-The Concept of “Renaissance”

In this course we look at what “the Renaissance” has meant for writers and scholars in a variety of disciplines from the 18th to the 20th centuries and what the introduction of the phrase “Early Modern” entails. This interdisciplinary course saw enrollments from MLL, English, and Art History.

-The Body of the Beloved in Italian, French and English Early Modern Poetry

Lyrical poetry in the Petrarchan vein usually postulates a male writer and a female object of love. The course starts with a selection of Petrarch’s Rerum vulgarium fragmenta and ended with poetry by William Shakespeare and John Donne, with additional readings by the poets of the French Pléiade as well as Louise Labé, Veronica Franco, Gaspara Stampa and Vittoria Colonna.

-Early Modern Humor

This course has at its basis canonical texts regarding humor, to wit, Sigmund Freud, Henri Bergson, and Luigi Pirandello. The literary readings are Pulci’s Morgante maggiore and François Rabelais Gargantua and Pantagruel against their social and historical background and construction of humor.

-Women Writing and Publishing in Early Modern Venice and Lyon

Did women have a Renaissance? Joan Kelly argued they didn’t. Yet recent scholarship suggests that women were writing and publishing in early modernity, but they were often excluded from the canon as formed in later times. This course looks at Veronica Franco, Moderata Fonte, and Lucrezia Marinella in Venice, as well as Louise Labé and Pernette du Guillet in Lyon.

-Cathérine de’ Medici: Florentine Princess, French Regent

The issue of female regency has been extensive studied in French culture from the legal and historical perspectives. In particular, the Medici regencies (Cathérine, 1560-1588; Marie, 1610-1630) saw political and religious turmoil and therefore have attracted considerable attention. However, in political narratives these two Florentine princesses usually fill out predetermined negative roles: loveless, neglected wives, smothering mothers, and inept and tendentious regents. This course considers the legal issues at the heart of the regency debates, the historical setting and the artistic patronage of Cathérine, influenced by her Florentine background and education and adapted to her French courtly ambience.