INSTRUCTOR: Sarah Kraaz

CREDITS: 4

COURSE DESCRIPTION
What does a work of art—painting, sculpture, fresco—tell the viewer? Overt messages, allegorical representations, thinly veiled political and social commentary, and sensuous enjoyment abound in art and have their aural counterpart in music—songs, motets, Masses, music for the stage, and Carnival songs. The Baptistry doors and Giotto’s frescoes in Santa Croce tell a story; so do a motet by Guillaume Dufay and canti carnascileschi by anonymous 15th-century composers.

COURSE OBJECTIVE
The goals of this course are:
• To hear and learn about music of the Renaissance and Baroque eras that complements art of the same periods;
• To study and describe the ways in which music and musicians are portrayed in art (iconography) and learn to interpret the significance of musical depiction (iconology);
• To comprehend the multi-dimensionality of the arts and culture of Florence from 1350 to 1700.

REQUIRED TEXTS
To be announced.

COURSE CONTENT
In-class lectures on musical styles and listening examples will alternate with on-site explorations of art and architecture in Florence. Examples of some possible stylistic correlations include Duccio’s Madonna in Orsanmichele with laude, or praise songs, sung by lay confraternities while meditating on the image; the Duomo with Guillaume Dufay’s motet, Nuper rosarum Flores, written using the same proportions as the cupola for the dedication of the finished building in 1436, and Fra Angelico’s Annunciation in the Museo di San Marco with Josquin Des Prez’ Ave Maria, both embodying the Renaissance ideal of balance and clarity.

Beyond comparing stylistic commonalities in music and art of the same periods, the course will examine how music and musicians are depicted in paintings and drawings in Florentine churches and museums and the significance behind these various modes of visualizing music. Paintings of the Nativity and the Coronation of the Virgin, in particular, commonly feature angels playing musical instruments. We will discuss the aural qualities and action representation of the paintings and learn about the instruments and their associations (e.g., with chamber music, secular singing and dancing, and sacred music). We will listen to examples of period music itself, including chant and polyphonic Mass movements. As part of our study of instrumental music, the class will visit the church of SS Annunziata to see and hear a restored 16th-century organ and learn about its continuing role in the music of the Church.
Narration is another commonality between art and music that we will explore. For example, in Ambrogio Lorenzetti’s fresco series, Allegory of Good Government in the City and in the Country, in the Palazzo Pubblico, Siena, a group of women dance to the beat of a tambourine. This allegory depicts the civic harmony that results from a just government. The madrigals written by Francesco Corteccio as musical interludes in the 1539 entertainment for the wedding of Cosimo I and Eleonora of Toledo describe the rivers and lands governed by the Medicis using allegory and mythological references.

Another subject of historical narrative, found most often in literature but in art and music as well is the medieval pilgrimage. Pilgrimages generated art in the form of badges, statues, and decorations on buildings. Pilgrims sang devotional songs while walking and to pass the time at night in the cathedrals where they were allowed to sleep. The most famous medieval route led from Rome through Tuscany to Santiago de Compostela in Spain. Students will listen to 13th- and 14th-century pilgrims’ songs from Italy and Spain before boarding a train to Pistoia, one of the pilgrimage stations approximately 30 miles from Florence. There they will see the silver altar of San Jacopo in the Cathedral, the reliquary containing his hand, and the Ospedale del Ceppo, with its Della Robbia and Santi Buglioni terra cotta friezes, built as a hostel for pilgrims and later used as a hospital (It is the oldest functioning medical school in Italy). We will discuss modern pilgrimages (Bayreuth, Graceland, the Baseball Hall of Fame), and I will ask each student to write an account of a pilgrimage they have made in their life.

ASSESSMENT

Assigned readings will supplement lectures. Written work will consist of:
- Several quizzes for term definition;
- 500-word weekly reflections on music in art that students discover on their own and/or see in other courses and on our trips to Venice and Rome; and
- Occasional 250-word summaries of music listening done outside of class (from a supplemental list of youtube examples or attendance at a live music event).
- A ‘treasure hunt’ for musician angels in paintings of the Galleria dell'Accademia, with descriptions and analysis of the iconology, will constitute the final exam.

ACM POLICY ON ACADEMICS

A complete listing of ACM policies can be found in your student handbook.

Class attendance and participation: You are expected to attend and participate fully in all classroom sessions, site visits, and field trips.

Academic honesty: Actions of dishonesty are destructive to the well-being of the academic community, and ACM staff respond to them vigorously. Cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic theft will result in a failing grade for that assignment and may result in failure for the course.

ACM POLICY ON NON-DISCRIMINATION

The Associated Colleges of the Midwest does not discriminate in the operation of its educational programs, activities, or employment on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, color, religion, national origin, age, veteran status, marital status, or disability.

CLASSROOM CONDUCT

Expectations will be discussed at the first class session.