The Venetian Empire and its Imperial Piety: Catholic Christianity

Instructor: Sam Miglarese

May 25- June 28, 2014

The course will examine the religious, doctrinal,spiritual and hagiographic traditions of Catholic Christianity as it was lived in the Empire of Venice through religious art as well as current devotional practice, ceremonies and traditions still extant today. Topics will include the place of Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary, the Evangelist Mark and other saints in Catholic life and thinking then and now. Excursions into the churches and art galleries will illustrate the power of the religious sensibilities in imperial Venice. We will study the influence of relics and the history and legends attached to the saints connected to the political history of Venice. We will also use Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice to explore Jewish presence in Venice. Several cultural/religious events, concerts, and field trips are planned. This course will be taught in English by Dr. Sam Miglarese, adjunct instructor in the Religion Department at Duke, and Director of Community Engagement for Duke's Office of Durham and Regional Affairs. He led the Duke in Venice program in Summer 2007 and lived in Italy for six years.

Meals and Accommodations

Students will be housed in double rooms in a dormitory of Venice International University (VIU), located on the scenic island of San Servolo. Each room will have a private bath. Breakfast, lunch, and dinner will be served in VIU's cafeteria Monday through Friday; students will also be given a set of vouchers/meal passes that can be used in the VIU cafeteria and also in a wide network of cafés, restaurants, and supermarkets. The vouchers are valid nationwide, so students can use them while traveling in Italy. There are no kitchen facilities in the dormitory.