

HIST 334

Reading Guide: Petrarch's Letters

1. How does Petrarch portray himself in the letters? How multidimensional a figure is the Petrarch that emerges from the writings?
2. Is Petrarch a follower of Cicero or of Augustine? Is he a man of letters beholden to the classics of antiquity or a man of faith held in check by his religious convictions?
3. What do the writings of Petrarch tell us about the boundaries between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance as historical periods? In what period does Petrarch belong?
4. Why do you think that Petrarch writes letters to individuals from the classical past and to posterity?