

Humanities I

Part II: Renaissance Florence  
Unit 16. Social Structure.

Knowledge Objectives:

- A. To know that Renaissance Florentine society had five major classes, of which the two highest classes comprised only about ten per cent of the population.
- B. To know that the development of the rich humanistic culture of Renaissance Florence was carried out by the elite, or top two classes, and that enjoyment of that culture was also limited primarily to the elite, but that all citizens could enjoy some aspects of the cultural life of the city.
- C. To know that urban social structure fostered the development of the rich humanist culture of Florence.

Discussion questions and study notes:

- 1) How would you analyze Florentine society? What specifically were the classes? How were they determined? What status did each enjoy? What norms were associated with each class? What privileges?
- 2) How does the Renaissance Florentine social structure compare with that of ancient Athens? Are there particular characteristics of urban social structures, like those of Athens and Florence, that encourage the type of culture to be found in each city?
- 3) What was the relationship between the class structure of Renaissance Florence and the humanistic culture of the city?
- 4) Should the Florentine elite have spent its money on raising the standard of living of the lower classes rather than on art?
- 5) What are your opinions on social class structure? Is there such a thing in modern American society? Is there evidence of class structure locally? What do the "elite" do for the living conditions of the "less well off"? What do the "elite" do for the art and culture of the community generally?
- 6) What, in your opinion, is more important - a rich cultural life for the few, or practical advantages such as sewers, hospitals, schools, and so forth, for everyone?

*Handwritten notes:*  
16-20-17-18-19  
16-20-17-18-19  
16-20-17-18-19  
16-20-17-18-19

## Humanities I

### Part II

#### Unit 17. The Political System

##### Knowledge Objectives:

- A. To know the reasons why city-states developed in Renaissance Italy, and particularly to know that the conflict between emperor and pope and the lack of power of the country nobles made possible the political power of the cities.
- B. To know how the governments of Renaissance cities operated, and particularly how they affected the arts.
- C. To know that rivalry for political power in the cities encouraged leaders to seek political support by patronizing art that could be enjoyed by everyone.

##### Discussion questions and study notes:

Trace the factors that led to the development of city states.

- 1) Who were the political leaders? What were their attributes? How did they gain and maintain support?
- 2) What kind of political institutions were established? How did these institutions affect the cultural life?
- 3) How were decisions made in the cities? What factors had to be accounted for in making decisions?
- 4) What was the role of the citizen? How did his role affect decision making, the choice of leaders?
- 5) What was the dominant ideology of the period? How did this ideology affect decision-making, the choice of leaders?
- 6) What responsibility does a government have for the arts?

## Humanities I

Part II

Unit 18. The Economy.

Read the selection most carefully and in a single paragraph, summarize the content of the reading. (this would be a knowledge objective.)

Exchange your ideas freely around your group.

Apply this statement to your findings:

The real cost of doing one thing is the necessity of giving up something else that could be done with the same resources.

Discussion questions and study notes

- 1) To what extent did this change in the economy contribute to the artistic development of the Renaissance?
- 2) Could the elite have invested its money (or spent its money) in other ways?
- 3) Did the state of the economy or the values of the elite, then, have more to do with investment in art?
- 4) What did Renaissance men give up by investing in art?
- 5) Must we give up as much in order to have a rich, cultural life today?
- 6) Should we give up some things in order to have a rich cultural life? What should be sacrificed?

What are our priorities today - economically?

Read The Affluent Society: by J. K. Galbraith. Penguin Paper Back.  
and  
The New Industrial State: by J. K. Galbraith. Penguin Paper Back.

*How would the rates  
of mac + econ. growth  
to a good society  
intellectual trends*

*13, 14, 15, 19*

## Humanities I

### Part II

#### Unit 19. The Ideas of the Renaissance.

##### Knowledge Objectives:

To know that classical humanism, scientific naturalism, and Renaissance individualism are major concepts that characterize the ideas of the Renaissance, and to know what is meant by each.

Attempt to explain each of the concepts used by Fleming in your own words.

##### Humanism:

##### Scientific Naturalism:

##### Individualism:

##### Discussion questions and study notes:

- 1) What examples does Fleming give to support his argument?
- 2) Find examples in the reading to support specifically each concept.
- 3) Are there other concepts that you would think would be more useful than Fleming's for characterizing the Renaissance?
- 4) Do you think that these concepts are useful for judging the nature of the good man, good life, and good society today?

##### Supplementary reading:

Utopia: by Sir Thomas More. Penguin Paper Back.

## Humanities I

### Part II

#### Unit 20. The Renaissance: An Assessment.

##### Knowledge Objectives:

- A. To know that the Renaissance has been indicted as a period in which a rich cultural life depended upon exploitation, in which art failed to inspire men, in which classical antiquity sapped creativity, in which toadying to the rich distracted men from moral values, in which individual fame was placed above community involvement, and in which ephemeral things of this world replaced enduring values.
- B. To know that Durant finds in the Renaissance the spirit of the modern world, which has given man intellectual liberation, a desire to excel, a world-centered religion that fosters concern for immediate problems, and a recognition of the totality of human life, including its sensual aspects.

##### Discussion questions and study notes:

- 1) Do you think that these condemnations are justifiable? Do you think the criteria used to judge the Renaissance should be applied to a culture?
- 2) How does Durant answer this indictment of the Renaissance?
- 3) Has not Durant shown the other side of the coin in the indictment of the Renaissance? How does he counter the arguments against the Renaissance?
- 4) Class hand-out F.@. Does this selection agree with Durant's arguments to support or refute the ideas in the hand-out?
- 5) How would you interpret the Renaissance in Florence as a model to judge your own life?

Make a collection for your notebooks. This should include examples of art and sculpture; architecture; functional buildings, as well as great cathedrals and palaces; scientific exploration and investigation; philosophical ideas; political ideas; social reform; laws; social graces and entertainment such as music and the dance; costume design and custom; games and recreation; religious fervor and religious reform.

Every student should contribute to the class effort until a mass of evidence (pictorial) is compiled to represent the Florentine Renaissance and its contribution to the history and civilization of Man.