment structure for the course allows for optional **extra-credit work** worth up to 3% additional points in the final grade. Extra credit will accrue for completion of multimedia projects linked to the topics of the course. Extra credit activities will be available in the second half of the semester. Details will be circulated by the instructor in class.



You are expected to attend class in person. Failure to submit or fulfill any required component may result in failure of the class, regardless of grades achieved in other assignments.

Midterm and Final Exams

- Midterm: 15 October 2024, timed exam in class (60 minutes)
- Final: 29 November – 12 December 2024, take-home paper

Attendance Policy

Studying at Global Academic Centers is an academically intensive and immersive experience, in which students from a wide range of backgrounds exchange ideas in discussion-based seminars. Learning in such an environment depends on the active participation of all students. Since classes typically meet once or twice a week, even a single absence can cause a student to miss a significant portion of a course. To ensure the integrity of this academic experience, class attendance at the centers is expected promptly when class begins. Attendance will be checked at each class meeting. Site visits and field trips are considered regular class meetings and the attendance policies outlined here apply equally to these as well.

Regardless of whether an absence is excused or not, it is the student's responsibility to recoup the work that was missed by getting notes from a classmate and consulting with your faculty member. Remember: Not all class activities can be made up and frequent absences may affect the participation, commitment or engagement component of the final grade.

Unexcused absences may be penalized with a two percent deduction on the participation, commitment or engagement component of the final grade for every week's worth of classes missed and may negatively affect your final grade. Four unexcused absences in one course may lead to an F (Fail) in that course. Being more than 15 minutes late counts as an unexcused absence. Furthermore, your professor is entitled to deduct points if you frequently join the class late.

As soon as it becomes clear that you cannot attend a class, you must immediately inform your professor and the Office of Academic Support. Absences are only excused if they are due to illness, Moses Center accommodations, religious observance or emergencies. Please note, emergencies or other exceptional circumstances that you wish to be treated confidentially must be presented to staff.

Exams, tests, quizzes, oral presentations, field trips and other important deadlines that are missed due to illness always require a doctor's note as documentation to be submitted to the Office of Academic Support. For regular class sessions, health-related absences require a doctor's note to be submitted only if you miss four consecutive days due to illness. To have these absences excused, please send the doctor's note via email to the Office of Academic Support at florence.advising@nyu.edu. Please note that absences cannot be excused retroactively.

Important deadlines (i.e. exams, quizzes, field trips) that are missed for any other reason may or may not be made up at the discretion of the instructor in consultation with the Office of Academic Support and the Office of Global Programs.

****If there is a pattern of single day non consecutive absences for health reasons over the course of the semester, you may be contacted by the Academics team.****



Religious Holidays

[NYU's Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays](#) states that members of any religious group may, without penalty, excuse themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. Students who anticipate being absent due to religious observance should notify their professor and the Office of Academic Support in writing via email to florence.advising@nyu.edu one week in advance. If examinations or assignment deadlines are scheduled on the day the student will be absent, the Academics Office will schedule a make-up examination or extend the deadline for assignments. **Please note that an absence is only excused for the holiday but not for any days of travel that may come before and/or after the holiday.** See also [Religious Accommodations at NYU](#). If you have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact religiousaccommodations@nyu.edu

Final exams

Final exams must be taken at their designated times. Should there be a conflict between your final exams, please bring this to the attention of the Academics team. Final exams may not be taken early, and students should not plan to leave the site before the end of the finals period.

The complete Global Attendance Policy is posted in the Academic Policies tab in Brightspace and on the [NYU Florence Student Portal](#) website. After you have read and reviewed the policies, if there is anything that still needs further clarification or raises a question, please reach out to florence.advising@nyu.edu.

Late Submission of Work

Please refer to Academic Policies in Brightspace. For any questions, contact florence.advising@nyu.edu.

Incompletes

Please refer to Academic Policies in Brightspace. For any questions, contact florence.advising@nyu.edu.

Teaching & Learning Philosophy

Students learn in a variety of ways: some intelligences are more visual, others text-based; some prefer individual reflection, others open debate; some shine in research, others in careful study of evidence provided; some enjoy the systematic nature of learning, others thrive by questioning. In an introductory course, it is optimal, both for the purpose of transmission of knowledge and for assessment, to offer a broad scope of different activities that will allow most to experience some pedagogical mode familiar to them, while challenging all to broaden their analytic and communication skills.

Required Text(s)

The texts covered by the course come in a wide variety of editions and translations. Students may use editions of their choosing, as they see fit. The editions that will be quoted from in the lectures and that are made available through the NYU library system are as follows:



- Coogan, M.D., Brettler, M.Z., Newsom, C.A., Perkins, P. (Eds.), 2010. *The New Oxford Annotated Bible: New Revised Standard Version with the Apocrypha*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Aeschylus, 1996. *Persians*. Hall translation, Aris and Phillips, Warminster.
- Aristophanes, 1998. *Ecclesiazusae*. Sommerstein translation, Liverpool University Press, Oxford.
- Tacitus, 1999. *Agricola, Germania*. Birley translation, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Aquinas, T., 1982. *On Kingship to the King of Cyprus*. Phelan translation, Pontifical Inst. of Mediaeval Studies, Toronto, ON.
- Machiavelli, N., 1998. *The Prince*. Mansfield translation, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL.
- Guicciardini, F., 1990. *Maxims and Reflections*. Domandi translation, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, PA.
- More, T., 2016. *Utopia*. Adams translation, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Montaigne, M., 1957. *The Essays*. Frame translation, Stanford University Press, Redwood City, CA.
- Hobbes, T., 1998. *De Cive; or, the Citizen*. Tuck & Silverthorne translation, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Rousseau, J.-J., 1987. *Basic Political Writings*. Cress translation, Hackett, Indianapolis, IN.
- Wollstonecraft, M., 2004. *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. Brody edition, Penguin Books, London.
- James, C.L.R., 1963. *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*. Vintage Books, New York, NY.
- Renan, E., 2018. *What Is a Nation? And Other Political Writings*. Giglioli translation, Columbia University Press, New York, NY.

All readings are available online on the NYU Brightspace course site. Hard copies of some textbooks are available for consultation and semester-long loans in the [Villa Ulivi Library](#). Please email florence.library@nyu.edu to reserve a copy. To request scans from books on reserve please fill out the [Ulivi Library Book Scan Form](#).

Supplemental Text(s) (not required to purchase)

Students may find the following general and reference texts helpful for background knowledge. They are available through the NYU library system.

- The Oxford Classical Dictionary.
- A. Classen (ed.), *Handbook of Medieval Culture*, De Gruyter.
- J. Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*.
- M. Bennett (ed.), *Historical Dictionary of the British & Irish Civil Wars*, Rowman & Littlefield.
- D. Brewer (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the French Enlightenment*.



Course calendar

Session/date	Topics	Readings	Assignments
Session 1 29 August 2024	Course introduction.	/	
Session 2 3 September 2024	The Old Testament.	<i>The Book of Judith.</i>	
Session 3 5 September 2024	Aeschylus.	<i>Persians.</i>	
Session 4 10 September 2024	Aristophanes.	<i>Ecclesiazusae.</i>	
Session 5 12 September 2024 16 September 2024	Tacitus.	<i>Agricola.</i>	Critical analysis paper 1 topic circulated
Session 6 17 September 2024	Tacitus.	<i>Germania.</i>	
Session 7 19 September 2024	Aquinas.	<i>On Kingship.</i>	Critical analysis paper 1 due, 5:00pm
Session 8 24 September 2024	Aquinas.	<i>On Kingship (cont.).</i>	
Session 9 26 September 2024	Machiavelli.	<i>The Prince.</i>	
Session 10 1 October 2024	Machiavelli.	<i>The Prince (cont.).</i>	
Session 11 3 October 2024 7 October 2024	Guicciardini.	<i>Maxims and Reflections.</i>	Critical analysis paper 2 topic circulated
Session 12 8 October 2024	Guicciardini.	<i>Maxims and Reflections (cont.).</i>	
Session 13 10 October 2024	Site visit: Santa Maria Novella.	/	Critical analysis paper 2 due, 5:00pm
Session 14 15 October 2024	Midterm.		In-class closed-book midterm (60 mins.)
Session 15 17 October 2024	Site visit: Casa Buonarroti.	/	
Session 16 22 October 2024	More.	<i>Utopia.</i>	In-class presentations scheduled
Session 17 24 October 2024	More.	<i>Utopia (cont.).</i>	In-class presentations scheduled
Session 18 29 October 2024	Montaigne	<i>Essays– Introduction to the reader & Book I: 1, 2, 20, 28, 31.</i>	In-class presentations scheduled
Session 19 31 October 2024	Montaigne	<i>Essays– Book II: 1, 6, 9, 18, 30 & Book III: 2, 10, 11.</i>	In-class presentations scheduled
4 November 2024			Critical analysis paper 3 topic circulated
Session 20 5 November 2024	Hobbes.	<i>On the Citizen</i> , chaps. 1-3, 5-8, 10, 12.	In-class presentations scheduled
Session 21 7 November 2024	Hobbes.	<i>On the Citizen</i> , chaps. 1-3, 5-8, 10, 12.	Critical analysis paper 3 due, 5:00pm



Session/date	Topics	Readings	Assignments
Session 22 12 November 2024	Rousseau.	<i>The Social Contract.</i>	In-class presentations scheduled
Session 23 14 November 2024	Rousseau.	<i>The Social Contract</i> (cont.).	In-class presentations scheduled
Session 24 19 November 2024	Wollstonecraft.	<i>A Vindication of the Rights of Woman</i> , chaps. 1-3, 9, 12.	In-class presentations scheduled
Session 25 21 November 2024	Wollstonecraft.	<i>A Vindication of the Rights of Woman</i> , chaps. 1-3, 9, 12.	In-class presentations scheduled
24 November 2024			Critical analysis paper 4 topic circulated
Session 26 26 November 2024	C.L.R. James.	<i>The Black Jacobins</i> , Prefaces, Prologue, chaps. I-IV.	
27 November 2024			Critical analysis paper 4 due, 5:00pm
28 November 2024 29 November 2024		U.S. Public Holiday – No class	Final take-home paper topic circulated
Session 27 3 December 2024	C.L.R. James.	<i>The Black Jacobins</i> , Prefaces, Prologue, chaps. I-IV.	
Session 28 5 December 2024 12 December 2024	Renan. Course conclusion.	“What Is a Nation?”	Final take-home paper due, 5:00pm

Suggested Co-Curricular Activities

Sessions 10 and 15 will consist of site visits to the complex of Santa Maria Novella and to Casa Buonarroti, two key locations for public and private life in Medieval and Renaissance Florence. Other individual visits in connection with the presentation project and extra-credit work (as well as relevant extracurricular talks offered at NYUF during the semester) will be discussed during the course.

Your Lecturer

Matteo Giglioli received his Ph.D. in Politics from Princeton in 2010, and has since taught and conducted research in a number of institutions of higher learning, including UC Berkeley, Columbia, Sciences Po Paris, Johns Hopkins SAIS, and the Università degli Studi di Bologna. Among his publications is the first English-language translation of the political works of Ernest Renan. He has been teaching at NYU Florence since the Fall semester of 2023.

Academic Honesty & Plagiarism

As the University's policy on "[Academic Integrity for Students at NYU](#)" states: "At NYU, a commitment to excellence, fairness, honesty, and respect within and outside the classroom is essential to maintaining the integrity of our community. By accepting membership in this community, students take responsibility for demonstrating these values in their own conduct



and for recognizing and supporting these values in others." Students at Global Academic Centers must follow the University and school policies.

NYU takes plagiarism very seriously; penalties follow and may exceed those set out by your home school. Your lecturer may ask you to sign a declaration of authorship form, and may check your assignments by using TurnItIn or another software designed to detect offenses against academic integrity.

The presentation of any improperly cited work other than your own, as though it is your own, including words, ideas, judgment, images, data, or AI-generated work (like ChatGPT or Google Gemini), whether intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes a breach of academic integrity. It is important that all work submitted for this course is your own. It is also an offense to submit your own work for assignments from two different courses that are substantially the same (be they oral presentations or written work). If there is overlap of the subject of your assignment with one that you produced for another course (either in the current or any previous semester), you must inform your professor.

For guidelines on academic honesty, clarification of the definition of plagiarism, examples of procedures and sanctions, and resources to support proper citation, please see:

[NYU Academic Integrity Policies and Guidelines](#)

[NYU Library Guides - Plagiarism and How to Avoid It](#)

Wellness and Counseling Resources

Mental health resources are available to students studying at NYU Florence through NYU's Wellness Exchange. Students can speak to a counselor about a variety of topics, including, day-to-day challenges, stress, health concerns and medical issues. Students may call the Wellness Exchange and talk to a Counselor 24/7 at 800879563 (free from Italian phone numbers) or +1 212 443 9999. You can also download the [Wellness Exchange app](#) and chat live with a Counselor 24/7. In case of emergency, students can call the Office of Student Life Florence duty phone 24/7 at +39 055 5007450. Alternatively, students can also make an appointment with NYU Florence's onsite Global Wellness Counselors. If you would like to arrange an appointment with Dr. Thiago Fernandes or Dr. Silvia Fiammenghi, please send an email to florence.counseling@nyu.edu with your weekly schedule attached.

Inclusivity Policies and Priorities

NYU's Office of Global Programs and NYU's global sites are committed to equity, diversity, and inclusion. In order to nurture a more inclusive global university, NYU affirms the value of sharing differing perspectives and encourages open dialogue through a variety of pedagogical approaches. Our goal is to make all students feel included and welcome in all aspects of academic life, including our syllabi, classrooms, and educational activities/spaces.

Pronouns and Name Pronunciation (Albert and Zoom)

Students, staff, and faculty have the opportunity to add their pronouns, as well as the pronunciation of their names, into Albert. Students can have this information displayed to faculty, advisors, and administrators in Albert, NYU Brightspace, the NYU Home internal



directory, as well as other NYU systems. Students can also opt out of having their pronouns viewed by their instructors, in case they feel more comfortable sharing their pronouns outside of the classroom. For more information on how to change this information for your Albert account, please see the [Pronouns and Name Pronunciation website](#).

Students, staff, and faculty are also encouraged, though not required, to list their pronouns, and update their names in the name display for Zoom. For more information on how to make this change, please see the [Personalizing Zoom Display Names website](#).

Moses Accommodations Statement

Academic accommodations are available for students with documented and registered disabilities. Please contact the Moses Center for Student Accessibility (+1 212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for further information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance. Accommodations for this course are managed through NYU Florence.

Bias Response

The New York University Bias Response Line provides a mechanism through which members of our community can share or report experiences and concerns of bias, discrimination, or harassing behavior that may occur within our community.

Experienced administrators in the Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) receive and assess reports, and then help facilitate responses, which may include referral to another University school or unit, or investigation if warranted according to the University's existing Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy.

The Bias Response Line is designed to enable the University to provide an open forum that helps to ensure that our community is equitable and inclusive.

To report an incident, you may do so in one of three ways:

- Online using the [Web Form \(link\)](#)
- Email: bias.response@nyu.edu
- Phone: 212-998-2277
- Local Telephone: 055 5007277

Community Engagement at NYU Florence

NYU Florence offers students the opportunity to engage with the Florentine community through off campus volunteer activities and placements which vary based on the student's availability, academic interests and language skill level.

There are two levels of participation:

- Short-term, single day, community-wide events
- Sustained weekly interaction with a local school, or nonprofit association



Some students choose to do both! The experience is well worth it!

To learn more about Community Engagement at NYU Florence, please email the Community Engagement office at florence.ce@nyu.edu

IDEA Cafè - NYU Florence

IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility) Cafè is a space where community members can bring up ideas, create synergies, express community concerns, and share information about what is happening in Florence and Italy around topics of inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility. Meetings take place approximately every two weeks and are a space in which community members can share their perspectives around these topics. For more information please contact florence.studentlife@nyu.edu