The aims of History 296, “Religion, Magic and Science in the Renaissance,” are threefold. The first is to acquaint students with the course of European history in the Renaissance, with special attention to the intellectual and spiritual developments of the period and the transformation of the European mind that they brought about. The second is to explore the competing interpretations of these developments among historians by investigating some of the major historiographical controversies about the period. The third is to challenge our own categories of knowledge and belief through an examination of the competing but often complementary claims of what we know today as “religion,” “magic” and “science.”

The objectives of the course follow naturally from its aims. By the end of the term, students will:

- Be familiar with the chronology of Renaissance history and with the fundamental political, economic, religious and intellectual developments that shaped its course;
- Understand the differing approaches of historians to the evidence surviving from the period and be able to analyze them critically;
- Think critically about the categories they use to organize their own understanding of the past and the present;
- Improve their skills in research, writing and presentation.

Every student in the course will read the following two books (available in the bookstore):


In addition, each student is required to read two books on a topic chosen in consultation with me, as well as reviews of these books and other scholarly articles related to the topic. These readings will form the basis for the historiographical essay that is required from each student in the course.

Students will be assigned brief additional readings for several class meetings.
Assignments and Grading

Book Review 15% (Due February 18)
Midterm 15% (February 25)
Historiographical Essay 30% (18 April)
Final Exam 20% (TBA)
Participation and Brief Essays 20% (TBA)

Attendance

Students are required to attend every class meeting. Absences may be excused for a variety of reasons, including poor health and other college obligations, at the discretion of the instructor. Unexcused absences will reduce the participation grade in the course by 2 points for each absence.

Assignments are due in class on the day noted on the syllabus (or, in the case of the short essays, on the date announced in class). Late assignments will be penalized one letter grade for each day late.

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism is unacceptable. If you plagiarize, you should expect to receive a zero on the assignment. Consult the Student Handbook for the college policy on academic integrity, a subject about which I will also distribute guidelines in class. You are always welcome to discuss your work with classmates and friends, but all the work you turn in to me—including essays, reviews, and exams—must be your own.
Schedule of Classes

Monday 14 January  Introduction to the Course

Wednesday 16 January  The Discarded Image

Friday 18 January  The Character of the Renaissance
  Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, *Oration on the Dignity of Man*; Wilcox, “General Introduction”

Monday 21 January  **Martin Luther King Day**

Wednesday 23 January  Plato, Plotinus and Pletho
  Yates, Chapters 1 and 2

Friday 25 January  Dante and Petrarch
  Wilcox, Chapters 3 and 4

Monday 28 January  The Star-Crossed Renaissance
  Yates, Chapters 3 and 4

Wednesday 30 January  Spiritual Magic
  Yates, Chapters 5 and 6

Friday 1 February  The Occult Sciences in the Renaissance
  Yates, Chapter 7; Wilcox, Chapter 7

Monday 4 February  From Magic to Science
  Yates, Chapter 8

Wednesday 6 February  The Copernican Revolution
  Wilcox, Chapter 8

Friday 8 February  The Sleepwalkers
  Reading TBA

Monday 11 February  The Mechanical Universe
  Reading TBA

Wednesday 13 February  From Alchemy to Chemistry
  Reading TBA

Friday 15 February  The Sciences of Life
  Debus, Man and Nature in the Renaissance (excerpt)

Monday 18 February  Technological Change: Gunpowder
  Handout (**Book Review Due**)  

Wednesday 20 February  Technological Change: The Printing Press
  Handout

Friday 22 February  Review

Monday 25 February  **Midterm Exam**

Wednesday 27 February  Art and Ideas I
  Wilcox, Chapter 11

Friday 29 February  Art and Ideas II
  No Reading Assignment

Monday 3 March  **Spring Break**
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<tr>
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<td><strong>Spring Break</strong></td>
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<td>Friday 7 March</td>
<td><strong>Spring Break</strong></td>
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<td>Monday 10 March</td>
<td>The Reformation in the Sixteenth Century</td>
<td>Wilcox, Chapter 13</td>
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<td>Wednesday 12 March</td>
<td>The Medieval Church</td>
<td>Wilcox, Chapters 15 and 16</td>
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<td>Friday 14 March</td>
<td>Mysticism and Nominalism</td>
<td>Wilcox, Chapters 17 and 18</td>
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<td>Monday 17 March</td>
<td>Northern Humanism</td>
<td>Wilcox, pp. 268-81</td>
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<td>Wednesday 19 March</td>
<td>Erasmus</td>
<td>Wilcox, pp. 281-85</td>
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<td>Friday 21 March</td>
<td><strong>Easter Recess</strong></td>
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<td>Monday 24 March</td>
<td>Film: “The Dissenter”</td>
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<td>Wednesday 26 March</td>
<td>Martin Luther</td>
<td>Wilcox, pp. 288-94; Ross, pp. 652-61</td>
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<td>Friday 28 March</td>
<td>Faith Alone</td>
<td>Wilcox, pp. 294-306</td>
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<td>Monday 31 March</td>
<td>Calvin</td>
<td>Wilcox, pp. 308-15</td>
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<td>Wednesday 2 April</td>
<td>Calvinism</td>
<td>Wilcox, pp. 315-24</td>
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<td>Friday 4 April</td>
<td>The Radical Reform</td>
<td>Wilcox, pp. 361-73</td>
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<td>Monday 7 April</td>
<td>The Catholic Reformation</td>
<td>Wilcox, pp. 342-48</td>
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<td>Wednesday 9 April</td>
<td>The Jesuits and the Council of Trent</td>
<td>Wilcox, pp. 348-60</td>
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<td>Friday 11 April</td>
<td>The Iron Century</td>
<td>No Reading Assignment</td>
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<td>Monday 14 April</td>
<td>Witchcraft</td>
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<td>Wednesday 16 April</td>
<td>Witchcraft</td>
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<td>Friday 18 April</td>
<td>Witchcraft</td>
<td>Handout (Historiographical Essay Due)</td>
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<td>Monday 21 April</td>
<td>Comenius</td>
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