And Yet it Moves: A Study of the Scientific Revolution in Florence, Italy

Freshman Seminar Abroad
July 20-August 6, 2011

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Freshman Seminars ..... 

...are engaging two-week courses in a cultural capital of the world like Florence that are designed to give students international experience.

...offer stimulating discussion and debate about current world topics.

...will help students develop critical thinking, writing, and study skills and introduce them to the demands of college work.

...are opportunities to make new friends.

...offer the chance to earn two college credits.

Queens College Freshman Seminars allow first-year students to explore intriguing topics in multiple disciplines in small, study abroad classes. Students will meet Queens College faculty and staff, meet other incoming students, learn about life at college, and begin their social, academic, and even professional journeys....

Our Freshman Seminar will begin with two days of orientation designed to prepare for the trip and introduce students to life at Queens College. Students will stay overnight in the Summit Residence Hall on campus. After orientation, we’ll jump on a bus and head off to the airport for our flight to Italy.

The first week, we’ll study the culture of Italy for one-credit:

ITALIAN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE
Staff, Florence University of the Arts

Italian Language and Culture is an interdisciplinary course which concentrates on rapidly developing a basic command of Italian while introducing the student to various aspects of Italian history, culture and realities of contemporary Italy. Students will have opportunity for on-site learning with their instructors through a series of walking tours and visits in Florence.
Prerequisites: There is no language requirement for this course which is aimed at beginners in the Italian language.

The second week, we’ll study the Scientific Revolution for one credit:

**AND YET IT MOVES...**
*Prof. Helen Gaudette, Queens College, History*

Does the earth move? Galileo maintained that it did, angering Church officials and ending up on trial for that idea and the others contained in his writings. The second week, we’ll study the history of the Scientific Revolution for one credit, examining the impact of Galileo’s teachings about the cosmos in the first decades of the 17th century. We’ll focus on Italy and reenact Galileo’s trial as a game; when the new science, as brilliantly propounded by him, collided with the cosmology of Aristotle, Aquinas, and medieval Scholasticism embraced by the Church at that time. Some of the excursion highlights in Florence will include the Uffizi Museum, viewing Galileo’s telescope at the Institute and Museum of the History of Science, and visiting his tomb in Santa Croce Church. We’ll also travel to Pisa where Galileo was born and educated at the university there.

During our reenactment of the Trial of Galileo, students will be assigned roles as historical figures with their own “game objective.” Some of you will play the roles of faculty of the *Collegio Romano* and the *Sapienza* or secular University of Rome, but most will play Cardinals who seek to defend the faith from the threat of Protestantism, the imperial ambitions of the Spanish monarchy, the schemes of the Medici in Florence, and a crisis of faith throughout Christendom. Some will embrace the “new cosmology,” some will denounce it, and still others will be undecided.

At the heart of the Trial of Galileo game, is animated discussion and debating; you must persuade others that “your” views make more sense than those of your opponents. You will have two ways of expressing your views, orally and in writing, and both will be graded and contribute toward your final grade. Writing assignments will be written into a journal. Work will be conducted individually and in teams. The issues will range from the nature of faith and the meaning of Scripture to the scientific principles and methods as advanced by Copernicus, Kepler, Tycho Brahe, Giordano Bruno, and Galileo. The central texts include: Aristotle’s *Physics*; Galileo’s *Starry Messenger* (1610) and *Dialogue on the Two World Systems* (1632); the declarations of the Council of Trent; and the Bible. Together, we will study these texts, visit some of the sites in Florence and Pisa associated with Galileo and his trial, and play the game along the way.

*Required Reading: please purchase before we leave for Italy to bring along with you*

Course Requirements:

**Participation:** (50%) The heart and soul of the Galileo Game is persuasion so participation is a crucial component. In your assigned role, you will seek to achieve your “game objectives” by expressing your views in the classroom as a member of a particular team (faction) or alone as an indeterminate.

**Journal/Notebook:** (50%) The journal will consist of hand-written notes, thoughts, comments, postcards, museum receipts, strategies, and arguments. Think of it as a written record of all that you do, see, and learn about Italy and the Scientific Revolution in Florence. *Choose your notebook carefully! Get one that is a comfortable size for you, one you will not mind taking with you everywhere, one that makes you feel like writing! It should have at least 100 pages (you may find yourself writing more than you had ever imagined you would).*

In addition to writing assignments, the journal will include your outlines and notes with arguments and counter arguments to each of the six major questions concerning Galileo that will come up in the debates: 1. Does the earth move? 2. Is there a single universe, and are the heavens fixed, perfect and immutable, as Aristotle proposed? 3. Should those who lack formal theological training be allowed to teach or publish their interpretations of the Bible? 4. Can Galileo publish *The Starry Messenger* and other works that espouse Copernicanism? 5. (This question is included ONLY if answer to #3 or #4 is some form of “yes”) Must Galileo publicly affirm that what he publishes or teaches on church-sensitive matters is offered only as hypothesis, not as reality? 6. Is Galileo guilty of heresy and, if so, how should he be punished? You can refer to your outlines and arguments during the debates.

**Suggested Further Reading:**


