

AE 3700: Global Experiences in Architectural Engineering Course Syllabus ♦ Summer 2006 ♦ 3 Credits

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Dates of trip: May 6 – May 24, 2006. Refer to the attached itinerary for details.

Required texts:

- ❖ Italy Eyewitness Travel Guide. This general travel guide to Italy is a good orientation to the country. It provides a general introduction to most of the towns and cultural sights that we will visit. You should read the front matter and the sections related to the sights we will visit prior to departure.
- ❖ Rick Steves' Best European City Walks and Museums. This book introduces several of places that we will visit in Rome, Florence, and Venice (e.g. the Colosseum, Roman Forum, Pantheon, St. Peter's Basilica, and the Vatican Museum in Rome, the Uffizi and Bargello in Florence, and the Doges Palace, St. Mark's Square, and St. Mark's Basilica in Venice).
- ❖ A Map of Italy (e.g. Michelin, Streetwise Italy, Collins, etc.)
- ❖ At least one book from the attached list. Travel is more meaningful when you are learning about the places that you visit as you go. You are also encouraged to read one or more books ahead of time.
- ❖ Supplementary handouts related to the cities and cultural sights that we will visit will be provided. Bring a folder or three-ring binder to store these materials.

Suggested References

- ❖ The more you read ahead of time, the better prepared you will be, and the more you will get out of this trip. Please see the attached media list for suggested books and DVDs that are related to this study abroad course.

Other required materials:

- ❖ Sketchbook, set of sketching pencils, pencil sharpener, and eraser. (A good set of pencils is the Staedtler Mars Lumograph Design Pencil Set, Blue Barrel, Black Lead, Set of 12)
- ❖ A pen (e.g. ballpoint, felt tip, roller-ball)
- ❖ A highlighter

Optional materials:

- ❖ A small stapler
- ❖ A portable 3-hole punch
- ❖ City maps, especially for Rome and Florence

Frequently Asked Questions:

What is this course about? This course is a survey of the history, aesthetics, and technical developments in architecture from ancient times to the middle of the 18th century. Though the emphasis is on architectural history, the course is much more than a static look at buildings. During our travels we will discuss the history of science and technology and the political and social context of the times. Italy is the only country on the world where we can visit buildings, archeological sites, and museums from Ancient Greece and Rome, Byzantium, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the Baroque, all within a few weeks.

In addition to the academic objectives, this course is also about developing new perspectives on academic subjects and real-world issues, it's about personal growth, and it's about developing valuable career skills. These complementary objectives are uniquely suited for international experiences and study abroad.

What is the course format? The course consists primarily of daily field trips to structures of historical significance, with the history of science and technology serving as the basis for the itinerary. We will visit remnants of Ancient Greece in Paestum, and remnants of the Roman Empire including the

Coliseum, Roman Forum, Domus Aurea, Pantheon, Pompei, and Villa Adriana. We visit structures related to the rise of Christianity, such as St. Peter's Basilica, the Sistine Chapel, and the Leaning Tower of Pisa. We will study structures from Byzantium, including the basilicas of Ravenna and the Basilica San Marco in Venice. Several medieval structures will be studied in the context of central Italian hill-towns, including the Duomos in Siena and Orvieto and medieval fortifications in San Gimignano and Monteriggione. Renaissance structures, including the Santa Maria Dei Fiori Dome in Florence, and the Teatro Olimpico in Vicenza will be studied, and Baroque environments, including San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane and Piazza Navona are part of the itinerary. You will have tours of each of these structures and many more, including discussions about the construction techniques and architectural design, all in consideration of the time period in which each was constructed. The influence of Italian visionaries on the history of science, art, and technology, such as Julius Caesar, Giotto, Michelangelo, Brunelleschi, Da Vinci, and Galileo, will be emphasized throughout the trip.

Why is the course in Italy instead of a different foreign country?

The Italian peninsula includes examples of the most significant pre-1850 architecture, allowing you to experience some of the world's most significant structures during a compact and efficient trip. Italy was the center of both the Roman Empire and the Renaissance, while also being rich with examples baroque architecture, and early Christian and medieval architecture.

Why is an international venue desirable for this course?

This trip is motivated by the educational value to engineering students of experiencing historically significant structures within the context of the history of science and technology. The experience of space, volume, form, and motion cannot be fully appreciated without personal experience. A trip to historically important buildings, archeological sites, and museums affords deeper appreciation and understanding, even awe, of our predecessors' accomplishments. In addition, the cultural value of spending time in a foreign country is integral to the learning experience. The experience of differences in customs, language, and food are important components intellectual development in the modern world, and are complementary to the core program of studies.

Is study abroad really that important?

In a word, yes. We live in a global community where it is easy to share ideas across national boundaries. Advances in transportation and communication technologies mean that the world is, in effect, getting smaller all the time. Consider what some experts have to say about study abroad:

"International education prepares our citizens to live, work, and compete in the global economy, and promotes tolerance and the reduction of conflict."
Colin Powell, Former US Secretary of State

"... Today ... forces press in from every conceivable direction. We are all being influenced by the same tides of political, social and technological change. We are connected by travel, sport, communications and commerce ... in such a world we need each and every individual to act as a global citizen."
Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations

"ASHRAE has experienced exponential growth in its membership from the international community ... because of the interest and need of engineers throughout the globe who benefit from the technology provided by the society."
Dr. Richard B. Hayter, Kansas State University, Former President of ASHRAE

"... security, stability, and economic vitality of the United States in an increasingly complex global age depend largely upon having a globally competent citizenry and the availability of experts specializing in world regions, foreign languages, and international affairs ... core values and skills of higher education are enhanced by participation in study abroad programs"
United States Senate, which on Nov. 10, 2005 unanimously passed a resolution designating 2006 as the Year of Study Abroad

What are the expected learning outcomes?

- ❖ Students should be able to demonstrate a basic understanding of architectural history, including an ability to identify the physical attributes of buildings that are associated with major architectural periods.
- ❖ Students should be able to explain how building architecture relates to the contemporaneous politics, economy, art, and/or culture of a particular society.
- ❖ Students are expected to develop new perspectives on academic subjects and real-world issues. This trip will provide you with opportunities to study architectural engineering in more depth and from a different cultural perspective than could be achieved at home in a classroom. Most of our activities will be based on field studies where we will physically experience the accomplishments of architectural engineers that paved the way for our modern practices. This learning will be enhanced by your daily interactions in the foreign culture that will occur when we are not meeting as a group. Even as we experience historic buildings, we will be doing so in the context of a modern culture. How is architectural engineering different in Italy versus the United States as a consequence of the existing stock of buildings? How has the automobile changed the way cities are created? These are just two examples of what you will study first hand, and be in conversant in upon your return.
- ❖ Students are expected to experience personal growth. Study abroad is a challenging adventure, academically and personally. Most students that return from abroad report that they developed a greater sense of confidence and independence. This is usually accompanied by an increase in expectations about what they can achieve.
- ❖ Students are expected to develop valuable career skills. Study abroad will give you the opportunity to develop or strengthen a number of career skills that will make you more marketable when you are searching for a job and being interviewed. Some of these skills include critical thinking, teamwork, problem solving, an expanded world view, the ability to adapt to unfamiliar settings, good judgment, independence, self confidence, multicultural perspectives, adaptability in unexpected circumstances, and communication skills.

How is the course graded?

Graded assignments fall into several categories, as listed in *Table 1*. Points acquired in each category will be summed to determine your final letter grade by reference to *Table 2*.

Table 1: Weighting of graded assignments

Category	Percentage
Quiz #1 (University Code of Conduct)	10%
Quiz #2 (Midterm)	20%
Quiz #3 (Final)	20%
Sketchbook / Journal	20%
Map Assignment	10%
Professionalism (attendance, promptness, participation, etc.)	20%

Table 2: Relationship between point values and letter grades.

Minimum %	Letter Grade	Maximum %
97	A+	100
93	A	96
90	A-	92
87	B+	89

83	B	86
80	B-	82
77	C+	79
73	C	76
70	C-	72
67	D+	69
63	D	66
60	D-	62
0	F	59

<i>What is meant by "Professionalism" ?</i>	Professionalism in this course is as important as in the workplace, and included such traits as preparation, productivity, timeliness, willingness to take instruction, and respect for your fellow classmates. In this class it is especially important to be on time and ready to go for our regularly scheduled classes and tours.
<i>What is the attendance policy?</i>	Regular and punctual attendance is mandatory. In the engineering profession, being late for a meeting is a breach of professionalism. A good engineer upholds professional conduct by always being prompt. If this is not your habit, acquire it. It will help you in this class and in your career. In this class there are direct grade deductions for truancy. In addition, the professional conduct portion of your grade will suffer. Missed attendance and truancy will not be tolerated. Period.
<i>What is the policy about working in teams?</i>	Open discussion and the public exchange of ideas are healthy parts of the learning process and university life. You are encouraged to discuss the course, exchange ideas, and work on assignments with fellow classmates. Keep in mind that there is an implied reciprocity associated with working together, solving problems together, and learning together. It is expected that in some instances your classmates will be a resource for you, while at other times you will be a resource for them. Also keep in mind that working together is a means, not an end. Ultimately, you need to know what you're doing, and you alone are responsible for the work you turn in.
<i>What constitutes academic dishonesty?</i>	Talking over your ideas and getting comments on your work from classmates, co-workers and instructors are not examples of plagiarism or cheating. Taking someone else's work and calling it your own is plagiarism — including using another persons' calculations, spreadsheets, computer programs, homework solutions, or ideas. Plagiarism and cheating are serious offenses with dire consequences. The minimum penalty imposed for academic dishonesty of any type will be a grade of 'F' for the assignment. You are encouraged to read Section II of the Student Code of Conduct for additional details.

Daily Itinerary

AE 3770: Global Experiences in Architectural Engineering

Last Update: February 20, 2006

Engineering Study Abroad in Italy, Summer 2006

Date	Day of the Week	Overnight City	Hotel (Tentative)	Dinner (Tentative)	Activities	Bus Transportation Requirements	Notes
6-May-06	Saturday	Rome	--> Airplane				
7-May-06	Sunday	Rome	Hotel Arenula	L' Orso 80	Orientation walk: Spanish Steps, Trevi Fountain, Pantheon, Campo dei Fiori, Piazza Navona, Trastevere		
8-May-06	Monday	"	"	Myosotis	Domus Aurea, Colosseum, Forum, Campidoglio		
9-May-06	Tuesday	"	"	"	Vatican Museums, St. Peter's		
10-May-06	Wednesday	Paestum	Agriturismo Selliano	Agriturismo Selliano	Pompeii		Pick up in Rome, drive to Pompeii, drive to Paestum.
11-May-06	Thursday	Capri	Villa Eva	Da Geisomina	Mozzarella Farm (La Tenuta Vamulo), Greek Ruins at Paestum		Drive to La Tenuta Vamulo, Drive to Paestum, Drop off at Port of Napoli (or Sorrento)
12-May-06	Friday	"	"	"	Villa Jovis, Grotto Azzuro		None
13-May-06	Saturday	Assisi (or Ovieto)	Hotel Umbra (or Hotel Duomo)	La Fortezza (or Trattoria Etrusca)	(or) Villa Adriana		Pick up at Port of Napoli, drive to Villa Adriana, drive to Assisi
14-May-06	Sunday	Siena	Alma Domus	Trattoria Papei	Morning: Walking tour of Assisi (Roman Amphitheatre, Basilica of St. Claire, Rocco Maggiore, Basilica of St. Francis). --OR-- Walking tour of Orvieto (Duomo, St. Patrick's Well). Afternoon: Arrival in Siena and orientation walk Cathedral and Museum; Il Campo, etc.		Late morning departure from Assisi (or Orvieto), drive to Siena
15-May-06	Monday	San Gimignano	Hotel LaCisterna		Morning in Siena. Late morning departure to Monteriggione for tour of medieval town and walk around medieval walls. Late Afternoon: San Gimignano: Torture Museum, Torre Grande, etc.		Drive from Siena to San Gimignano, with a stop at Monteriggione
16-May-06	Tuesday	Florence	Grand Hotel Cavour		Pisa: Campanile, Baptistery, Cathedral, and Cemetery; Florence: Orientation Walk, Galileo's House		Drive to Pisa, Drive to Florence
17-May-06	Wednesday	"	"	Ristorante Del Fagoli	Continue Orientation Walk, Duomo, Duomo Museum		None
18-May-06	Thursday	"	"	Trattoria Baldovino	Accademia, Uffizi		None
19-May-06	Friday	"	"	"	Science Museum, Bargello, Pitti Palace		None
20-May-06	Saturday	Ravenna	Hotesl S. Andrea	La Gardèla	Basilica di San Vitale, Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, Sant' Apollinare in Classe, Basilica of St. Apollinare Nuovo		Drive from Florence to Ravenna
21-May-06	Sunday	Venice	Hotel Al Piave		Vicenza: Palladian Architecture (Basilica Palladiana, Teatro Olimpico, etc.), Venice: Grand Canal, Campanile di San Marco		Drive from Ravenna to Vicenza, then to Venice
22-May-06	Monday	"	"	"	Doge's Palace, Basilica San Marco, Chiesa Dei Frari		
23-May-06	Tuesday	"	"	Ostaria al 4 Feri	Venice Lagoon and visit to the MOSE Project construction site, Correr Museum or Galleria dell' Accademia		
24-May-06	Wednesday	--> Fly Home					

Notes:

a.

Assignments

Sketchbook/Journal Assignment– Description coming.

Map Assignment – Description coming.

Engineering Study Abroad Media List

I. Books

A History of the Roman People, 4th edition (Allen Ward, Fritz Heichelheim, Cedric Yeo)

★★½

A well written textbook with a self explanatory title. Probably not the kind of book you would sit down and read cover-to-cover for pleasure, but it is a good reference. This is the most readable of the four books used on the Omaha campus for HIST 3520: History of the Roman Empire.

Cicero (Anthony Everitt)

★★★

A biography of Cicero, who was a great statesmen and philosopher who lived in the 1st century AD when Rome transitioned from a republic to a dictatorship to an empire. Great for learning about Cicero and the times in which he lived.

A Scandalous History of the Roman Emperors (Anthony Blond)

★★

The first section of the book is a nice introduction to roman society, covering topics such as sex, slavery, Jews, Roman law, the Roman army, and gladiatorial games. The second part of the book includes anecdotes about Julius Caesar, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, and Nero. And the third section is about Rome, including topics such as the cityscape, housing, religion, and food. The first and last sections, which provide a nice introduction to Rome and Roman society, are worth reading. The middle section is mostly gossipy stories without substance. The writing is at times laborious.

Lives of the Caesars (Suetonius, translated by Catharine Edwards)

★★

Written early in the 2nd Century AD, Suetonius provides biographies of the first 12 roman emperors. There is one chapter for each emperor and they can be read independently. Suetonius organized each chapter thematically rather than chronologically. It's a classic book but difficult to read by today's standards. This is one of four books used on the Omaha campus for HIST 3520: History of the Roman Empire.

The Classical Roman Reader (edited by Kenneth Atchity)

★★

This is a collection of translations from classical Roman authors. It includes excerpts from Cato the Elder, Cicero, Julius Caesar, Lucretius, Livy, Vitruvius, Ovid, Suetonius, Hadrian, Justinian, and many others. This book is not for the casual reader; it is one of four books used on the Omaha campus for HIST 3520: History of the Roman Empire.

The Roman Empire: Economy, Society and Culture (Peter Garnsey & Richard Saller)

★★

A scholarly book not written for the casual reader. This is a book for people that already know quite a lot about Rome. This is one of four books used on the Omaha campus for HIST 3520: History of the Roman Empire.

A World Lit Only by Fire (William Manchester)

★★★½

Manchester presents and interprets chains of circumstances that led civilization through the period of history from roughly 400 to 1500 AD. He doesn't follow a strict chronological line and instead covers things topically. I enjoyed this book in part because, rather than a dry narration of facts and dates, Manchester has opinions about the meaning of events and their interrelationships. Well written by a very capable author and historian.

The Pillars of the Earth (Ken Follet)

★★★½

This is the only fiction book on this list. It's set in 12th century England and is the story of the building of a cathedral in the fictional town of Kingsbridge. It traces how four decades of social and political confusion, and church politics,

affects the progress on building the cathedral and the lives of the characters. It loses a half-star only because I (generally) prefer non-fiction books.

1215: The Year of Magna Carta (Danny Danziger & John Gillingham)

★★★½

The Magna Carta is the central document for modern freedom. The book focuses on what life was like in early 13th century England. The authors describe castle life, towns, schools, diets, trial by ordeal, the church, and other topics that bound and separated the political and social fabric of Middle Ages England. This book does a nice job of illustrating how the Magna Carta was a product of its times. It is an easy read and highly recommended.

In the Wake of the Plague: The Black Death & the World it Made (Norman Cantor)

★★★

This book brings the 14th century to life – especially 14th century England – in the time of the Black Death. It's a well written account of the social chaos caused by the plague, including immediate and longer-term social and cultural effects. Cantor has an interesting contemporary perspective, for example by interpreting the Black Death in a modern biomedical context. Worth reading.

Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages (Umberto Eco, translated by Hugh Bredin)

★

The author is famous, and this book is highly recommended by others, but I found it very difficult to read. I quit after a chapter and do not recommend it. Perhaps a different translation would be better.

The Renaissance: A Short History (Paul Johnson)

★★★

In less than 200 pages Johnson lays out the economic, technological, and social developments that define the Renaissance. He covers literature and scholarship, sculpture, architecture, painting, and finally the spread and eventual decline of the Renaissance. Very worthwhile reading.

Art for Travellers: Italy, The Essential Guide for Viewing Italian Renaissance Art (Ann Morrow and John Power)

★★★½

This is not a book to read from cover-to-cover. It's a travel book with art-based itineraries that are focused on Italian Renaissance artwork. It includes brief introductions to the major Italian renaissance artists, as well as a guide to common characters, places, and stories that are commonly represented in renaissance artwork. It's full of information about the places we will visit and is great to have on hand, especially while visiting Rome and Florence.

The Architecture of the Italian Renaissance (Peter Murray)

★★

You will need to be more committed than I was to read this book from cover to cover. The individual chapters, however, are essentially stand-alone essays. For example, I enjoyed Chapter 2 about Brunelleschi, which discusses his work on the Santa Maria del Fiore Cathedral as well as his other buildings in Florence. And Chapter 9 covers Michelangelo's architectural works in Florence and Rome. This is a useful reference with good illustrations, but it is written more for the specialist than the casual reader.

Brunelleschi's Dome (Ross King)

★★★★

The story of Brunelleschi and the building of the dome on the Santa Maria del Fiore Cathedral. King does an excellent job of explaining the engineering accomplishments of Brunelleschi, all set in the context of early 15th century Florence. Highly recommended, especially for engineers.

The Feud that Sparked the Renaissance (Paul Robert Walker)

★★★

Walker recreates 15th century Florence through the stories of Filippo Brunelleschi and Lorenzo Ghiberti. Brunelleschi's dome (on the Santa Maria del Fiore Cathedral) and Ghiberti's doors (on the Baptistery for the cathedral), were defining moments in the birth of the Renaissance and the blossoming of Florence. A great complement to Brunelleschi's Dome by Ross King.

The House of the Medici: Its Rise and Fall (Christopher Hibbert)

★★½

This traces the Medici family from the 15th to 18th century, with a focus on their most interesting period from the mid-15th to mid-16th centuries. The rise of the Medici parallels the rise of Renaissance Florence and this book tells their story as a chronological narrative. It's competently written and full of good information for those interested in Florence and the Medici, but is not as easy to read as some other books on this list.

April Blood: Florence and the Plot against the Medici (Lauro Martines)

★★★

This is the story of the Pazzi conspiracy against the Medici in the late 15th century. This book expertly describes the plot to murder Lorenzo de' Medici, and places it in the wider social and political contexts of Renaissance Florence. It is written by an academic and can perhaps be best appreciated by a reader that already has basic knowledge of Renaissance Florence, such as you might get from watching the DVD "Medici: Godfathers of the Renaissance", described below. But don't let this deter you, it's an remarkable story and a worthwhile read.

Michelangelo and the Pope's Ceiling (Ross King)

★★★½

Focuses on the period from 1508 to 1512 when Michelangelo painted the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. King offers great insights into the politics and personal rivalries in Rome, such as Michelangelo's relationships with Pope Julius II and Raphael. It also provides insights in Michelangelo's personal life, such as his health, finances, and domestic problems. This is a great book, especially for admirers of Michelangelo and the Roman Renaissance.

The Pope and the Heretic (Michael White)

★★★

This is the story of the Giordano Bruno, who was a visionary philosopher of the late 16th century. His ideas put him in direct conflict with the Catholic Church. This is the story of his ideas and how they got him wrangled with the Church and ultimately led to his execution at the hands of the Inquisition. This book is an easy read and well worth it.

Galileo's Daughter (Dava Sobel)

★★★

This book focuses on the latter part of Galileo's life through the collection of surviving letter written to Galileo by his eldest daughter, who was also his confidante. This book reveals Galileo not just as a scientist, but as a real person, all within the context of the politics and social culture of late 16th to mid 17th century Italy. Though this is a good book, Sobel's other book on this list, Longitude, is a better read.

Longitude (Dava Sobel)

★★★½

A short and well written book about the quest to solve the problem of not getting lost on the open seas, which was one of the greatest scientific problems of the 18th century. This is primarily the story of John Harrison, the man who solved the longitude problem and ultimately won the longitude prize offered by England's Parliament. This is a great story with great writing, interwoven with the history such scientific topics as geography, navigation, astronomy, and clock making. Highly recommended.

Sprezzatura: 50 Ways Italian Genius Shaped the World (Peter D'Epiro and Mary Desmond Pinkowish)

★★½

This book is comprised of 50 stand-alone chapters, arranged chronologically. Some of the topics of particular interest include: The Roman Republic and our own; master builders of the ancient world; the Roman legacy of law; banks, bookkeeping, and the rise of commercial capitalism; Leonardo da Vinci; Andrea Palladio and his "bible" of building; and many others. My rating reflects the fact that some chapters are of little interest, though others are very good.

Europe 101: History and Art for the Traveler (Rick Steves and Gene Openshaw)

★★★

This book was written by a travel guide author, Rick Steves, to help his American readers better appreciate their travels in Europe. Though it's irreverent and opinionated, and corny at times, it is nonetheless a nice overview of

history and art for the traveler. Rather than trying to be authoritative, it is lightly written, easy to read, and a handy overview. Recommended.

II. Documentaries

A History of Britain (BBC & The History Channel, Written and Presented by Simon Schama)

★★★★

This collection is comprised of 15 one-hour documentaries. The quality of the writing, filming, narration, and story selection is exceptional. This is not a static history focused on timelines and lineages, but about people and events that shaped the history of Britain. One of the best documentaries I have every watched. Highly recommended.

Rome: Power and Glory (Questar, Narrated by Peter Coyote)

★★

This 6-part series totaling about 5 hours attempts to present the complete history of Rome from its primitive beginnings, to the peak of its glory, and through its decline. It is an ambitious undertaking that is not done with a lot of polish or sophistication, but is still acceptably interesting. The DVD includes virtual reconstructions of some Roman buildings.

The Roman Empire in the First Century (PBS Empires Series, Narrated by Sigourney Weaver)

★★½

This 4-part series totaling approximately 3 ½ hours focuses on the formative period of the Roman Empire. It tries to cast a wide net and provides anecdotes about emperors, slaves, poets, and so on. Some of the narration is paraphrased from early historians, such as Pliny and Suetonius. This is a good, though not inspired, video collection. Even though I have not rated it highly, I know of no better DVD introduction to the Roman Empire.

The Medici: Godfathers of the Renaissance (PBS Empires Series)

★★★★

This 4-part series totaling approximately 3 ½ hours focuses on the rise of the Medici in Renaissance Florence. It is well written, well filmed, has expert commentary, and is a very cogent and well presented story. This is not only about the Medici, but about the transition from the Dark Ages to the Renaissance. Highly recommended.

Michelangelo: Self Portrait (Home Vision Entertainment)

★★½

This 85 minute documentary attempts to summarize the artistic life of Michelangelo. This documentary, which was filmed in 1989, is based on an earlier documentary that was filmed in 1950. The best part of the DVD is that the original 1950 documentary is also included. The 1950 documentary, titled "The Titan: Story of Michelangelo" won an Academy Award in 1950 and is easily to better of the two films.

The Life of Leonardo DaVinci (Questar)

★★★

This 5-part series totaling approximately 4 ½ hours is a docudrama of the life of Leonardo DaVinci. The original was made in Italy, in Italian, in the 1970s. The Questar version is dubbed in English, which takes a little getting used to since lip-movement does not match the spoken words. The scenery quality and acting is perhaps not up to modern standards, but the story is nonetheless compelling. Though a little corny, it is still an enjoyable way to learn about DaVinci.