

Stanford



Sarah Prodan

Assistant Professor of French and Italian

Bio

BIO

Sarah Prodan is an Italianist, an early modernist and a Michelangelo scholar. Her primary research and teaching contributions center on Italian literature and cultural history of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Her first monograph, *Michelangelo's Christian Mysticism: Spirituality, Poetry and Art in Sixteenth-Century Italy* (Cambridge University Press, 2014), was awarded the Jeanne and Aldo Scaglione Publication Award for a Manuscript in Italian Literary Studies by the Modern Language Association in 2013. Literary, cultural and historical in scope, this study considers the Florentine artist's poetics and aesthetics in light of medieval and Renaissance Augustinianism, lay religious culture, and the Italian Reformation, respectively, to provide a more nuanced understanding of Michelangelo's spirituality and how it functioned.

Her current book project, *Poetics of Piety in Early Modern Italy and Beyond*, builds on this earlier work to consider the ways in which male and female poets of devotional verse engaged the Word in text, image, and imagination in the sixteenth century. Combining diachronic and synchronic approaches to the study of early modern Italian verse, this project examines relations among religious practice and poetic form in the pre-Tridentine and post-Tridentine periods.

Other book-length projects include *Friendship and Sociability in Premodern Europe: Contexts, Concepts and Expressions* (Toronto: CRRS, 2014), a co-edited volume that explores ideas and instances of friendship in premodern Europe through a well-ordered series of investigations into amity in discrete social and cultural contexts related to some of the most salient moments and expressions of European history and civilization: the courtly love tradition, Renaissance humanism; the Reformation, the Counter-Reformation and the attendant confessionalization and wars of religion; Jesuit missions; the colonization of America; and lastly, expanding trade patterns in the Age of Discovery.

Prior to joining Stanford, Prodan was a postdoctoral research fellow in the Department of History at Harvard University and at the Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies at Victoria University in the University of Toronto, where she designed and taught early modern cultural history courses and lectured on Italian language and literature.

In parallel to her scholarly pursuits, Prodan is completing a work of historical fiction inspired by her academic research. Taking the dramatic events of the French invasion of Italy in the fall of 1494 as its context, *Imminence: Florence, 1494* recounts the riveting and tumultuous history of the dangerously divided Florentine city-state through the experiences of a lay female visionary temporarily resident in an elite nunnery tied to the highest echelons of political power. An imagined female story seamlessly inserted into a famously documented male history, *Imminence* weaves strands of verisimilitude with threads of reality, to offer a tapestry of fiction and

non-fiction that touches on persistent human challenges – personal, social, and political. An exercise in empathic historical imagination, this novel explores women’s political, social, cultural, and religious history during the exciting and pivotal moment of the Italian Renaissance.

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

- Assistant Professor, French and Italian

Teaching

COURSES

2020-21

- Between Gods and Beasts: The Struggle for Humanity: ESF 18 (Aut)
- Between Gods and Beasts: The Struggle for Humanity: ESF 18A (Aut)
- The Italian Renaissance and the Path to Modernity: ITALIAN 128 (Win)
- Word and Image: ARTHIST 265A, ARTHIST 465A, COMPLIT 225, ITALIAN 265, ITALIAN 365 (Aut)

2019-20

- Michelangelo: Gateway to Early Modern Italy: ITALIAN 237, ITALIAN 337 (Spr)
- The Good Life: Renaissance Perspectives on Perennial Questions: ITALIAN 142 (Aut)
- The Italian Renaissance and the Path to Modernity: ITALIAN 128 (Win)