Did Renaissance artists really dissect human bodies in order to become better painters and sculptors? Were courtesans the only women in Venice who were allowed a higher education in the liberal arts? How did the Renaissance move north? And what was it like to live in the city of London during the time of Elizabeth I and Shakespeare? As an introduction to Early Modern history, this course will cover the period from the Renaissance in the 15th century through 1700 with a focus on its Italian birthplace and the way the Renaissance was transformed by moving to England. We will analyze social, economic, and political factors, and explore the cultural developments that shaped and transformed the early modern era. We will pay particular attention to topics such as the impact of the Renaissance on public and private thought, the role of the individual vs. the role of institutions, the changing nature of political power, the changing roles of women, and the impact of the Church’s response to the Protestant Reformation in both public and private life.