



The Renaissance Studies Program presents the first lecture in its
“Forms of Knowledge and the Renaissance Uses of the Liberal Arts” series:

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Fare and Comporre: Painting, Poetry and the Liberal Arts in Early Modern Italy

Friday, April 17, 3:00 p.m.

Walnut Room, Indiana Memorial Union

Current criticisms of the Liberal Arts, whether as crumbling edifice or bulwark of elitism, ignore the fact that over the centuries (indeed millennia) it has been continually reassessed, remodeled and even reconstructed. Some of these changes—which may correspond to broader political or social transformations—moved the liberal arts toward greater isolation and exclusivity (befitting its modern caricature). Yet others have been more dynamic, opening up to question the assumptions guiding the construction of the category itself. This paper argues that the Renaissance debates over the status of the factive arts—and in particular of painting—were an example of the latter. The claims that painting is a liberal, rather than mechanical, art often privileged content over form (content—or subject matter—serving as its link to the “higher” arts). I will examine both texts and works of art that suggest a very different possibility: that the kinship of factive and liberal arts (or of painting and poetry) is not in shared intellectual products but in shared inventive processes.

This lecture is made possible through the support of the College Arts and Humanities Institute, the College of Arts and Sciences, the Mary-Margaret Barr Koon Fund of the Department of French and Italian, and the Robert and Avis Burke Lecture Series, the Department of the History of Art. There will be coffee, tea and light refreshments.