

# The Italian Renaissance

## Course Syllabus

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## Course Info

### Course Description

The Advanced Elective Seminar is a course designed to familiarize students with some of the purposes and methods of comparative analysis. Topics discussed include contrasting types of evidence, differentiating information sources, examining related content, and communicating learning experiences. In this particular Seminar, The Italian Renaissance, students will address the development of western ideas in science, culture, and community during the Italian Renaissance.

From the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries, the Italian peninsula was the center of a new age of human discovery and expression. With the unfolding of ancient philosophies, the Catholic Church's temporal and spiritual control over Western Europe faltered. This age changed the meaning of political power, art, literature, science, and religious life. New perspectives lifted the horizons of thought and artistic expression. What meaning and value do these issues have for the contemporary person? By exploring the richness of Renaissance culture, this course attempts to answer the following questions: What happened on the Italian peninsula during the Renaissance? Who were the principal players? How did this period influence western civilization, particularly with respect to learning? What does the Renaissance mean today? Why, indeed, does it play such a major role in contemporary consciousness of the arts, literature, politics, and science?

This is a complex period in human history. The material on the Renaissance available to learners is infinite and complex. In order to organize our thoughts, our course concentrates on the rise and fall of the Medici family in Florence. Cosimo, Lorenzo, Piero, and Giovanni de' Medici (Pope Leo X) were instrumental in the development of this spectacular age. Readings will address issues in the city state of Florence. Learners will also confront our own time with respect to issues raised in the Italian Renaissance.

### Course Learning Goals

Upon the successful completion of the course, learners will have:

- a general awareness of the interrelationship of the arts, history, politics, science,

- and religion in a specific period in western history;
- a greater appreciation for the liberal arts and their origins;
  - a clear perception of the history of our views and definitions of science and technology;
  - an ability to articulate how contemporary human experience conforms to or differs from previous cultural periods.

### **Learning Strategies:**

In this course, students will select individual fields of investigation from various topics concerning the Italian Renaissance. Readings, films, discussions, field trips, independent research, and other experiences will allow learners to discover the world of the Italian Renaissance and to apply its value and meaning to contemporary issues. *Please note that all Modules are necessary and required. Participation is mandatory.*

## **Course Resources**

### **Texts**

1. Plumb, J.H. *The Italian Renaissance*. Mariner Books, 2001.
2. Brucker, Gene. A. *Giovanni and Lusanna: Love and Marriage in Renaissance Florence*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988.
3. Brucker, Gene A. ed., Martines, Julia, translator. *Two Memoirs of Renaissance Florence: The Diaries of Buonaccorso Pitti and Gregorio Dati*. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, Inc., 1991.
4. Bondanella, Julia Conaway. *The Italian Renaissance Reader*. New American Library, 1987.

### **Films**

Time/Life Civilisation series - the clips listed below are available as streaming content in the course but you may wish to rent them (available on Netflix) or check them out from your local library. The critical content, delivered by Art Historian Sir Kenneth Clark, is combined with views of art and architecture and with music of the period. Although there are other series which address this material in a more contemporary way, the Clark films are visually rich and extraordinarily successful in combining the impact of various art forms, historical periods, and social concerns.

- #2 - The Great Thaw
- #3 - Romance and Reality
- #4 - Man: The Measure of All Things
- #5 - Hero as Artist
- #6 - Protest and Communication

This series is also available in book form, should you want to review the narrative delivered by Sir Kenneth.

## **Course Competences**

In this course, you will develop the following competences:

Competence	Competence Statement and Facets/Criteria
E1	Understands the nature of new learning in the Italian Renaissance, and can relate these issues to social, scientific, and artistic developments of that period.
E2	Will address each student's individual research topic.

## How Competences will be Demonstrated in this Course

Advanced Elective (E-1 and E-2) competences:

The Advanced Elective competences will reflect the integrative nature of the liberal arts in the period of the Italian Renaissance. Because of the unprecedented growth of learning in this period, and because of the strides which were made afterward, our modern concepts of social science, hard science, and the arts are defined somewhat differently from those same ideas in the Renaissance. Advanced competences, thus, must refer to the interaction of these fields, and to their relative difference from our contemporary concepts.

E-1: Understands the nature of new learning in the Italian Renaissance, and can relate these issues to social, scientific, and artistic developments of that period.

E-2: will address each student's individual research topic. Students will choose one from the following list of competences:

1. Can explain the development of communities and social values in the Italian Renaissance, and can relate these to ideas of community in the 21st century.
2. Can define technology in the Italian Renaissance, and can compare it to 21st century notions of technology.
3. Can describe the impact of the visual arts on Italian Renaissance Society, and can relate 21st century views of the visual arts to those of the Renaissance.
4. Can produce a work of art which mirrors the arts of the Italian Renaissance, can explain the work in context, and can describe the methods of production used in the Renaissance and in modern times.

## Course Structure

*A note on the readings: Please complete reading assignments according to the schedule listed below. Plumb, Brucker, and Bondanella readings must be completed before module 6.*

Module 1: Introduction to the Italian Renaissance

Topics:

1. Introductions: What do you know about the Italian Renaissance?
2. What is a Seminar? Reading Report Sign Up
3. The Contributions of Ancient Rome

### **Preparation for next Module:**

Watch: The Great Thaw

Read: Plumb, pp. 6 - 33

Begin Brucker readings

Begin Bondanella,

"Francesco Petrarca" pp.1 - 11 and  
"Canzoniere" selections #s 52, 61, 90, and 159.  
"Giovanni Boccaccio" pp. 6- 78 and 96-99

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Module 2: The Rise of Secular and Religious Power

Topics:

1. Review
2. Readings Reports
3. The Middle Ages, City States, and Concentrations of Power

***Preparation for next Module:***

Watch: Romance and Reality  
Read: Plumb, pp. 35 - 68  
Continue Brucker readings  
Continue Bondanella,  
"Leon Battista Alberti" pp. 164-169, 173-177 and  
"Giovanni Pico della Mirandola" pp. 178-183.

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Module 3: Humanism and the Medici Family: Cosimo

Topics:

1. What's Going on Here? Developments in the Italian Renaissance/Time Lines
2. Readings Reports
3. Humanism Defined and the Medici Family: Cosimo

**First set of journal entries due**

***Preparation for Next Module:***

Read: Plumb, pp. 69 - 90  
Continue Brucker readings

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Module Four: The Growth of Economic Power

Topics:

1. Review
2. The Medici Family Evolves
3. Financial Institutions and the Medici Bank

***Preparation for Next Module:***

Watch: Man: The Measure of All Things  
Read: Plumb, pp. 91 - 117  
Complete Brucker, Two Renaissance Diaries  
Continue Bondanella,  
"Baldassare Castiglione" pp. 197- 203 and  
"Niccolo' Machiavelli" pp.258-261, and chapters XV, XVI, XVII (pp.  
273 - 278)

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Module Five: Warriors and Women

Topics:

1. Readings Reports
2. Warrior Princedoms
3. Renaissance Women

**Second set of journal entries, plus research topic due**

***Preparation for Next Module***

Read: Complete Plumb, pp. 142 - 170  
Complete Brucker, Giovanni and Lusanna  
Continue Bondanella "Leonardo Da Vinci" pp. 185-186  
and "Notebook" Introduction, plus selections #s11, 19, 483,  
660, and 1179 and "Michelangioli Buonarroti" pp. 375-379

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Module Six: Lorenzo de' Medici

Topics:

1. Readings Reports
2. Revisit Developments in the Renaissance
3. Lorenzo as Banker, Leader and Humanist

**Third set of journal entries due**

***Preparation for Next Module***

Watch: Hero as Artist

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Module Seven: Renaissance Art and Architecture

Topics:

1. Readings Reports
2. Touring Museums
3. Art's Role in the Italian Renaissance

**Research Paper outline due**

***Preparation for Next Module***

Read: Continue Bondanella,  
"Giorgio Vasari" pp, 382 - 392

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Module Eight: Eclipse of the Renaissance Period

Topics:

1. Readings Reports
2. The End of the Renaissance

**Fourth set of journal entries due**

***Preparation for Next Module***

Watch: Protest and Communication

Read: Complete Bondanella,  
"Benvenuto Cellini" pp, 306 - 316 and  
"Francesco Guicciardini" pp, 298 - 303

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#### Module Nine: The Age of Discovery

Topics:

1. Columbus and the New World
2. What Happened to Italy?

**Fifth set of journal entries due**  
**Research Paper due**

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#### Module 10: Why Study the Italian Renaissance?

Topics:

1. What is the nature of western civilization and is it still important
2. What do you know now that you didn't know before?

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## Assessment

### Assessment of Learning

In addition to assigned readings, class discussions, and films, students will participate in a variety of experiential and research activities. The requirements for this course are listed below, as are explanations of each requirement. All course assignment will deal specifically with the dissemination of Renaissance ideas, and their ramifications on learning in complexity and the flow of information in the modern world. Please see the instructor for more details.

E-1 - Participation in online discussions

- museum field trip;
- Journal on competence themes;
- Final presentation of perceptions of the Renaissance and its impact on contemporary culture.

E-2 - Research project of approximately ten pages;

- Annotated bibliography.

### Descriptions of course activities:

#### On line discussions and activities

The Italian Renaissance provides a great deal of information to discuss and debate. Seminar courses depend heavily on discussion for the presentation and clarification of ideas. These online Modules will be devoted to consideration of the liberal arts system of thought which matured in this period and the ways in which it integrates with the SNL competence domains. Consistent participation in these activities is required, including

regular discussion of course readings. During our class time, students will be responsible for scheduling a field trip to their local art museums to locate art from the period. This visit is a required part of the course. Students must also participate in the sharing of ideas around the readings of Renaissance authors that we will complete in this class. These Readings Presentations will take place each week;

### **Journal (Approximately 20 pages total)**

The journal focuses on the content of our course. Use this document as a forum for discussion of competence themes as they relate to Renaissance facts, ideas, and personalities. Each student will submit five, four-page journal entries, totaling twenty pages in all. Topics for each journal are listed below. Students are expected to use the journal to comment on their developing knowledge and understanding -acquired through lecture, reading, films, etc. - of the general topics of the course. Although learners will draw on knowledge and ideas gleaned from course readings, discussions, and films, these journals are meant to be personal commentaries, not research papers. Journals must be written in standard English, and submitted via email according to the calendar in the Topic Outline section below.

- Journal #1 Define the Italian Renaissance.
- Journal #2 What is Humanism?
- Journal #3 What is a "Renaissance Person?"
- Journal #4 Did the Italian Renaissance end?
- Journal #5 Why study the Italian Renaissance?

### **Final Presentation**

Each student will present a 5 minute summary of work done on course competences, on the museum field trip, and on the applications of the material of this course to modern times, as is outlined in the E1 and E2 competence statements.

### **Research Project (Approximately 10 pages, plus an Annotated Bibliography)**

Participants in this experience will develop projects which present some aspect of the renaissance and its relevance to contemporary society. Competence statements and accompanying research topics are listed below. Each paper must analyze the topic with respect to competence demands, according to the outline presented below. All papers must be in standard English and submitted according to MLA format. If you have questions about how and when to use citations or about the MLA style, please see the instructor.

- An Annotated Bibliography of approximately 10 sources must accompany your work. That is, for each of your 10 sources, you must write a brief paragraph describing and critiquing the source. Annotations should include reference to the type of work you are citing, its general style, the relevance to your topic, and the position the piece holds with respect to other materials in your bibliography. Nb. NO internet sites may be used as sources for this paper. This syllabus includes a bibliography, but there are many sources available on this topic. Questions about sources should be referred to the instructor.

**MATERIALS SUBMITTED AFTER DUE DATES WILL BE ASSESSED ON A PASS/FAIL BASIS ONLY.**

**INCOMPLETE GRADES MUST BE NEGOTIATED WITH FACULTY.**

## Research Project Outline and Topic Suggestions

The suggestions which follow are not exhaustive. Should you have any additional topics, please discuss them with the instructor.

### I. Introduction

- A. What is the Main Point of your paper? (i.e. Your chosen competence statement)
- B. How will you prove your main point? (Library research, Observation, Analysis of factual data, Interviews, etc.)
- C. What was your experience with or understanding of the topic before you began your research?

### II. Definition of terms

- A. What do the words in the statement mean?
- B. What do the terms of your topic mean?
- C. Other terms germane to your discussion

III. In this section, answer the questions listed below your chosen competence statement (see below)

IV. What contemporary comparisons or analyses can you make?

### V. Conclusion

- A. What did you prove in your research paper?
- B. How does your research demonstrate your mastery of the competence?
- C. What do you know about this period that you didn't know before?

### VI. Annotated Bibliography

## E-2 Competence Choices:

Choose one of the following competences for your E2 statement and for your research paper. The items below each statement should give you some ideas on structuring your paper.

- Can explain the development of communities and social values in the Italian Renaissance, and can relate these to ideas of community in the 21st century
  1. Discuss the nature of human interaction, (political, social, national, community, etc.) in the Renaissance;
  2. Comment on political and economic contributions to the rise of the Renaissance;
  3. How would you characterize the values of Renaissance Florence?
  4. What is the relationship between values and culture?
  5. How were the values conveyed through artifacts?
  6. Discuss one art object or custom which characterized Florentine values in the Renaissance period;
  7. Define the term nation from a Renaissance perspective;
  8. Describe the Italian city states in terms of their historical development;

9. Show how the Papacy can be defined as a temporal authority.
  10. How might a 15th century Florentine define multiculturalism?
- Can define science and technology in the Italian Renaissance, and can compare it to 21st century notions of science technology.
    1. Define technology from a Renaissance perspective;
    2. Define science in the Italian Renaissance;
    3. Describe some of the technological developments of this period;
    4. Show how technological advancement influenced other aspects of Renaissance life;
    5. Identify the controversies surrounding technological discoveries in the Renaissance;
    6. Identify the major players in changing the role of scientific inquiry during this period.
    7. Describe the controversies regarding science and theology in the Italian Renaissance;
    8. Explain how renaissance thinkers equated science and theology;
    9. Describe the long term influences of heliocentrism on European thinking;
    10. Relate these issues to contemporary views of science, religion, and their intersection.
  - Can describe the impact of the visual arts on Italian Renaissance Society, and can relate 21st century views of the visual arts to those of the Renaissance.
    1. Define the values prevalent in the Italian Renaissance;
    2. Show how 2 or 3 works of art or literature convey the values you have defined in #1;
    3. Characterize the art of the Renaissance;
    4. What is the difference between art and entertainment in Renaissance society?
    5. How is comparison achieved in the arts? in literature?
    6. Describe the differences in style and content of mediaeval and Renaissance art;
    7. Discuss Michelangiolo's evolving style;
    8. Define folk art.
    9. How does folk art differ from other forms of art?
    10. Who produced folk or popular art in the Italian Renaissance?
  - Can produce a work of art which mirrors the arts of the Italian Renaissance, can explain the work in context, and can describe the methods of production used in the Renaissance and in modern times.
    1. Define the work of art you intend to produce;
    2. Define the terms original and art;
    3. Explain how your artwork meets the demands of the definitions you provided in #2;
    4. Describe how your artwork conveys Renaissance ideology;
    5. What methods did Renaissance artists use to produce their art?
    6. Describe the training Renaissance artists received.
    7. What were the relationships of design, aesthetics, and function in Renaissance art?

## Percentage Distribution of Assessments

### Course Grading Scale

A = 95 to 100	A- = 91 to 94	B+ = 88 to 90
B = 85 to 87	B- = 81 to 84	C+ = 77 to 80
C = 73 to 76	C- = 69 to 72	D+ = 65 to 68
D = 61 to 64	F = 60 or below	INC

For SNL courses taken for Pass/Fail, a “Pass” represents a grade of “A” for purposes of financial aid and employer reimbursement.

Students wishing to declare a Pass/Fail option must do so before the end of the 2nd week of the quarter.

### Your Grading Policies and Practices

All students, no matter what competence they seek, are expected to:

- Read assigned texts in timely fashion.
- Participate regularly and articulately in class discussions.
- Show respect for divergent points of view expressed within the discussions.
- Turn in assignments in timely fashion.
- Use correct academic format including citation in all work.
- Follow rubrics given in courseguide for each assignment.
- Revise according to instructor suggestions when requested or required.

### General Assessment Criteria for All Writing Assignments

All writing, including posted messages, must be:

1. Original work. All work must be in your own words. If you have questions about whether you have paraphrased or cited correctly, click on the “Academic Integrity” button on the upper left-hand side of the Blackboard entry page and follow the links there, or ask for help from the DePaul University Writing Center, which provides online help for no charge.
2. Professionally stated. Even though we hope to be a friendly group online, casual or slangy wording is inappropriate in college classes. If you imagine yourself at a business meeting (even if you are sitting at home in your pajamas), you are more likely to write in an appropriately formal style.
3. Correctly spelled, punctuated, and phrased. Even in postings, you should be careful to use correct standard English. This is required as well in all written materials that you submit for assessment.

## Online Discussion

### Assessment Criteria for Online Discussion Participation

Online participation will be assessed according to the following expectations:

- Each student will post each week in that week's forums.
- Students are expected to work on a weekly basis; each forum will be closed to new postings after two weeks.
- Postings should be on topic and in professional language.
- Postings may disagree with other postings, but disagreements should be courteously stated.
- Postings should be substantive, meaning they should do more than agree or disagree with an earlier posting.
- Postings should, when appropriate, reference works from the class bibliography or outside sources. Such citations should be appropriately quoted and sourced

### **Online Participation Guidelines for this course**

#### **Discussion Boards**

Discussion Boards are a forum for discussion and sharing information among students. Your instructor may create one or more public conferences related to the topics you are studying each week.

At the beginning of the quarter, your instructor will set up three discussion conferences. These three conferences will help you and your classmates get off to an immediate start on the course, by providing conversational spaces for necessary, ongoing social and administrative activities. These conferences are:

- Introductions
- Course Q&A
- The Student Union for discussion that is not directly related to course content.

The Q&A conference is where the management and administrative tasks of the course are conducted, and where you can ask 'process' questions and receive answers. You will also find the schedule of specific dates for your course in this Conference, and the emails sent out to the whole class using the Listserv.

The Student Union can be used freely for your own conversation (like setting up groups or teams, if these are used in the course)

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## **Policies**

### **Academic Integrity**

DePaul University is a learning community that fosters the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas within a context that emphasizes a sense of responsibility for oneself, for others and for society at large. Violations of academic integrity, in any of their forms, are, therefore, detrimental to the values of DePaul, to the students' own development as responsible members of society, and to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Violations include but are not limited to the following categories: cheating; plagiarism; fabrication; falsification or sabotage of research data; destruction or misuse of the university's academic resources; alteration or falsification of academic records; and academic misconduct. Conduct that is punishable under the Academic Integrity Policy could result in additional disciplinary actions by other university officials and possible civil or criminal prosecution. Please refer to your

Student Handbook or visit [studentaffairs.depaul.edu/homehandbook.html](http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/homehandbook.html) for further details.

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is a major form of academic dishonesty involving the presentation of the work of another as one's own. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to the following:

- The direct copying of any source, such as written and verbal material, computer files, audio disks, video programs or musical scores, whether published or unpublished, in whole or part, without proper acknowledgement that it is someone else's.
- Copying of any source in whole or part with only minor changes in wording or syntax, even with acknowledgement.
- Submitting as one's own work a report, examination paper, computer file, lab report or other assignment that has been prepared by someone else. This includes research papers purchased from any other person or agency.
- The paraphrasing of another's work or ideas without proper acknowledgement.

Plagiarism, like other forms of academic dishonesty, is always a serious matter. If a instructor finds that a student has plagiarized, the appropriate penalty is at the instructor's discretion.

### **Incomplete Grades**

The intent of the Incomplete grade is to allow students extra time to complete their final assignments. This need arises because, in the closing weeks of the course, they have an event of significant magnitude that adversely affects their ability to complete the course, e.g. serious illness, death in the family, overseas deployment, or natural disaster.

You must request an incomplete grade in writing two weeks before the end of the quarter. Incomplete grades will be considered only after you have satisfactorily completed at least 75 percent of the coursework, and you have such an unexpected, uncontrollable event that prevents you from completing your course. Do not assume that you will qualify for an incomplete. Students who are failing the course at the point where they request an incomplete will not receive one, nor will they be granted after the end of the quarter. Incomplete grades are given at the discretion of the instructor.

If you do receive permission from the instructor to take an incomplete in the course, you will be required to complete a contract with the instructor, specifying how you will finish the missing work within the next two quarters (excluding summer). Incompletes not finished by the end of the second quarter (excluding summer) will automatically become an F grade on your transcript.

Instructors may not change incomplete grades after the end of the grace period without the permission of a college-based Exceptions Committee.

NOTE: In the case of a student who has applied for graduation and who has been approved for an Incomplete in his or her final term, the incomplete must be resolved within the four week grace period before final degree certification.

### **Protection of Human Subjects**

For more information see: <http://condor.depaul.edu/~irb>

Demonstrating the acquisition of competences in this course can involve "interactions"—interviewing and or observing other people—discussing those interviews or observations with other class members and writing them up in one or more final report(s).

As such, these activities qualify as “research” with “human subjects” and are subject to University and Federal guidelines. Because it takes place in the context of this course, your research is exempt from approval by the School for New Learning’s Local Review Board only under the following conditions:

1. The information you collect is EXCLUSIVELY for the purpose of classroom discussion and will NOT be used after the term is over. If there is any possibility that you will EVER use it in further research or for publication, you must obtain approval from the Local Review Board before you begin.
2. You assess and ensure that no “harm”—physical, mental, or social—does or could result from either your interviews and/or observations or your discussion and/or reports.
3. The privacy and confidentiality of those that you interview or observe must be protected. Unless you receive specific permission, in writing, from the person(s) you interview or observe, please change their names, and make sure that their identity cannot be readily ascertained from the information you provide.
  - a. If you want to use real names and relationships, they must sign an “informed consent” document. For information on creating an “informed consent document” see, for example, [www.research.umn.edu/consent/](http://www.research.umn.edu/consent/)

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## Course Expectations

### Time Management and Attendance

SNL’s online courses are **not** self-paced and require a regular time commitment EACH week throughout the quarter.

You are required to log in to your course at least **FOUR** times a week so that you can participate in the ongoing course discussions.

Online courses are no less time consuming than “face to face” courses. You will have to dedicate some time every day or at least every second day to your studies. A typical four credit hour “face to face” course at SNL involves three hours of classroom meeting per week, plus at least three to six hours of study and homework per week.

This course will require at least the same time commitment, but your learning activities will be spread out through the week. If you have any problems with your technology, or if you need to improve your reading or writing skills, it may take even longer.

***The instructor should be notified if your life events do not allow you to participate in the course and the online discussions for more than one week. This is particularly important when there are group discussions or you are working as part of a team.***

If you find yourself getting behind, please contact your course instructor immediately.

### Your Instructor’s Role

Your instructor’s role in this course is that of a discussion facilitator and learning advisor. It is not their responsibility to make sure you log in regularly and submit your assignments. As instructor, s/he will read all postings to the general discussion forums on a daily basis but may not choose to respond to each posting. You will receive feedback to assignments posted to your delivered to you by your instructor via email or through the Gradebook. You can view your feedback by selecting “My Grades” in the

course website and viewing your assignment.

The instructor may choose to designate “office hours” when s/he will be online and available and will immediately respond to questions. Depending on the instructor, this response may be by e-mail, instant messenger or telephone. Otherwise, you will generally receive a response to emailed or posted queries within 48 hours.

### **Your Role as a Student**

As an online student, you will be taking a proactive approach to your learning. As the course instructor’s role is that of a learning guide, your role is that of the leader in your own learning.

You will be managing your own time so that you can complete the readings, activities and assignments for the course, and you will also be expected to take a more active role in peer learning.

You will learn with and from your classmates in the online discussions and group assignments, sharing information and resources and posting your ideas and critiquing and expanding on the ideas of others in a collegial fashion. You are encouraged to bring your questions to the online discussions and respond to each other—do not always wait for the instructor to answer questions.

***If events arise in your life that will prevent your attendance in class for one week or more, it is your responsibility to make sure that your instructor is advised at the first possible opportunity. You, or a friend or family member can do that by email, postal mail or phone. Someone could also send a note to [snlonline@depaul.edu](mailto:snlonline@depaul.edu). This will allow your instructor to assist you to make up missing work. If these events occur early in the quarter and you wait until the end of the quarter before informing your instructor, do not expect to receive an Incomplete.***

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