We are delighted that you have decided to take our course and look forward to working with you next year. Some of you have asked for preliminary readings. Here are some suggestions. They are intended as an introduction for those of you who might not have studied art history formally before, or for those who are not familiar with Italy in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Evelyn Welch’s book on *Art and Society in Renaissance Italy* will introduce many of the issues that will concern us, even if she does only consider the period between the late fourteenth century and circa 1500. Stephen Campbell and Michael Cole's *A New History of Italian Renaissance Art*(2012) provides a broad understanding of the art of the period and is lavishly illustrated with works of art with which you should be familiar by the time you start the course.

If you have not yet read Michael Baxandall’s celebrated *Painting and Experience*, we certainly recommend that you read it. It’s short and can be finished in an afternoon. For those interested in Florence between 1400 and 1500, this can be usefully complemented by reading a few of the chapters in Patricia Rubin’s book *Images and Identity in Fifteenth-Century Florence*. For sixteenth-century Rome, it will be useful to start the course with clear ideas about Raphael’s and Michelangelo’s works and careers, which you can gain from Johannes Wilde’s *Michelangelo: Six Lectures* (Oxford, 1978) and Bette Talvacchia’s *Raphael* (New York, 2007). An interesting critical approach to their careers is in Rona Goffen, *Renaissance Rivals: Michelangelo, Leonardo, Raphael, Titian*, New Haven and London, 2002. In addition, the classic short book *Mannerism* by John Shearman and Elizabeth Cropper;s article “On Beautiful Women, Parmigianino, ‘Petrarchismo’, and the Vernacular Style”, in *The Art Bulletin*, 58 (1976), pp. 374-394 make for fascinating readings. For Venetian topics, we advise that you read one of the following: Patricia Fortini Brown, *Venice and Antiquity* (YaleUP 1997); Paul Joannides, *Titian to 1518*(YaleUP 2002)*;* Tom Nichols, *Renaissance Art in Venice: From Tradition to Individualism*(Laurence King publishing 2016) (esp. chapters 1-5). If you would like to read about Botticelli, then Herbert Horne’s monograph on the artist from 1908 (and often reprinted) is still among the best (it is available online here: <https://archive.org/details/alessandrofilipe00horn/mode/2up>). Alessandro Cecchi’s monograph in Italian is equally good and includes the most recent archival discoveries.  Charles Dempsey’s interpretation of the *Primavera* remains unsurpassed and is essential reading for anyone interested in the poetic culture of Laurentian Florence: Dempsey, C., *The Portrayal of Love: Botticelli's Primavera and Humanist Culture at the Time of Lorenzo the Magnificent*, Princeton, 1992.