Chapter 13: Chapter Outline

The following annotated chapter outline will help you review the major topics covered in this chapter.

Instructions: Review the outline to recall events and their relationships as presented in the chapter. Return to skim any sections that seem unfamiliar.

I. Wealth and Power in Renaissance Italy

A. Trade and Prosperity
   1. By the middle of the twelfth century Venice, supported by a huge merchant marine, had grown enormously rich through overseas trade, as had Genoa and Milan.
   2. Important advances in shipbuilding allowed those cities’ ships to sail all year long at accelerated speeds and carrying ever more merchandise.
   3. Florence, another commercial leader, was situated on the fertile soil along the Arno River, in a favorable location on the main road northward from Rome that made it a commercial hub.
   4. Florentine merchants loaned and invested money, and they acquired control of papal banking toward the end of the thirteenth century.
   5. The profits from loans, investments, and money exchanges that poured back to Florence contributed to the city’s economic vitality and allowed banking families to control the city’s politics and culture.
   6. Despite several crises that hit Florence in the fourteenth century, the basic Florentine economic structure remained stable.
   7. Wealth allowed many people greater material pleasures, a more comfortable life, and the leisure time to appreciate and patronize the arts.
   8. The rich came to see life more as an opportunity to be enjoyed than as a painful pilgrimage to the City of God.

B. Communes and Republics of Northern Italy
   1. The northern Italian cities were communes, sworn associations of free men who began in the twelfth century to seek political and economic independence from local nobles.
   2. The merchant guilds that formed the communes built and maintained the city walls, regulated trade, collected taxes, and kept civil order.
   3. This merger of the northern Italian feudal nobility and the commercial elite created a powerful oligarchy, yet rivalries among these families often made Italian communes politically unstable.
   4. The common people (the popolo) were disenfranchised and heavily taxed, and they bitterly resented their exclusion from power.
   5. Throughout most of the thirteenth century, in city after city, the popolo used armed force and violence to take over the city governments and establish republican governments in which political power theoretically resided in the people and was exercised by their chosen representatives.
   6. Because the popolo could not establish civil order within their cities, merchant oligarchies reasserted their power and sometimes brought in powerful military leaders called condottieri to establish order.
   7. Many cities in Italy became signori, in which one man ruled and handed down the right to rule to his son.
   8. These oligarchic regimes maintained a façade of republican government, but the judicial, executive, and legislative functions of government were restricted to a small class of wealthy merchants.
   9. The rulers of many northern Italian cities transformed their households into courts and displayed their wealth by becoming patrons of the arts, hiring architects to build private palaces and public
city halls, artists to fill them with paintings and sculptures, and musicians and composers to fill them with music.

10. Ceremonies connected with visiting rulers or with family births, baptisms, marriages, and funerals offered occasions for magnificent pageantry and elaborate ritual.

11. Rulers of nation-states later copied and adapted all these aspects of Italian courts.

C. City-States and the Balance of Power

1. Renaissance Italians had a passionate attachment to their individual city-states, which hindered the development of a single unified state.

2. In the fifteenth century Venice, Milan, Florence, the Papal States, and the kingdom of Naples dominated the Italian peninsula.

3. Though Venice was a republic in name, an oligarchy of merchant-aristocrats actually ran the city.

4. Milan was also called a republic, but the condottieri turned signori of the Sforza family dominated Milan and several smaller cities in the north from 1447 to 1535.

5. In Florence the form of government was republican, but in reality the great Medici banking family held power almost continually for centuries.

6. Most Renaissance popes were members of powerful Italian families, selected for their political skills, not their piety.

7. South of the Papal States, the kingdom of Naples was under the control of the king of Aragon.

8. Whenever one Italian state appeared to gain a predominant position within the peninsula, other states combined to establish a balance of power against the major threat.

9. One of the great political achievements of the Italian Renaissance was the establishment of permanent embassies with resident ambassadors in capitals where political relations and commercial ties needed continual monitoring.

10. When Florence and Naples entered into an agreement to acquire Milanese territories near the end of the fifteenth century, Milan called on France for support, and the French king Charles VIII (r. 1483–1498) invaded Italy in 1494.

11. In Florence, the French invasion was interpreted as the fulfillment of a prophecy by the Dominican friar Girolamo Savonarola (1452–1498), who had predicted that God would punish Italy for its moral vice and corrupt leadership.

12. For a time Savonarola was wildly popular, but eventually people tired of his moral denunciations, and he was excommunicated by the pope, tortured, and burned at the stake.

13. The French invasion inaugurated a new period in European power politics in which Italy became the focus of international ambitions and the battleground of foreign armies, particularly those of France and the Holy Roman Empire in a series of conflicts called the Habsburg-Valois Wars.

14. The failure of the city-states to form a federal system, to consolidate, or at least to establish a common foreign policy led to centuries of subjection by outside invaders.

II. Intellectual Change

A. Humanism

1. Giorgio Vasari was the first to use the word Renaissance in print, but he was not the first to feel that something was being reborn.

2. The Florentine poet and scholar Francesco Petrarch (1304–1374) spent long hours searching for classical Latin manuscripts and believed that the recovery of classical texts would bring about a new golden age of intellectual achievement, an idea that many others came to share.

3. Petrarch proposed a new kind of education in which young men would study the works of ancient Latin and Greek authors, using them as models of how to write clearly, argue effectively, and speak
The study of Latin classics became known as the *studia humanitates*, usually translated as the “liberal arts”; those who advocated it were known as *humanists* and their program as *humanism*.

Petrarch and other humanists admired the works of the Roman author and statesman Cicero (106–43 B.C.E.) and his use of language, literary style, and political ideas.

In the fifteenth century Florentine humanists became increasingly interested in Greek philosophy, especially the ideas of Plato.

Under the patronage of Cosimo de Medici (1389–1464), the scholar Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499) translated Plato’s dialogues into Latin, attempting to synthesize Christian and Platonic teachings.

Plato’s emphasis on the spiritual and eternal over the material and transient fit well with Christian teachings about the immortality of the soul.

In a remarkable essay, *On the Dignity of Man* (1486), Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494), Ficino’s most brilliant student, stressed that man possesses great dignity because he was made as Adam in the image of God before the Fall and as Christ after the Resurrection, making him truly a “miraculous creature.”

Renaissance thinkers believed man’s miraculous nature meant that there were no limits to what individual men could accomplish, especially those men with the admirable quality of *virtù*, the ability to shape the world around them according to their will.

**B. Education**

1. Humanists thought that studying the classics would provide essential skills for future diplomats, lawyers, politicians, writers, and artists, and they taught that a life active in the world should be the aim of all educated individuals and that education was not simply for private or religious purposes, but benefited the public good.

2. Beginning in the early fifteenth century, humanists opened schools and academies in Italian cities and courts in which pupils learned Latin grammar and rhetoric, Roman history and political philosophy, and Greek literature and philosophy.

3. Humanists disagreed about education for women, whose sphere was generally understood to be private and domestic.

4. A few women were bold enough to educate themselves in the classics through tutors or programs of self-study, and they argued that reason was not limited to men and that learning was compatible with virtue for women as well as men.

5. No book on education had broader influence than Baldassare Castiglione’s *The Courtier* (1528).

6. According to Castiglione, the educated man should have a broad background in many academic subjects; his spiritual and physical as well as intellectual capabilities should be trained; and above all, he should speak and write eloquently.

7. Castiglione’s treatise also discussed the perfect court lady, who was to be well educated and able to paint, dance, and play a musical instrument, and who should possess physical beauty, delicacy, affability, and modesty.

8. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, *The Courtier* was translated into every European language and widely read, influencing the social patterns and conduct of elite groups in Renaissance and early modern Europe.

**C. Political Thought**

1. Humanists believed that educated men should be active in the political affairs of their city, a position historians have since termed “civic humanism.”

2. The most famous civic humanist, and ultimately the best-known political theorist of this era, was Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527).

3. In *The Prince* (1513), Machiavelli uses the examples of classical and contemporary rulers to argue
that the function of a ruler (or any government) is to preserve order and security by any means necessary.

4. *The Prince* is often seen as the first modern guide to politics, though Machiavelli was denounced for writing it, and people later came to use the word “Machiavellian” to mean cunning and ruthless.

5. Machiavelli argued that governments should be judged by how well they provided security, order, and safety to their populace, and that a ruler’s moral code in maintaining these was not the same as a private individual’s.

6. Most scholars regard Machiavelli as realistic or even cynical, but some suggest that he was being ironic or satirical, showing princely government in the worst possible light to contrast it with republicanism.

D. Christian Humanism

1. Northern humanists shared the ideas of Ficino and Pico about the wisdom of ancient texts, but they viewed humanist learning as a way to bring about reform of the church and deepen people’s spiritual lives.

2. These Christian humanists thought that the best elements of classical and Christian cultures should be combined.

3. The English humanist Thomas More (1478–1535) wrote the controversial dialogue *Utopia* (1516), which describes a community on an island where all children receive a good education, and adults divide their days between manual labor or business pursuits and intellectual activities.

4. More’s purposes in writing *Utopia* have been greatly debated: Some view it as a revolutionary critique of More’s own hierarchical and violent society, some as a call for an even firmer hierarchy, and others as part of the humanist tradition of satire.

5. The fame of Dutch humanist Desiderius Erasmus (1466?–1536) rested largely on his exceptional knowledge of Greek and the Bible.

6. Erasmus’s long list of publications includes *The Praise of Folly* (1509), a satire of worldly wisdom and a plea for the simple and spontaneous Christian faith of children.

7. Two fundamental themes run through Erasmus’s work: first, education is the key to moral and intellectual improvement; and second, Christianity is Christ—his life and what he said and did, not what theologians have written.

E. The Printed Word

1. Printing with movable metal type developed in Germany in the 1440s as a combination of existing technologies.

2. Johan Gutenberg, a metal-smith, and his assistants made metal stamps—later called *type*—for every letter of the alphabet, which could then be covered with ink and used to mark the letters on a surface.

3. They also built racks that held the type in rows, which meant that the type could be rearranged for every page and so used over and over.

4. The ready availability of paper also enabled the printing revolution.

5. By the fifteenth century the increase in urban literacy, the development of primary schools, and the opening of more universities had created an expanding market for reading materials of all types.

6. Although the effects of the invention of movable-type printing were not felt overnight, movable type brought about radical changes.

7. Printing gave hundreds or even thousands of people identical books, so that they could more easily discuss the ideas that the books contained with one another in person or through letters.

8. Government and church leaders both used and worried about printing: They printed laws, declarations of war, battle accounts, and propaganda, but they also attempted to censor books and authors whose ideas they thought were wrong.
9. Printing stimulated the literacy of laypeople and eventually came to have a deep effect on their private lives.

10. Although most of the earliest books and pamphlets dealt with religious subjects, printers produced anything that would sell.

III. Art and the Artist

A. Patronage and Power

1. No feature of the Renaissance evokes greater admiration than the dazzling creativity that emerged in painting, architecture, and sculpture of the 1400s and 1500s.

2. Powerful urban groups often flaunted their wealth by commissioning works of art in early Renaissance Italy.

3. In the later fifteenth century, wealthy individuals and rulers, rather than corporate groups, sponsored works of art as a means of glorifying themselves and their families.

4. Patrons varied in their level of involvement as a work progressed; some simply ordered a specific subject or scene, while others closely oversaw the work of the artist, making suggestions and demanding changes.

5. Art revealed changing patterns of consumption among the nobility, with nobles spending less of their money on military gear as they adjusted to an urban culture.

6. For the rich merchant or the noble recently arrived from the countryside, a grand urban palace represented the greatest outlay of cash.

7. After the palace itself, the private chapel within the palace symbolized the largest expenditure for the wealthy of the sixteenth century.

B. Changing Artistic Styles

1. The content and style of art shifted from the mostly religious and family scenes of the Middle Ages to classical motifs and individual portraits.

2. Renaissance portraits showed human ideals, often portrayed in a more realistic style.

3. The Florentine painter Giotto (1276–1337) led the way in the use of realism, especially in his treatment of the human body and face.

4. Piero della Francesca (1420–1492) and Andrea Mantegna (1430/31–1506) pioneered perspective in painting, the linear representation of distance and space on a flat surface.

5. The sculptor Donatello (1386–1466) revived the classical figure, with its balance and self-awareness, and Filippo Brunelleschi (1377–1446) looked to the classical past for inspiration in designing buildings that achieved a sense of balance and harmony.

6. Flemish painters, notably Rogier van der Weyden (1399/1400–1464) and Jan van Eyck (1366–1441)—one of the first artists to use oil-based paints successfully—were considered the artistic equals of Italian painters.

7. In the early sixteenth century the center of the new art shifted to Rome, as Renaissance popes expended huge sums of money to beautify the city.

8. Michelangelo went to Rome and began a series of statues, paintings, and architectural projects of considerable note, including the Pieta, Moses, the redesigning of the Capitoline Hill in central Rome, and, most famously, the dome for Saint Peter’s and the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.

9. Raphael Sanzio (1483–1520) became the most sought after artist in Europe, overseeing a large workshop with many collaborators and writing treatises on his philosophy of art in which he emphasized the importance of developing an orderly sequence of design and proportion.

10. Titian (1490–1576) and other sixteenth-century painters developed an artistic style known as “mannerism” in which artists sometimes distorted figures and heightened color to express emotion
and drama more intently.

C. The Renaissance Artist

1. Renaissance artists and humanists came to think that a work of art was the deliberate creation of a unique personality who transcended traditions, rules, and theories.
3. Most Renaissance artists trained in the workshops of older artists, where they learned proper artistic techniques and stylistic conventions.
4. All the most famous and most prolific Renaissance artists were male, though several women did become well-known as painters in their day.
5. Artistic workshops were male-only settings in which men of different ages came together for training and created bonds of friendship, influence, patronage, and sometimes intimacy.
6. Renaissance culture did not influence the lives of most people in cities and did not affect life in the villages at all.

IV. Social Hierarchies

A. Race and Slavery

1. Since the time of the Roman republic, a small number of black Africans—who had come, along with white slaves, as the spoils of war—had lived in western Europe.
2. Unstable political conditions in many parts of Africa enabled enterprising merchants, particularly the Portuguese, to seize people and sell them into slavery.
3. Local authorities afforded them no protection in a culture where tradition sanctioned the practice of slavery.
4. The Iberian Peninsula had significant numbers of people of mixed African and European descent.
5. Black servants were much sought after, in part because of a continuing interest in curiosities and the exotic.
6. In Portugal, Spain, and Italy, slaves supplemented the labor force in virtually all occupations.
7. Most Europeans perceived Africa as a remote place, the home of strange people isolated by heresy and Islam from superior European civilization.
8. The expanding slave trade only reinforced negative preconceptions about the inferiority of black Africans.

B. Wealth and the Nobility

1. Beginning in the thirteenth century, the idea of a hierarchy based on wealth was emerging alongside the medieval concept of orders.
2. This hierarchy of wealth was more changeable than the hierarchy of orders, allowing individuals and families to rise—and fall—within one generation.
3. The nobility maintained its status in most parts of Europe not by adhering to rigid boundaries, but by taking in and integrating the new social elite of wealth.
4. Along with being tied to hierarchies of wealth and orders, social status was also linked with considerations of honor.
5. In cities, sumptuary laws reflected both wealth and honor.

C. Gender Roles

1. Toward the end of the fourteenth century, learned men (and a few women) began what was termed the querelle des femmes, a debate about women’s character and nature.
2. Misogynist critiques of women from both clerical and secular authors denounced females as devious, domineering, and demanding.

3. Christine de Pizan was among those writers who were not only interested in defending women, but also in exploring the reasons behind women’s secondary status.

4. Beginning in the sixteenth century, the debate about women also became one about female rulers, and about whether gender or rank was the stronger determinant of character and social role.

5. Despite a prevailing sentiment that women were not as fit to rule as men, there were no successful rebellions against female rulers simply because they were women.

6. Ideas about women’s and men’s proper roles determined the actions of ordinary men and women even more forcefully.

7. Women’s work was not viewed as supporting a family—even if it did—and women who worked for wages earned about half to two-thirds of what men did even for the same work.

8. Disorder in the proper gender hierarchy was linked with social upheaval and was viewed as threatening.

9. Of all the ways in which Renaissance society was hierarchically arranged—social rank, age, level of education, race, occupation—gender was regarded as the most “natural” and thus the most important to defend.

V. Politics and the State in Western Europe, ca. 1450–1521

A. France

1. The Black Death and the Hundred Years’ War left France drastically depopulated, commercially ruined, and agriculturally weak, but Charles VII (r. 1422–1461) revived the monarchy and France.

2. By reconciling warring factions within France, expelling the English, reorganizing the royal council, and strengthening royal finances through salt and land taxes, Charles began France’s recovery.

3. Charles also created the first permanent royal army.

4. Territory added through conquest, inheritance, or marriage enlarged the state of France as well.

5. In the Concordat of Bologna in 1516, French king Francis I and Pope Leo X reached an agreement that allowed the French ruler to control the appointment of bishops and therefore the policies of church officials.

B. England

1. The aristocracy dominated the government of Henry IV (r. 1399–1413) and indulged in disruptive violence at the local level.

2. A decline in population and the chronic disorder caused by the Wars of the Roses hurt trade, agriculture, and domestic industry.

3. Edward IV (r. 1461–1483), his brother Richard III (r. 1483–1485), and Henry VII (r. 1485–1509) used Machiavellian methods to restore royal prestige, to crush the power of the nobility, and to establish order and law at the local level.

4. Edward IV and subsequently the Tudors, excepting Henry VIII, conducted foreign policy on the basis of diplomacy, avoiding expensive wars.

5. Because Henry VII distrusted much of the nobility, he chose small landowners and urban residents trained in law to be members of his royal council, which governed at the national level.

6. The council dealt with real or potential aristocratic threats through a judicial offshoot, the Court of Star Chamber.

7. When Henry VII died in 1509, he left a country at peace both domestically and internationally, a substantially augmented treasury, an expanding wool trade, and the dignity and role of the royal
majesty much enhanced.

C. Spain

1. The marriage of the dynamic and aggressive Isabella of Castile and the crafty and persistent Ferdinand of Aragon constituted a dynastic union of two royal houses, not the political union of two peoples.

2. Although Ferdinand and Isabella (r. 1474–1516) pursued a common foreign policy, Spain continued to exist as a loose confederation of separate kingdoms, each maintaining its own cortes (parliament), laws, courts, and system of taxation.

3. Ferdinand and Isabella curbed aristocratic power by excluding high nobles from the royal council, which had full executive, judicial, and legislative powers under the monarchy.

4. They secured the right to appoint bishops in Spain and in the Hispanic territories in America.

5. The victorious entry of Ferdinand and Isabella into Granada on January 6, 1492, signaled the conclusion of the reconquista.

6. The majority of Spanish people still viewed the Jews as potentially dangerous.

7. Even though Jewish industry, intelligence, and money had supported royal power and financed many Christian businesses and ventures, a strong undercurrent of resentment of Jewish influence and wealth festered.

8. Anti-Semitic pogroms swept the towns of Spain in the fourteenth century, and perhaps 40 percent of the Jewish population was killed or forced to convert.

9. Those converted—conversos or New Christians—were often well educated and held prominent positions in government, the church, medicine, law, and business.

10. In 1478 Queen Isabella and Ferdinand established their own Inquisition to “search out and punish converts from Judaism who had transgressed against Christianity by secretly adhering to Jewish beliefs.”

11. Officials of the Inquisition argued that a person’s status as a Jew was in their blood and was heritable, so Jews could never be true Christians.

12. In what were known as “purity of blood” laws, having pure Christian blood became a requirement for noble status.

13. In 1492 Isabella and Ferdinand issued an edict expelling all practicing Jews from Spain.

14. The Spanish national state rested on marital politics as well as military victories and religious courts.

15. Isabella and Ferdinand’s grandson, Charles V (r. 1519–1556), succeeded to a vast inheritance that included the Burgundian Netherlands and the Holy Roman Empire.

16. Charles’s son Philip II joined Portugal to the Spanish crown in 1580, politically uniting the Iberian Peninsula at last.