

# The Renaissance

1350 - 1600

# Definition

- French for “rebirth”
- Scholars reacted against the “dark ages”
- Revived learning of ancient Greece and Rome
- Both worldly and religious

# Spirit of the Renaissance

- The Italian City-States
  - Northern Italy
  - Towns that expanded
  - Self-governing and self-confident – explored larger world of ideas
  - Grew wealthy through trade and industry
  - Political and economic leadership was in the hands of the middle class (no feudal development)



# Spirit of the Renaissance

- Attitudes and interests of the wealthy middle class helped shaped the Renaissance:
  - Concerned with education and individual achievements
  - Time and money to become patrons of the arts

# Spirit of the Renaissance

- **Florence:**
  - **Medici family (1400's)**
  - **Giovanni de' Medici**
    - Organized bank in 1397
    - Bank flourished all over Europe
    - Son Cosimo and great grandson, Lorenzo would control the government of Florence
  - Would come to symbolize the creative spirit of the Renaissance

# Spirit of the Renaissance

- The Medici:
  - Well-educated and had many interests
  - Hired local painters, sculptors, architects, and silversmiths to create works of art to beautify Florence



# Spirit of the Renaissance

- Study of the Humanities:
  - People in the Italian city-states took a new interest in education, especially the learning of ancient Greece and Rome
  - At universities, theology, law, and medicine were most highly respected subjects
  - More stress on the humanities:
    - Subjects taught in Ancient Greece and Rome
    - Grammar, rhetoric, poetry, history

# Spirit of the Renaissance

- **Humanists:**
  - Those who studied the humanities
  - Wanted to learn more about the world
  - Read ancient texts
  - Applied new learning to everyday life
  - Believed it enriched their Christian lives
  - Education the only way to become a well rounded individual
  - Belief in the achievement of the individual



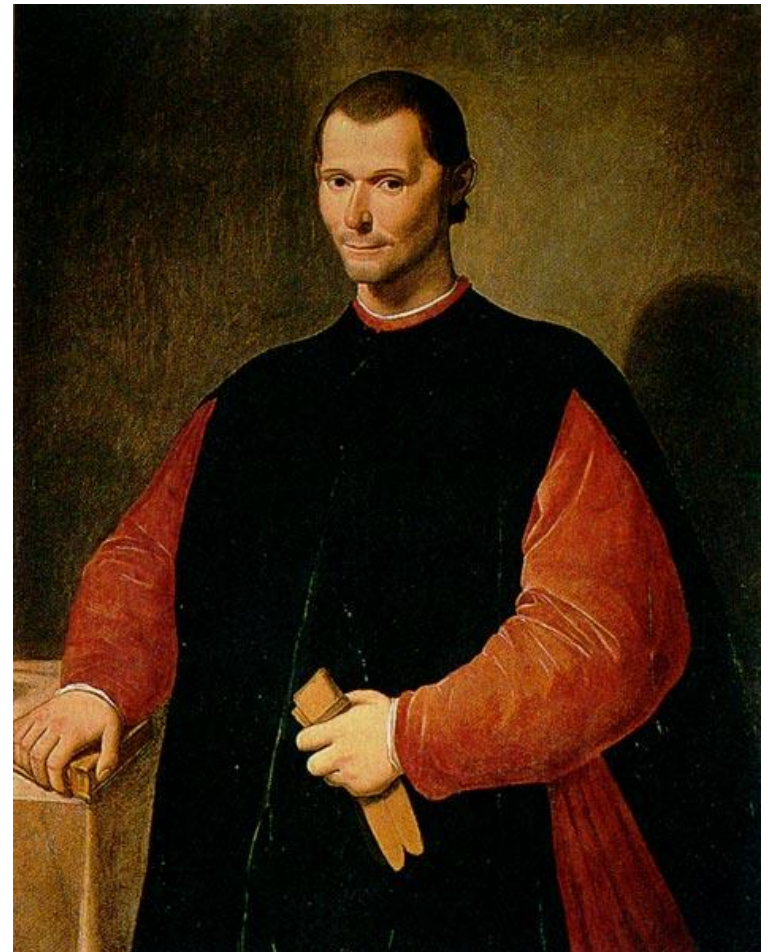
# Spirit of the Renaissance

- Recovering the Classics:
  - Francesco Petrararch:
    - Travelled Europe in search of old manuscripts
    - Realized how much had been lost
  - Other scholars would attempt to restore classics and determine when they were written
  - Led to dangerous areas when their work questioned ancient texts



# Spirit of the Renaissance

- Handbooks for Proper Behaviour
  - Renaissance writers prepared manuals that told people how to behave
  - Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*
    - Handbook for Italian rulers
    - Recommended realistic course of action to stay in power
    - “It is much safer to be feared than to be loved, if one must choose.”
    - “The end justifies the means”
    - Mixture of cunning, diplomacy, and ruthlessness



# Spirit of the Renaissance

- Handbooks for Proper Behaviour:
  - Baldassare Castiglione – *The Book of the Courtier*
    - Described the qualities an aristocrat should have
    - Praised the study of the humanities
    - Learn to appreciate music and play a variety of instruments
    - Speak gracefully
    - Provide rulers with witty, pleasant company
    - Renaissance Person: broad education in many different areas

# Spirit of the Renaissance

- The Renaissance in Northern Europe:
  - Kings, queens, and nobles were patrons of the arts (feudalism)
  - More traditional approach to religion
  - More likely to study the works of early Christians than Greeks or Romans
  - Devoted time to discovering the purer faith of early Christians

# Spirit of the Renaissance

- Similarities (Italy and N. Europe)
  - Stressed individual achievement and classical learning
  - Stimulated vigorous creative spirit
  - Concerned with achieving worldly success, but also maintained strong faith in Christianity