



## **HON 4490/S02 (cross-listed with HIST 4490/S02) HOW THE RENAISSANCE WAS BORN**

We will live with the artists, writers, and thinkers who brought about the re-birth of western civilization – the Renaissance – in the place where it all happened: ITALY! This 3-credit course is optional for students in the Honors Great Books cohort and available to all students studying in Montepulciano.

### **Texts:**

The Merchant of Prato. Author: Iris Origo

Brunelleschi's Dome. Author: Ross King.

These two works are complementary.

The Merchant of Prato gives us a look at the birth of the Renaissance through the life of a 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century Tuscan merchant preserved in his correspondence with his business partners and his wife. Francesco di Marco Datini rose from near poverty to become both a successful pioneer of international trade and an early patron of the arts. Filippo Brunelleschi was one of the early recipients of that patronage. Brunelleschi's Dome will give us another way of understanding Florence and the Renaissance. While it is focused on the creation of one of the great architectural achievements that launched the

rebirth of art and architecture in Renaissance Europe, King's book reveals a great deal more about Renaissance society, the government of Florence, and how thought and art were inspired by the rediscovery of the Roman past. Field trips to Florence have obvious connections: the Duomo itself and Ghiberti's Gates of Paradise, Piazza della Signoria, the Uffizi, the Accademia and other museums. Field trips to Rome would emphasize the kinds of things that would have inspired these artists, their patrons, and the writers and thinkers of the Renaissance. One obvious example is the Pantheon.