

The Renaissance and Shakespeare
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Lecture - 01
The Renaissance An Introduction Part-1

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Course Goals: This course aims to acquaint the students with the Renaissance in Europe and life and times of the English dramatist, William Shakespeare. It will introduce and discuss some of his major works and equip the students to undertake a more intensive study of Shakespeare's drama. Other than placing the writer in his own context, the course will also help students understand the continuing relevance of Shakespeare's work in our own time.

Who should take this course? The course will be of help to those looking for an introduction to the Renaissance age and to Shakespeare. The students of B.A. Hons. (Eng.) should also find this useful.

What will students need to know or do before starting this course? An interest in English literature and theatre is the basic prerequisite for this course.

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Instructional Level: Intermediate

Course Information

Title: The Renaissance and Shakespeare

Subtitle: Performances and Perspectives

Language: English

Category: Humanities

Sub-Category: English Literature

Duration: 10 Weeks

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Course Summary: The course will have modules on the Renaissance in Europe and Shakespeare's life and works. The lecture on the Renaissance will look at different aspects of the age, such as the major thinkers and philosophers of the age, developments in the field of visual arts and science, and the position of women in the Renaissance. The lecture on Shakespeare's life and times talks about his birth, his schooling, his career on stage and situates the playwright in the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods in England. A number of major plays by Shakespeare will be discussed in detail: *Othello* and *Macbeth* among the tragedies and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Twelfth Night* among the comedies. In addition there are lectures on Shakespeare's History plays and the Romances or Last Plays. The video lecture on *Othello* looks at the military background of the play, an aspect that is usually overshadowed by gender and race-centric arguments in contemporary critical discussions of the play. The lecture on *Macbeth* explores supernatural elements in the play, Scottish history and the characterisation of the protagonist. The lecture on *A Midsummer Night's Dream* explores the notion of a dream and relates it to the Platonic heritage. The lecture on *Twelfth Night* includes a discussion of the popular recent stage adaptation of the play in Hindi, *Piya Behrapiya*. As theatre is a performance form, two of our modules include performances of scenes from *The Merchant of Venice* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by Delhi University students. These are followed by panel discussions in which students share their experience of enactment and how it helped them in clarifying their ideas about the play and understand it in their own context. Apart from these, there is also a module on adapting Shakespeare on the Indian stage with a reference to the work of Habib Tanvir, Mohan Maharishi and Roysten Abel. The MOOC ends with a discussion of global Shakespeare with international Shakespeare scholars who analyse how works of Shakespeare have been appropriated and adapted by people across cultures and nations to investigate their own positions.

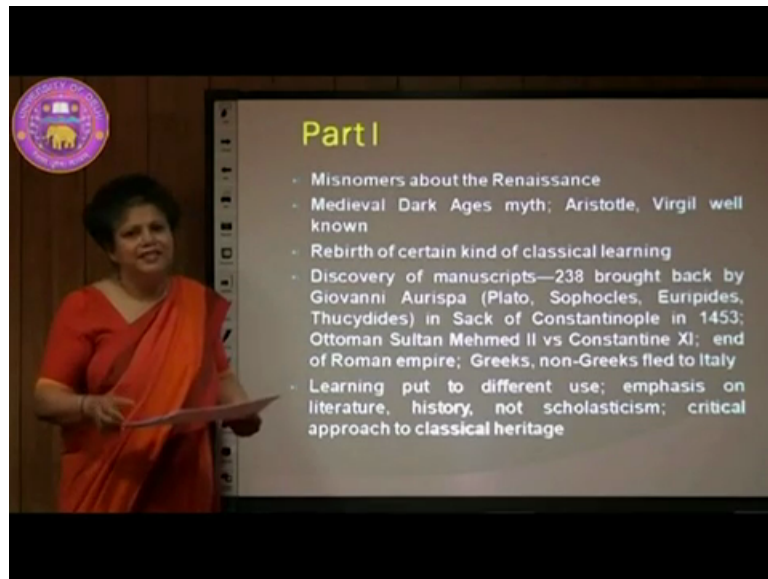
Hello friends. We present to you the MOOC the Renaissance and Shakespeare. This MOOC has been prepared by myself Professor Shormishtha Panja; I teach at the Department of English, University of Delhi and by Manila Kohli; assistant professor in the Department of English, Shamalal college, University of Delhi. In this MOOC, we will tell you about the Renaissance give an idea of the intellectual climate of the Renaissance; we will tell you about Shakespeare life and times, we will take you through four major wringers of Shakespeare place and tragedies, comedies, history, place and romances. And we will also include student performances of scenes from Shakespeare place followed by panel discussions. We include interviews with international experts on global Shakespeare as well as lectures on Indian adaptations of Shakespeare on stage. We hope that you will greatly enjoy and benefit from this MOOC the Renaissance and Shakespeare. Thank you.

In this MOOC, we will first begin my talking about the Renaissance, the intellectual climate of the Renaissance, the major thinkers both Italian and British. We will talk about the Renaissance in the north, science in the Renaissance, the Visualacs in the Renaissance, the position of women in Renaissance, and also how the Renaissance travel from Italy to England. We will also say a few words about Philip Sidney and Admon Spenser two major writers of the English Renaissance.

Hello, my name is Professor Shormistha Panja and I am going to talk to you today about

the Renaissance.

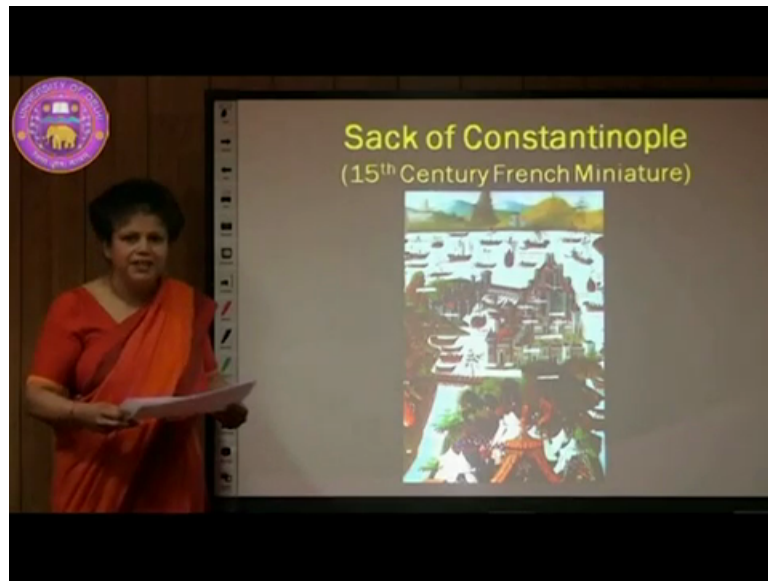
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Now, there are a number of misnomers about the Renaissance; the fact that there was the sudden rebirth of classical learning that there was no knowledge of the classics in the medieval period; the medieval period was the period of dark ages this is not true. Authors like Aristotle and Virgil; well known in the middle ages, but what happened in the Renaissance as the result of the discovery of a number of new manuscripts including the words of Plato that would discover after the sack of Constantinople which was brought to Italy by people like Jomani or whisper who rescued no fewer than 238 manuscripts.

As a result of this, there was a new kind of knowledge of classics enable in the Renaissance. This knowledge was put to different users, then it had been in the middle ages; there was not that emphasis on scholasticism anymore, and there was an emphasis on literature on history, and there was a critical approach to this classical heritage which we did not have in the middle ages.

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What I am showing you now is the contemporary visual of the fall of Constantinople; the sack of Constantinople; modern Istanbul in 1453; this is a French miniature.

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Now, the Renaissance in Italy, this is where it moved. Now you have to remember that Italy was not a national or a unified country, it was a collection of city states; why did it move to Italy in Italy people thought that they had a link to the classical past through the roman empire through authors like Virgil, it was also fueled by the enormous wealth of the families like the Medici or banking family in Florence great patterns of art the source

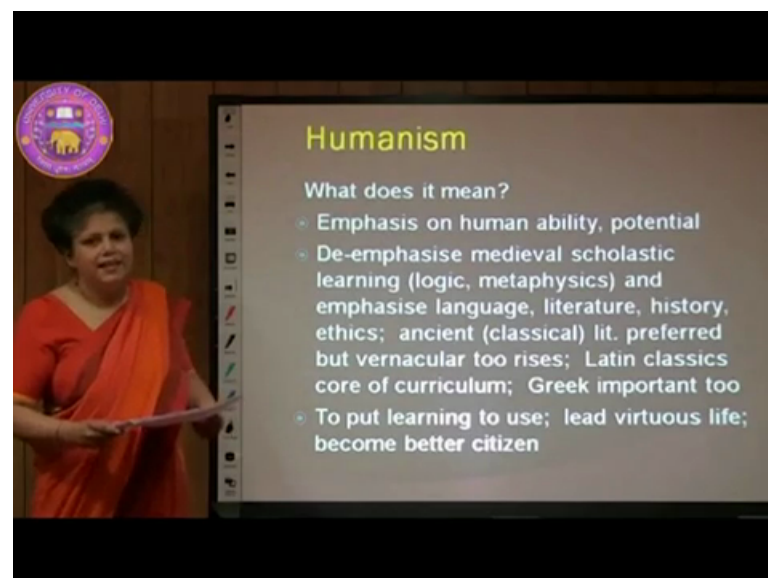
of family; Milan, the Roglarace the people from Venice, the papal states the pope was of course, a huge mentor of art and literature and the Renaissance in Italy grew up from urban centers alright; it was a city fueled movement.

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This is a map of Italy. And remember, this is not Italy as a nation, but Italy as a connection of states a collection of states that consider themselves independent whether it be Milan whether it be Florence whether it be Naples; this is Italy. Now one of the keywords for the Renaissance is of course, humanism.

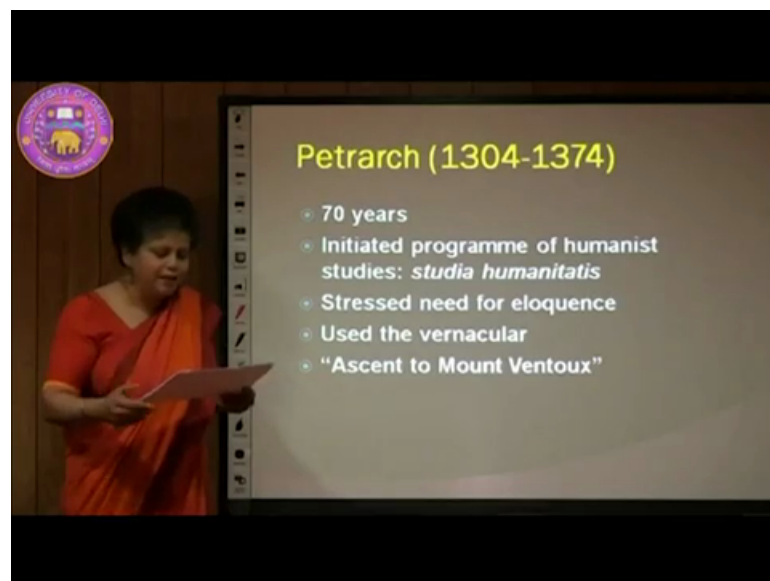
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Now, what is humanism mean? Humanism means that there is an emphasis on the individual on the human being not on God; remember in the middle ages life on earth was a preparation for life either in heaven or health that is no longer the case life on earth human beings become enormously important in the Renaissance.

As a result of humanism this deemphasizes medieval scholastic learning and emphasizes in step language literature history ethics and classical literature the study of both Latin and Greek, Latin classic literature is on the rise, but there is also the rise of the vernaculars that is very important; Italian literature, Tuscan literature, English literature; these takes place you know in the Renaissance. And as I said before; the end of learning is to lead a good life to make a an honorable and ethical individual and also to become a better citizen is this man called Petrarch.

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Petrarch; his dates on 13 or 4; 1374 is for the father of humanist is true; the right old age of 70; he initiated this sort of course, of humanist study called the Studia Humanitatis.

He stressed the need for eloquence, but he also uses the vernacular he writes Spnics in Italian not in Latin or in Greek; that is very important one of the major letter that he writes is called the ascent to Mount Ventoux; he writes this around 1350 and its addressed to one of his formal confessors and it is a sort of prototypical Renaissance document why because he is talking about himself, the focus is on the self he discusses theology he discusses classical texts he refers to a Gustin.

For example, a Gustin confession he also looks upon his climb up the mountain as a neological journey; as ones journey through life he takes the wrong way 3 times he says while his brother loves at him and also it is a you know the importance of sort of reaching your goal of being ethical of being a learn it person who also contemplates a looks within this is what fines expression in the ascent to Mount Ventoux and Petrarch is a sort of major exponent of what was called the vita contemplativa. The contemplative life the inward life the person who looks within another person who does this and also show you portrait of Petrarch; that is Petrarch.

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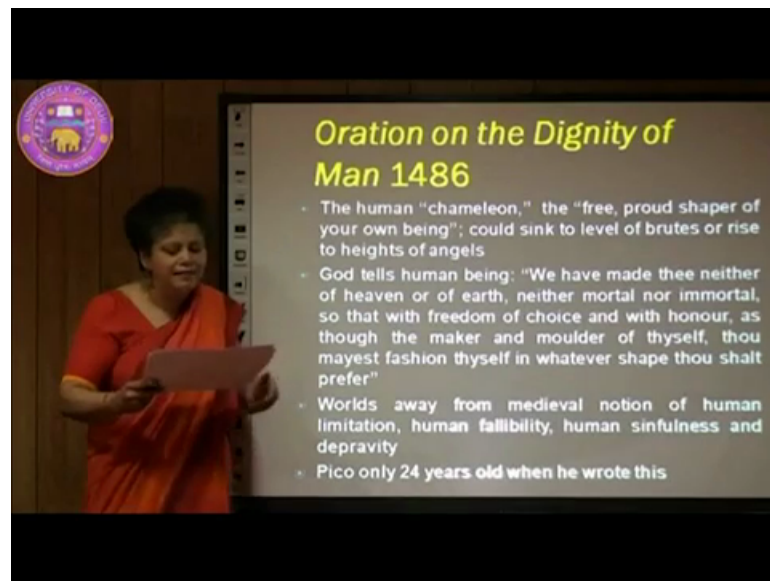


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There is Pico Della Mirandola; 1463 to 1494 only lived to be 31, but what is amazing about Pico is that not only he is combining the stands of Platonism and Christianity, but he is also looking at other religions, he is looking at the Hebrew heritage, he is looking at the Mozilam heritage, he is showing this enormous breadth of mind of not being just confined to Florence, but looking at the world and talking in terms of the world culture this is very important.

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And what we also have in Pico's famous oration on the dignity of man which was published in 1486 when he was just 24 years old is this sense of tremendous optimism; god looks at the human being and he tells we have made the neither of the heaven, nor of earth; neither mortal, nor immortal. So, that with freedom of choice and with honors as though the maker and molder of thyself thou mayest fashion thyself in whatever shape thou shalt prefer look at these words fashion thyself.

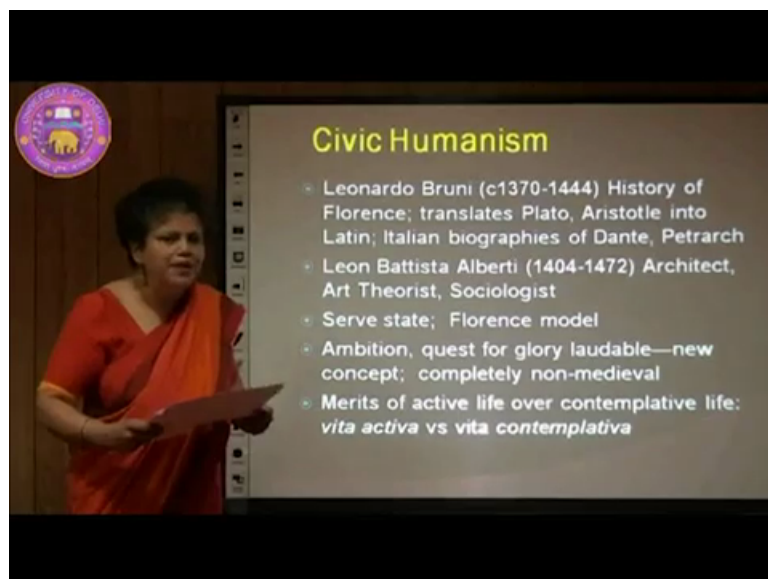
Very important freedom of choice very important see we worlds away from the medieval notion of god determining whether you are going to be a sinner or whether you are going to be saved you now as a Renaissance individual have the freedom to fashion your own life; the other important point that Pico makes is that the human being is like a chameleon, he calls him the human chameleon; the human being can either raise to the level of angels or sink to the level of piece. So, this tenuousness this flexibility in human nature human nature is not fixed that is Pico's vital contribution to the notion of the

human being in the Renaissance.

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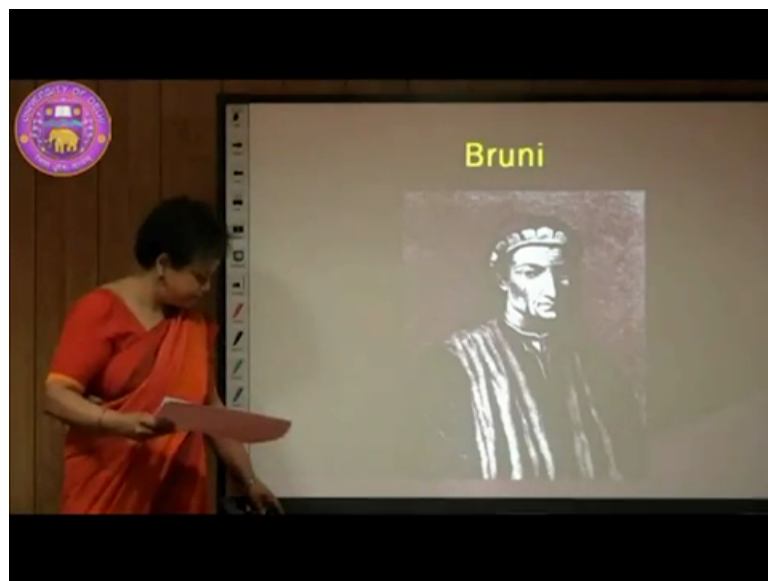


And that is the portrait of Pico there; another important branch of humanism was what is called civic humanism remember I told you that not Nossis, but (Refer Time: 13:31) must be the fruit; learning must be put to good use. So, civic humanism with the help of people like Leonardo Bruni and Leon Battista Alberti talked about the need of the citizen. They also say that it is quite alright to be ambitious its quite alright to peruse a (Refer Time: 13:52) glory, it is quite alright to fulfill your complete potential here on

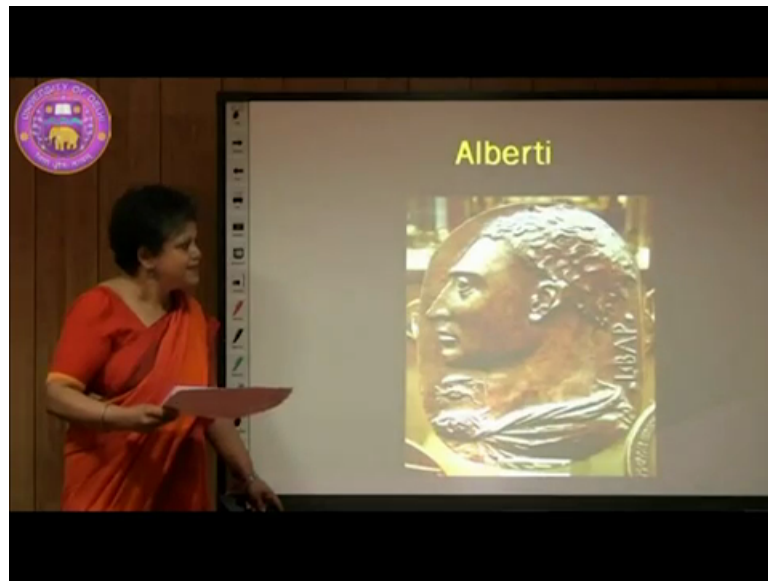
earth; these are very important things and remember that both Bruni and Alberti are what we now called Renaissance men; Bruni is not only a historian; writes a history of Florence, but he also translates Plato and Aristotle into Latin.

Very very important; Plato was not available to the western world before this; he also writes biographies in Italian. So, he emphasizes the vernacular along with classical learning; he writes biographies of Tan Ten Pic Transo; in other words, he is upholding the role of poets; poets are seen as very important to the human community Alberti is an architect; the diplomat that art theorist the sociologist, he writes the first theory of art and the first sociological treaties on the family where he stresses the importance of the nuclear family. So, they saying that one must serve the state the use Florence that home town as a model and they are the ones who are talking about the merits of the active life Vita Attitiva Petrarch stands for Vita Contem Plativa Alberti and Bruni and Lorenzo Valla stand for the folk Vita Attitiva and I will just show you this is Bruni and this is Alberti.

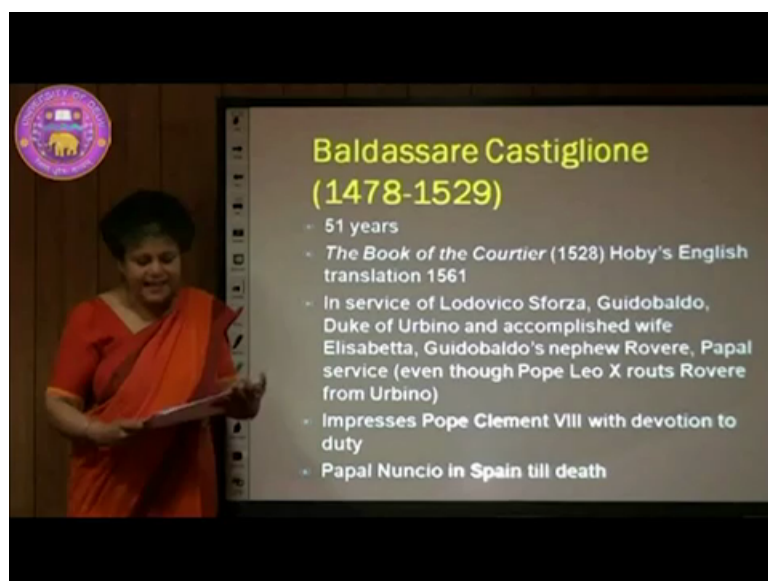
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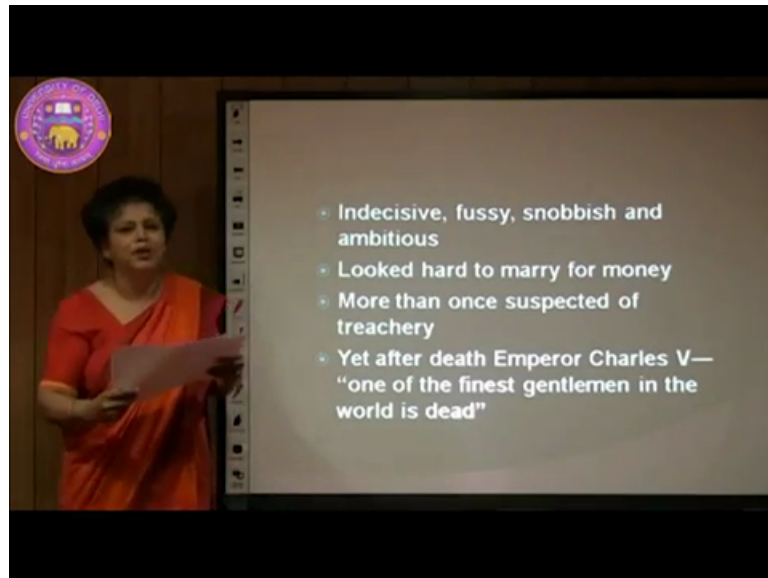


Now, Baldassare Castiglione his date supporting 78 and 1529; he is also a very good example of a good citizen, alright, he lived for 51 years, the book of the courtier was published in 1528; hobbies; English translation came up in 1561 and just about every English author of importance reverse to this book.

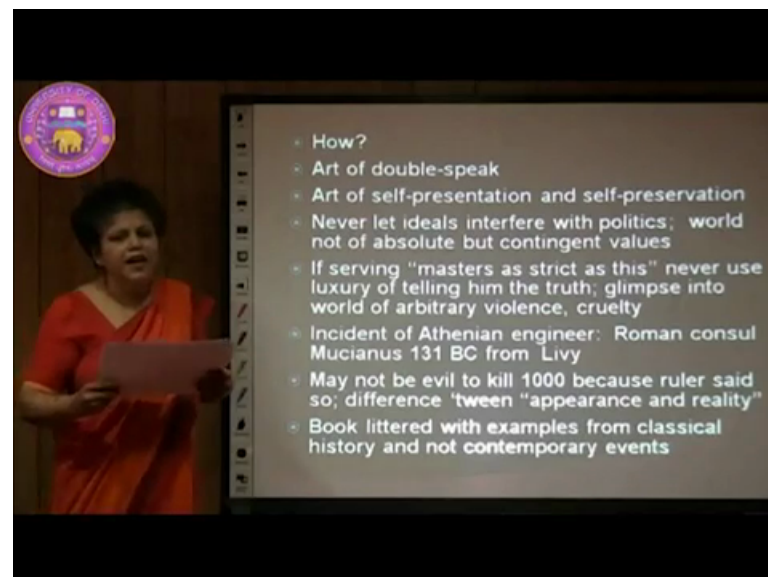
So, it was one of the best sellers of its time, now note the number of masters that Castiglione has he serves Sforza, he served the Duke of Urbino, he served Rovere, he served the Pope, he has served all these successive employers successfully, alright, but

actually he was Nobish, he married for money, he was fastidious, he was not a very nice man, but in spite of that when he died the Emperor Charles the fifth said; one of the finest gentlemen in the world.

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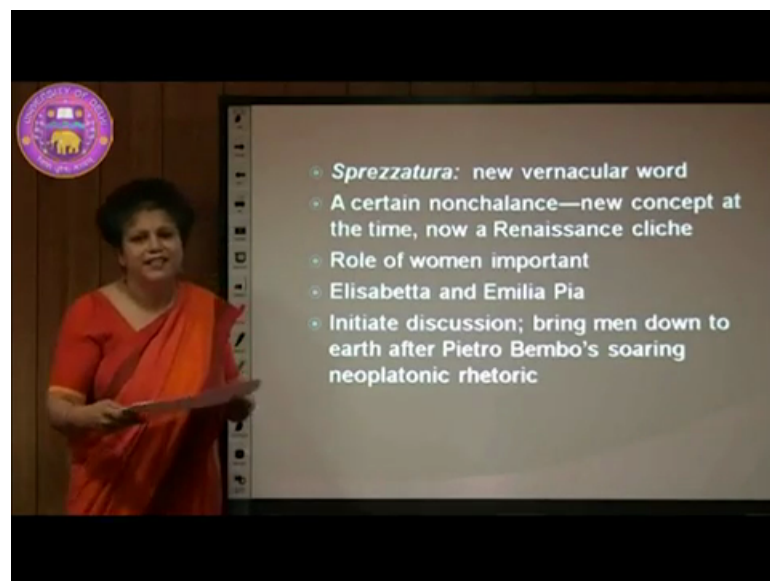


He is dead now; why did he say this because Castiglione puts to practice what he preaches in the court yard; what does he say in the court yard; in the court yard, he is talking about the art of double speak, the art of self presentation which was hand in hand with self preservation, he says ideal should never interfere with the life of politics, the

world is not a world of absolute values, but of contingent values; you do what is right at that particular time and he gives examples of you know the really arbitrary world of violence that was Italian city state politics, but he does it in such a smooth and nano way that you do not even know that you are looking upon a world or such violence.

He says it may not be evil to kill even 1000 people, if your princess ask you to do it. So, you know he is talking about the difference between the appearance and reality, he is talking about the world of politics, real politic which is very different from the kind of idealized world where the victuals are always rewarded and the evil are always punished, he also stares away from contemporary examples and only gives example from ancient history there by also protecting himself you know you understand from any charges of favoritism or whatever.

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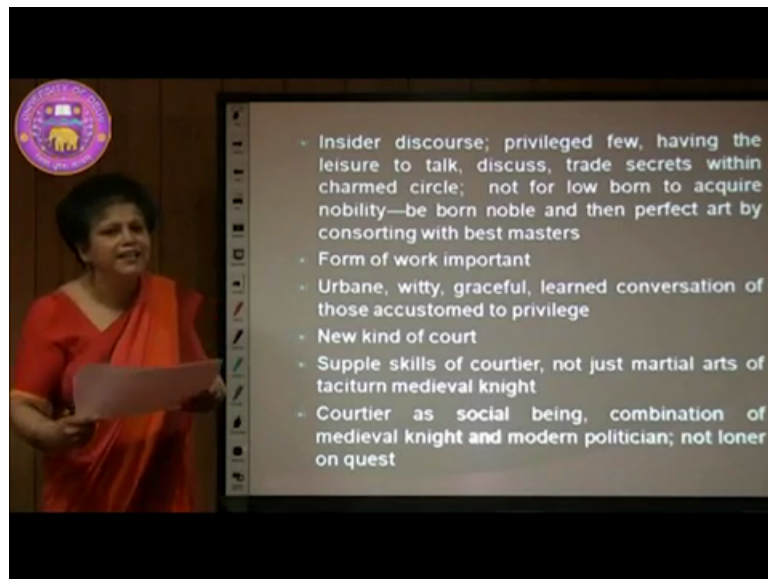


He coins new words like Sprezzatura; he says I am using a new word; this is now become a Renaissance (Refer Time: 17:50); what is Sprezzatura; sprezzatura is a sort of nonchalance, it is a way of presenting yourself with artful artlessness, alright. So, actually the way you are presenting yourself disguises a lot of labor, but you do not show any of that labor you just present yourself as this sort of you know god made a wonder the role of women in the courtiers very very important crucial characters in the courtier Elisabetta Gonzaga the counters and Emilia Pia; her close relative, these are the women who initiate the discussion; these are the women who prick the balloon of male Retarate;

you know like when Pia throw them Bembo perorates on love; Emilia Pia tracks a jock and brings everybody down to earth.

So, what we have in the world of the courtier which is based on four evenings where this sort of group of very you know well bread people get together and talk about what it means to be a perfect courtier, alright

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The form of the work is very important because they are gracefully talking to each other, cracking jokes, making very sophisticated fun of each other, because through the form of the workers (Refer Time: 19:11) is telling us about the substance of the work.

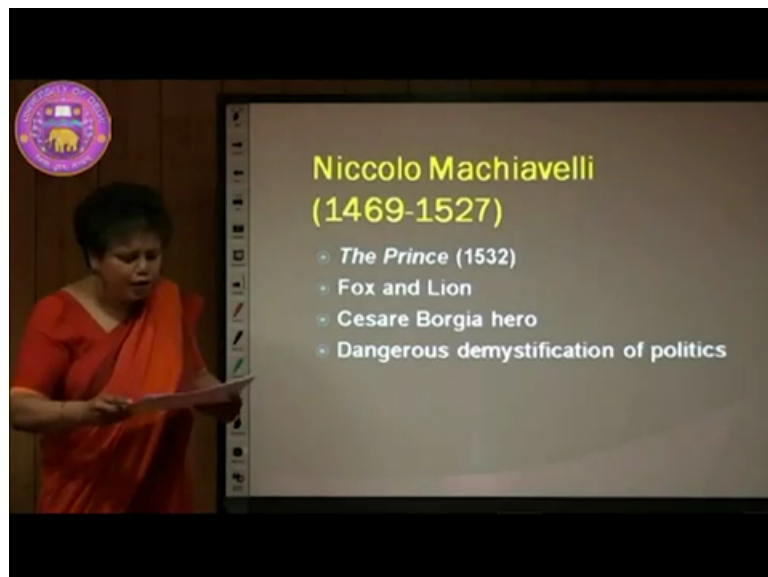
You know this is how courtier must behave. So, the supple skills of the courtier are not the kinds of skills that are medieval knight needed; a courtier is a combination of the medieval knight and the modern politician; he is a social being, alright he has to interact and live and succeed in society; he cannot be a loner on a quest like the medieval knight. So, this urbane, this witty, this sort of very graceful and learn it conversation that we find in the courtier is what is what being a courtier in the Renaissance is all about and this is actually based on Castiglione's own experiences in the court of (Refer Time: 20:00).

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Where Elisabetta Gonzaga was the counters; this is the superb portrait one of the best portraits that we have in the Italian Renaissance by Raphael of Castiglione and look at that face; look at how much he is concealed in that face and how little it reveals that is the core of the courtier.

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Now, Nicilo Machiavelli; 1469-1527; one of the most original minds in the Renaissance, but was he a thundering success like Castiglione no.

He was not why because he did not try to disguise the truth, he did not try to tell the truth

courtly, he always spoke clearly and he demystified politics to such an extent that he was seen as dangerous and he founded very hard to find patriots; his prince came out in 1532 and that is where he says things like you know the en-justifies the means between the fox and the lion, the prince model himself on the clever fox, rather than the magnanimous line Cesare Borgia; one of the villains of history is Machiavelli's hero because he is a very effective administrator.

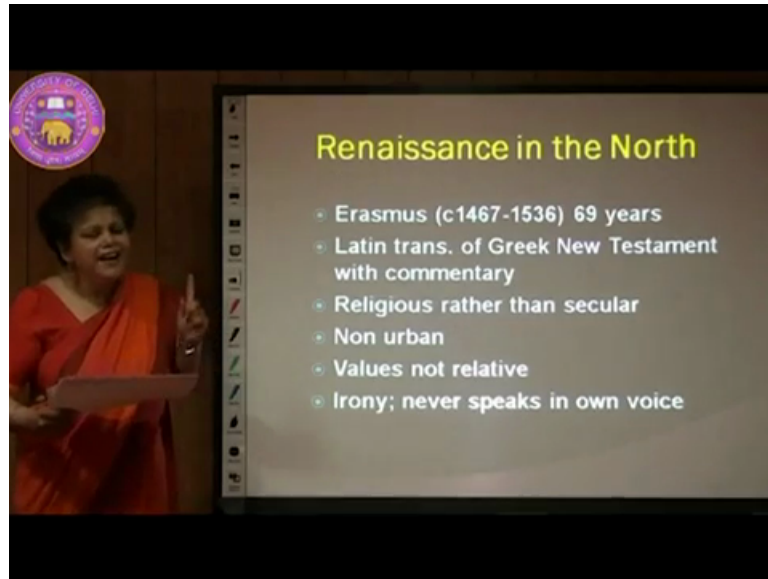
So, what Machiavelli is saying is really not very different from what Castiglione is saying, but the way in which he says it is so very different that he is seen as dangerous where as Castiglione is a is (Refer Time: 21:29). So, this dangerous demystification of politics of saying everything exactly as it is that is Machiavelli's sort of quality.

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And of course, the princes address directly to the prince where as Castiglione's courtier is addressed to a member of the court the courtier this is the portrait of Machiavelli.

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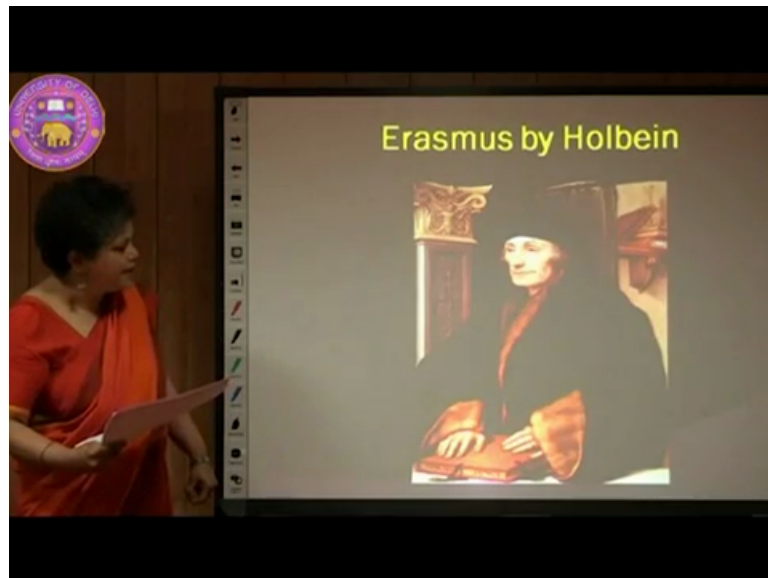


Now, the Renaissance in the north was very different from the Renaissance in the south in Italy; Erasmus is the leading figure of the Renaissance in the north; the (Refer Time: 22:20) of son of prince of a priest sorry and Rotterband, but he was a true sort of citizen of Europe, his states are (Refer Time: 22:09) 1467 to 1536; lived for 69 years, had friends all across the continent; Sir Thomas More in England was a very close friend and his major work; his lives work was a Latin translation of the Greek new testament with a commentary why was this.

So, crucial remember that the Bible was read earlier only by priests; in the middle ages the common person could not just pick up the bible and read it, Erasmus makes the bible available to you know the man on the street; the average person alright, the Renaissance in the north is much more religious; less secular than the Renaissance in Italy, it is non urban, it is not build around city states, values are not seen as relative or contingent and Erasmus also writes these marvelous (Refer Time: 23:01) and of course, his masterpiece the praise of (Refer Time: 23:04) where he uses irony and never speaks in his own voice and what is ironic is that Erasmus's Greek new testament; the translation of it makes possible the raise of Protestantism, but actually Erasmus was an enemy of Protestantism.

He did not believe in Protestantism and he has all these you know sort of arguments with Luther about it, but it is his (Refer Time: 23:30) that makes the bible available to millions more than it was available to earlier; this is the beautiful portrait of Erasmus by Holbein.

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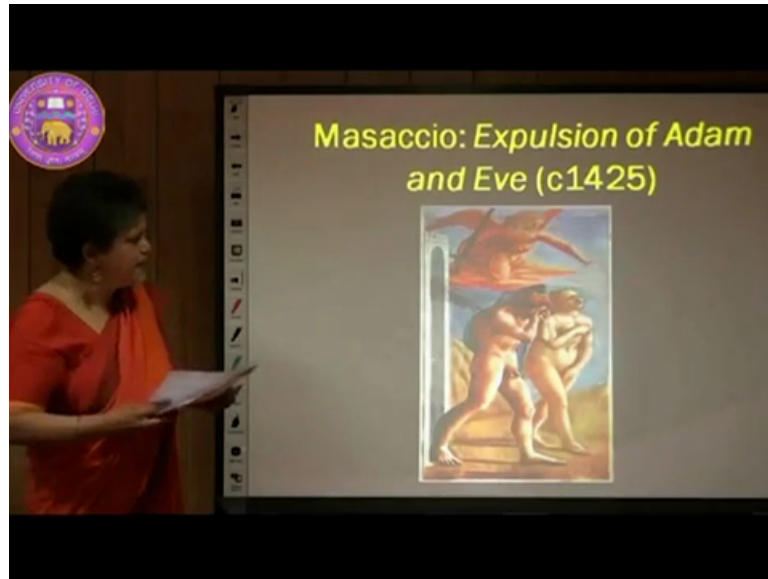


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Just a few words about Renaissance art; these are the major artists Masaccio, Botticelli, Leonardo Da Vinci, Michelangelo, Raphael; Masaccio's date supporting 1401 to possibly 1427.

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This is the expulsion of Adam and Eve from paradise (Refer Time: 24:05) 1425; this is the fresco part of the famous (Refer Time: 24:08) frescos; now how is Masaccio changing medieval art.

He is making the bodies a lot more solid; they were elongated in a medieval art, they are much more recognizably human in Masaccio's hands and look at that expression of Eve you know Moonk probably the remembered it when he painted the screen; many centuries later look at the realism of Eve's horror as she realizes that she can never go back through those narrow gates back into paradise, alright. So, that psychological realism is something that along with the solidity of the bodies that Masaccio is introducing.

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This is Botticelli's primavera or springs (Refer Time: 24:52) 1482 and allegory because you have Zibeth there who is impregnating Cloris the (Refer Time: 24:59) in the flora the (Refer Time: 25:03) of flowers that is Venus in the center; the 3 graces and Mercury and cupid on top. So, beautifully drawn figures; the importance of the human body in the Renaissance we can see in the paintings of Botticelli as well as a certain Beo Platonism a tendency towards allegory.

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Leonardo Da Vinci's virgin and child with Saint Anne 1510; Leonardo Da Vinci

produced very few complete paintings, he was constantly reworking his paintings never satisfy look at the marvelous way in which he is dealing with the problem of placing 2 adult figures and a child in the same frame.

What is he do? He seats the virgin Mary in the lap of a mother Saint Anne who is the virgin's mother and you can see that Saint Anne look at the psychological realism; has eyes not for Christ; the Christ child, but for her own daughter the virgin Mary, alright whereas, the virgin is reaching out to the child who is already pulling away from her because he has a life to lead and he is embarrassing that lamp which represents Christianity which represents Christ flock.

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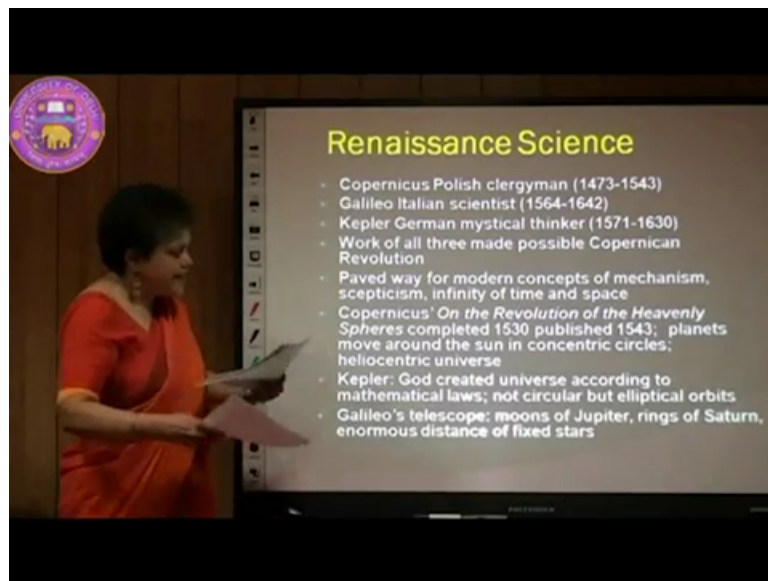
And this is Michelangelo's masterpiece the last judgment the detail of it in the 16; chapel 1536 to 1541 are the years that it took Michelangelo took to complete this; he is painting frescoes when he is actually trained as a sculpture and a painter he says I have been given a commission to do work that I am not familiar with and look what he produces. Now the last judgment is amazing because it combines the secular and the spiritual which is a very important trade in Renaissance.

So, the figure of Christ in the middle is actually modeled on Apollo; the figure is modeled on the classical Apollo and right here above the alter you have the gates of L opening and you have Charren, the boatman rowing the dead souls on the river sticks. Now see these are all from classical myth these are not part of Christian myth, but he is

combining the figures of Christ, Mary's and John the Baptist with classical elements and on this side you have the (Refer Time: 27:20) and on that side you have the dam and this Flaid skin is none other than Michelangelo himself.

So, he positions himself among the dam and the only sort of heartening thing about this is that Christ faces the damped even though he has raised his hand to (Refer Time: 27:40) them, he faces the damped; Renaissance science.

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Now, you know we think that how can that possibly have been science in the Renaissance this is not true what we call the Copernican revolution is brought about by 3 people a Polish Clergyman; Copernicus 1473 to 1543 and Italian scientist Galileo; 1564 to 1642 and Kepler; a German mystical thinker 1571 to 1630. So, the work of all 3 of these made possible the Copernican revolution and they pave the way for modern concepts like skepticism infinity of time and space mechanism Copernicus's famous book on the revolution of the heavenly spheres which was completed in 1530, but published only in 1543; why this is a clergyman who is who knows that he is going to upset the way people think about the universe as a result of this discovery, alright.

So, he puts of publishing the still 1543 which is also the year he dies and he is the man who says that the planets do not move around the earth they move around the sun; just think of that just think of what a huge sort of you know comment; statement, this was to make it completely made the whole Renaissance world (Refer Time: 29:07) alright. So,

the universe was not earth centric; it was Heliocentric and Kepler says that you know god creates the universe according to mathematical laws; not just you know does not just wake up one morning and create the world; the planets move in elliptical and not circular orbits and of course, Galileo's telescope which you know he sees the moons of the Jupiter for the first time. The rings of Saturn and measures the enormous distance of fix stars.

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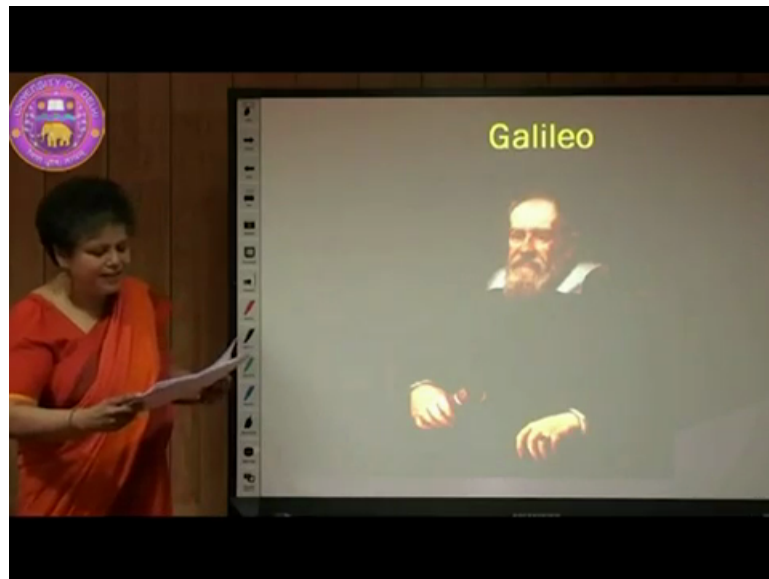
And these are the portraits; this is polish clergyman a Copernicus; A polish clergyman.

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Kepler: the German mystical thinker.

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And Galileo: carrying his telescope the Italian scientist.