Notes for Lecture (Week 2)

* Preamble about the complexities of historical processes.
* What does modernity mean?
  + secularism,
  + rational investigation of nature
  + Increasing skepticism of and lack of reliance on tradition (whether religious, political, aesthetic, etc.)
  + focus on the human rather than the divine
  + A move (in Europe) toward various forms of more or less, popular, democratic government
  + Move from transcendent modes of thinking to immanent modes of thinking
* Politics I: Machiavelli (years)
  + power politics/cynicism (yes and no, not really)
    - the subjects of a principality must be deceived (in order for the prince to maintain his rule in the present circumstances)
    - he wanted this because renaissance Italy, and Florentine city-state in particular, had gone through a oscillatory period of political tumult and relentless upheaval for the better part of three generations, and this was not good for peace and order, something which M. believed necessary above all.
    - He was actually a historian of Livy, a Roman republican political theorist, and his major works were dedicated to theorizing a form of democracy.
    - He wrote The Prince, as a plea to try to become a counselor of the Medici family (and more importantly, to get himself out of exile from Florence for his dangerous political ideas).
  + The Prince, despite the amorality of its appearance, shows the move away from the divine right of kings in political thinking; this is something that all subsequent political theorists will have to contend with.
  + It also shows, though in a completely indirect way, that the originary source of political power, of any political power, is the people—thus he puts the idea of popular sovereignty on the center stage of political concerns, whether you were a democrat or a monarchist. This means that the common association of individuals forms the bedrock of political decision. Thus, every individual has, according to their sphere of influence, a modicum of political power, which—taken en mass—can overturn political orders, that for centuries and millennia previous were thought to be timeless and ordained by the divine.
* ART I: Renaissance
  + Linear Perspective (representation and realism, what is the significance, for rationalization? Imitation of individual experience) and generalized projective geometry
    - Origins: Brunelleschi, Alberti, Dürer
    - map-making, navigation
      * Gerardus Mercator (Mercator projection, 1569)
        + gave paths of navigation in straight lines, making it easier for navies to chart voyages and to understand their locations on the seas.
      * This of course, dovetails with the first major phase of the Colonial project, and not accidentally.
    - A different kind of perspective, developed roughly at the same time, was also used Fortification and war machine diagrams
      * See “soldiers’ perspective”
    - Show Uccello, de la Francesca
    - Diagrams of perspective
* SCIENCE I: Galileo (years)
  + mathematization of nature and the rationalization of metricization of nature (the *ratio*)
    - Diatribe about rationalism
  + Developed precise quantitative techniques of observation by comparing the magnitudes of different processes or extensities (again the ratio).
    - Give example of a formula
    - Experiment: inclined planes and constant rate of acceleration due to gravity.
* PHILOSOPHY I: Descartes (years)
  + Invention of analytic geometry and homogeneous extensional space (Cartesian coordinates)
    - relate back to measurements of natural objects in science and representation of proportion in linear perspective.
  + “Je pense danc je suis” “ego cogito ergo sum” “I think therefore I am”: doubt and certainty (privileging individual experience and the basis of apodictic knowledge)
  + Written in vernacular
* SCI/PHI II: Newton/Leibniz
  + Unified celestial and earthly mechanics using the techniques, developed by Galileo and Descartes, and invented his own, in particular, the calculus, which allowed him to describe laws, not just for constant and linear relationships, but rates of change, and areas under curves. It gave the first precise, and mathematically functional notion of infinity in the infinitesimal (along with the point at infinity of projective geometry).
* ART II (Baroque art)
  + focus on dynamicism, movement, gesture, curvilinear form and (why? The success of the individual personalities opposed to archetypal exemplars).
  + Chiaroscuro (what about that?)
  + Desargues’ projective geometry (1600s)