

Reading List for HalifaxThinks – Renaissance and Reformation

Here are the books you will need to read for The King's Seminar.

Johan Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages*

Pico della Mirandola, *Oration of the Dignity of Man*

Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*

Bernal Diaz, *The Conquest of New Spain*

Bartolome de las Casas, *The Devastation of the Indies: A Brief Account*

Galileo, *Starry Messenger, Letter to the Grand Duchess Christina, Assayer*

Desiderius Erasmus, *In Praise of Folly*

Thomas More, *Utopia*

Martin Luther, *The Freedom of a Christian; Secular Authority: to What Extent Should it be Obeyed; Two Kinds of Righteousness; The Bondage of the Will*

Michel de Montaigne, *Essays*

William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*

All texts are all available from the [King's Bookstore](#) and may be ordered online.

Lecture #1 – Introduction – The Collapse of the Middle Ages. There is no reading other than the lecture itself in either this or the next lecture on art but interested readers may want to look at either or both of two great works mentioned in the text. One of these is by the Dutch historian, Johan Huizinga, (1872 – 1945CE), who combed through the chronicles, letters, proclamations, customs, treatises, music, and especially the art of the late medieval period with the aim of showing a society in its dissolution and has managed to put together a composite picture in his *Waning of the Middle Ages* – (the lecturer uses a republication of the original English translation of this 1919 Dutch work – Edward Arnold & Co, London, 1924 – from Dover Publications, August, 1998).

You may want to supplement Huizinga's work with the eminently readable story in Barbara Tuchman's famous work, *A Distant Mirror: The Calamitous 14th Century*, (Ballantyne Books, July 1987). Tuchman lays out in all its delicious and terrible detail the pessimistic view of a world in which "man had lost confidence in his capacity to construct a good society."

Lecture #2- From Medieval to Renaissance Art – No reading other than the lecture – but plenty of looking at the images reproduced in the posted lecture.

Lecture # 3 – Pico della Mirandola, *Oration on the Dignity of Man*. This little text is like an architect's sketch on the back of an envelope – in this case it lays out the general form of the new concept of man that was to inform the Modern World. (The lecturer uses the Hackett edition, March, 1998, which includes two of Mirandola's lesser known works, of which the publishers say: "This anthology offers in their entirety three central works of Pico's. *On the Dignity of Man*, one of the most widely read documents of the early Renaissance humanism, appears in the context of two lesser-known but equally representative mature works: *One Being and the One*, a treatise defending what Pico held to be the agreement between Aristotle and Plato on the relation between unity and being, and *Heptaplus*, an interpretation, influenced by a blend of cabalism and Christian doctrine, of the first verses of *Genesis*. Reflected in this collection, then, is the remarkable range of interests of a major Renaissance thinker and humanist." If you prefer to just get the *Oration* by itself, it is available from Gateway Editions, (June, 1956).

Lecture #4 – Florence and Machiavelli's *The Prince*. The most recent edition is from Oxford University Press, March, 2005, Oxford World's Classics, it contains the celebrated translation by Peter Bondonella and the notes of Maurizio Viroli. This is the edition used by the lecturer but any other will serve as well.

Lecture #5 – Diaz and the Conquest of New Spain. Bernal Diaz, *The Conquest of New Spain*. (Penguin Classics, translated by J.M. Cohen, 1963). This eye-witness account by one of the soldiers in Cortes' expedition (which ended up overthrowing the Aztec Empire) naively reveals the amazing deeds of this handful of Europeans – deeds both wonderful and atrocious. We read it alongside the very different and outraged European reaction that we find in Bartolome de las Casas' *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, (Penguin Classics, introduction by Anthony Pagden, translated by Nigel Griffin, September 1999).

Lecture #6 – Renaissance Science, *The Starry Messenger*, *Letter to the Grand Duchess Christina*, *The Assayer*. These three works may be found in *The Discoveries and Opinions of Galileo*, Edited, Stillman Drake, Anchor Books, (April, 1957). This is the text used by the lecturer. In addition it contains Galileo's *Letters on Sunspots* as well as an introduction to each treatise.

Dava Sobel's, *Galileo's daughter: A Historical Memoir of Science, Faith, and Love*, (Penguin, October, 2000) provides a readable, semi-fictionalized account of Galileo's life and world based on 124 surviving letters with his daughter Sister Marie Celeste.

Lecture #7 – Renaissance Music. No reading other than the lecture – but plenty of listening to the music in the posted lecture.

Lecture #8 – Erasmus, *Praise of Folly*. The lecturer uses the Yale University Press, Second Edition, edited by Clarence H. Millar, February 2003. Some may have the Penguin Classics version edited by A.H.T. Levi and Betty Radice, March, 1994 – which will work just fine. *Praise of Folly*, written to amuse his friend Sir Thomas More, is Erasmus's best-known work. The Yale edition includes his lesser known satire *Pope Julius barred for Heaven* and selections from his *Adages*.

Lecture #9 – Thomas More, *Utopia*, (edited and translated (from the Latin) by George M. Logan and Robert M. Adams, 1989, Cambridge University Press). In this little work More set out in Book I all that was wrong with the collapsing world of the Middle Ages in Western Europe and then, in Book II, he lays down a blueprint of the Modernity that would remake the world ... in his prescient and witty account of the imaginary island of Utopia.

Lecture #10 – Martin Luther – *The Freedom of a Christian; Secular Authority: to What Extent Should it be Obeyed; Two Kinds of Righteousness*; and the selections from *The Bondage of the Will* – all of which are contained in *Martin Luther, Selections from his Writings*, (ed. John Dillenberger, Anchor Books, February, 1958). These are the foundational texts of the Protestant Reformation.

You may want also to look at the famous and very readable biography of Martin Luther by Roland H. Bainton, *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther*, (Plume, April, 1995).

Lecture #11 – Michel de Montaigne, *The Complete Essays*, (edited, introduced, and translated by M.A. Screech, Penguin Classics, September, 1993). Readings include: *We reach the same end by discrepant means; That it is madness to judge the true and the false from our own capacities; On the Cannibals; On the inconstancy of our actions; On repenting; and On experience*. If you have time and inclination you could also look at, *On some lines of Virgil*.

Lecture #12 – William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*. The lecturer uses the Dover Thrift Edition, (October, 1998), but if you want more extensive notes you could use the Norton Critical Edition, (edited by Peter Hulme and William H. Sherman, December 2003, and containing 18 critical essays on various aspects of the play) or any other edition you may have.