Unit 1:4, Humanism and the Renaissance Individual

1. Humanism
   1. Characteristics
      1. Revival aof antiquity (Greeece and Rome) in philosophy literature and art
         1. Sought to reconcile pagan writings and Christian doctrine
         2. This is not entirely new, Scholasticism and Aristotle
         3. The emphasis is different: more emphasis on Plato and the Latin writers
      2. Strong belief in individualism and the great potential of human beings
         1. This is in constrast to the Medieval period were humans were seen as small wicked and inconsequencial
         2. The focus of Medieval world was how to gain salvation etc
      3. Virtú
         1. The quality of being a man
         2. Idea of excelling in all of ones pursuits
         3. Believed the key to a good life was Reason and nature
         4. The Greek concept of αρετη
      4. Ad Fontes
         1. Focused on styding ancient languages
         2. Initially Classical Latin
         3. After 1453, and the Fall of Constantinople, Greek came to be the study de jour
         4. By 1500, virtually all of the significant ancient Roman and Greek texts had been rediscovered
         5. They were translated and printed
      5. Philsophy
         1. Largely rejected Aristotelian views (saw them as old fashioned, Medieval)
         2. Roman authors such as Cicero, Livy, Virgil, and Quintilian
         3. Greek Rigtings especially of Plato
         4. Early Church Fathers
      6. New Education
         1. Believed in a liberal arts education program
         2. Included grammar, rhetoric, poetry, history, politics and ethics
      7. Civic Humanism
         1. Idea that education should prepare leders who would then be active in civic affairs (Italian City State)
         2. Some of the most important humanists were important political leaders
      8. More secular world view
         1. Often humanism was more secuar and layman dominated
         2. However most humanists were devout Christians
         3. This issue must not be overstated, that is Hollywood
   2. Humanists of consequence
      1. Petrarch (1304-1374)
         1. The father of the humanists
         2. Considered the first modern writer
         3. Claimed that the Middle ages were the Dark Ages
         4. He was perhaps the first to use critical textual analyisis on ancient etxts
         5. Especially influenced by Cicero
         6. Wrote his famus poetry in the Italin vernacular as did Dante Alighieri
      2. Boccacio (1313-1375)
         1. Complied an index of Greek and Roman mythology
         2. The Decameron
            1. His most famous work
            2. Consisted of 100 earthy tales that comprise a social commentary of Italy in 14th century
            3. Aimed to impoart wisdom of human character and hebavior
            4. Especially targeted were human sexual and economic misbehavior
            5. Gives a great deal of insight into the Black Plague
      3. Leonardo Bruni (1370-1444)
         1. First to use the term humanism
         2. Among the most important of the civic humanists
         3. Served as the Standard Bearer of Justice for Florence
         4. Wrote a history of the Florece
            1. Perhaps the first critical and analytical history in Europe
            2. Wrote a narrative using primary source documents
            3. Created historical divisions
      4. Lorenzo Valla (1407-57)
         1. Foremost expert on the Latin Language
         2. Elegances of the Latin Language (1444)
         3. One the Donation of Constantine (1444)
            1. Claimed the Donation of Constatnine was an 8th century document, although the document claimed to be from the 4th century
            2. The Church held lands in Italy due to this document
         4. Valla argued that there were translating errors in the Latin Vulgate
         5. Still Valla never challenged the Church’s doctrine or authority and remained a devout Catholic throughout his life
         6. He even served as a secretary under Pope Nicholas V
      5. Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499)
         1. One of the most influential humanist philosophers of the 15th century
         2. Founded the Platonic Academy funded by the Medici
         3. This academy served to spread the works and philosophy of Plato throughout much of Europe
         4. Transalted Plato’s works into Latin
         5. Gave Europeans access to these works for the first time.
      6. Pico Della Mirandola (1463-94)
         1. Member of the Platonic Academy of Ficino
         2. Oration of the Dignity of Man (1486)
            1. Perhaps the most famous renaissance work on the nature of mankind
            2. Man created by God and therefore given tremendous potential for greatness, and even union with God if they desired it
            3. This had been taught by the Church for centuries, but, the emphasis is on the ability of Man to achieve this within himself
            4. Man could, through neglect, also choose a negative course
            5. Therefore Man has a free-will to be great or to be a failure
      7. Baldassare Castiglione (1478-1529)
         1. The Book of the Courtier 1528
         2. Perhaps the most important work on Renaissance Education
         3. Specified qualities necessary to be a true gentleman including physical and intellectual abilities and leading an active life
         4. Rejected crude contemporary social habits
         5. Described the ideal of a Renaissance Man
            1. Well versed in the Greek and Roman classics
            2. A warrior
            3. A musician and dancer
            4. And a modest but competent demeanor
         6. These ideas contrasted with the medieval view of being a master in only one area
         7. Virtú
            1. The quality of being a great man in whatever noble pursuit
      8. The Printing Press: Johann Gutenburg
         1. One of the most important inventionsi n human history
         2. Comparable to, but exceeding, the internet
         3. Gutenbuerg’s development of movable type made possible the spread of literature to the rest of Europe with astonishing speed
         4. No longer were scriptorums necessary
         5. The first thing to be printed was the Latin Vulgate in the city of Mainz Germany