

GONZAGA-IN-FLORENCE

PHIL 472\ Art 466: RENAISSANCE PHILOSOPHY OF ART Spring 2010.

Dr. Francesco Vossilla

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The Spring Semester 2010 seminar on Renaissance Philosophy of Art will introduce Gonzaga- in-Florence students to the interdependence of philosophy and art in the Italian Renaissance and will focus mainly on Michelangelo Buonarroti.

To appreciate Michelangelo's great achievements in sculpture, painting, and architecture students will be exposed to the thought of philosophers and artists who shaped the development of Florentine Humanism and influenced Michelangelo: from Plato, Aristotle and Plotinus to Dante, Brunelleschi, Ghiberti, Donatello, Alberti, Marsilio Ficino and Pico della Mirandola.

To assist students in achieving a rigorous interrogation of the meaning and value of beauty and art in Renaissance Italy we will fully approach Buonarroti's art theories. To this end, special study will be made of how specific moral, social, religious and philosophical tendencies can be read from Michelangelo's art as well as of his contemporaries such as Leonardo, Dürer, Bandinelli.

A list of reading assignments will be handed weekly. A detailed list of images and topics will be handed weekly.

The **Mid-Term** examination will regard Michelangelo's art and the art theories of Plato, Aristotle and Plotinus, and the **Final** will regard Michelangelo's art as well as his theories.

Course requirements

- 1) Attendance at scheduled classes.
- 2) Careful reading of the assigned pages prior to class sessions
- 3) Students are expected to participate in class discussions
- 4) A 5 to 8 pages short **essay** expressing your feelings about the **Role of Art and Beauty in Contemporary Life** due on Thursday, April 9th.
- 5) A 5 to 8 pages **paper** due on Monday, April 22nd. This paper should involve an interface between the philosophy of the Italian Renaissance, Michelangelo's own theories and his works of sculpture, painting or architecture.

Possible choices

- A) A visit to Piazza della Signoria and the Accademia. The student will research the history of Michelangelo's *David* as well as its political meaning. Reproductions of the art works explained and ticket stub must be included.
- B) A visit to the Accademia, analyzing Michelangelo's *Slaves*. Student should research their history, subject, as well as Michelangelo's sculpture theories. The ticket stub and reproductions must be included.
- C) Michelangelo's New Sacresty. Student will research and write on the sculptures and the architecture of S.Lorenzo Sacrestia Nuova. Reproductions of the art works explained and ticket stub must be included.

January 11-14

Presentation of the Syllabus. Forming influences behind Michelangelo's art: an introduction

Plato's philosophy of art (1)

Plato's philosophy of art (2).

Reading assignment: Plato, from *Republic (II, X)* in **Philosophies of Art and Beauty**, pp. 8-14, 30-34; from *Ion and Symposium* in **Philosophies of Art and Beauty**, pp. 53-57, 75-77

January 18-21

Plato's philosophy of art (3). Plato and Aristotle

Aristotle's philosophy of art (1)

Aristotle's philosophy of art (2).

Reading assignment: Aristotle, from *Nicomachean Ethics, Rethoric, Metaphysics, Poetics*, in **Philosophy of Art and Beauty**, pp. 93-94, 96, 99-101, 109-112

January 25-28

The ordeal of sculpture (1)

The ordeal of sculpture(2)

Design, unifier of all arts.

Reading assignment: Plotinus, from *The Enneads*, in **Philosophies of Art and Beauty**, pp.143-154; Paul Kristeller, *The Platonic Academy of Florence*, in *Philosophy of Art Reader I*, pp. 72-76

February 1-4

Plotinus's philosophy of art

Plotinus's philosophy of art (2). Augustine

Marsilio Ficino's philosophy of art.

Reading assignment: Marsilio Ficino, from *De Amore*, in **Philosophies of Art and Beauty**, pp.207-210. Paul Kristeller, *Ficino's Historical Position* in **Renaissance Philosophy of Art Reader**, pp.62-71

February 8-11

Michelangelo's early works (1)

Michelangelo's early works (2)

Girolamo Savonarola and the visual arts.

Reading assignment: Savonarola, *Sermons*, in **Renaissance Philosophy of Art Reader**, pp.149-150

February 15-18

Forming influences behind Michelangelo's early works

The *Baccus*

The *Pietà*.

Reading assignment: E. Wind, *A Bacchic Mystery by Michelangelo*, in Wallace William E., *Michelangelo Selected Scholarship in English*, New York 1995, I, pp.201-211.

February 22-25

Class discussion on the Social Role of Art and Beauty for You (1)

Class discussion on the Social Role of Art and Beauty for You (2)

Mid-term examination.

March 1-4

Pico della Mirandola.

Michelangelo's *David* (1)

Michelangelo's *David* (2).

Reading assignment: Pico della Mirandola, *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, in **Renaissance Philosophy of Art Reader**, pp.120-140; Charles Seymour, *Homo magnus et albus* in: Wallace William E., *Michelangelo Selected Scholarship in English*, New York 1995, I, pp.278-287

March 8-11

Michelangelo's *Slaves*

Andrea Sansovino, Iacopo Sansovino, Leonardo and Rustici

Baccio Bandinelli and Michelangelo

Reading assignment: Michelangelo, *Selected Poems*, in **Renaissance Philosophy of Art Reader**, pp.194-202

March 22-25

The New Sacristy (1)

The New Sacristy (2)

Michelangelo's frescoes in the Sistine Chapel (1)

March 29- April 1

Michelangelo's frescoes in the Sistine Chapel (2)

Baccio Bandinelli and Michelangelo. The Florence civil war and the *Hercules*.

Reading assignment: Blunt Anthony, *The Social Position of the Artist*, in **Renaissance Philosophy of Art Reader**, pp.188-193

Michelangelo's faith and mysticism. "La riforma cattolica"

Reading assignment: John W. Dixon, *Christology...*, in Wallace William E., *Michelangelo Selected Scholarship in English*, New York 1995, I, pp.295-319.

April 6-8

Michelangelo's theories and the development of architecture and sculpture in the 16th Century (1)

Michelangelo's theories and the development of architecture and sculpture in the 16th Century (2).

Classical themes and veneration of classic art

April 12-15

The *Last Judgement*

Beauty and realism. Moral nature and function of art

Leonardo, Dürer, Michelangelo on Beauty

April 19-22

Class discussion on the Social Role of Art and Beauty for You (3)

Review for final examination

Final examination.

Readings:

Robb Nesca A. *Neoplatonism of the Italian Renaissance*, New York 1968, pp. 212-238, 239-270

Kristeller P. O., *Ficino's Historical Position*, in *Philosophy of Art Reader I*, pp.62-71

Kristeller P. O., *The Platonic Academy of Florence*, in *Philosophy of Art Reader I*, pp. 72-76

Blunt Anthony, *The Social Position of the Artist*, in I, pp.188-193

Michelangelo, *Selected Poems*, in *Philosophy of Art Reader I*, pp.194-202

Hartt, F. and Wilkins D, G. *History of Italian Renaissance Art*, Fifth Edition, New York 2003

Hartt, F., *Michelangelo. The complete sculpture*, New York 1976.

H. Hibbard, *Michelangelo*, New York 1974

Hersey, G.L., *High Renaissance art in St. Peter's and the Vatican*, Chicago 1993, pp. 177-224, 249-276

W. Holligworth, *Patronage in sixteenth century Italy*, London 1996, pp. 7-64

Wallace William E., *Michelangelo Selected Scholarship in English*, New York 1995, I, pp. 1-6, 81-121, 201-215, 278-290, 291-309.

Selected readings

from Plato, Plotinus, Marsilio Ficino, Savonarola (in *Philosophies of Art and Beauty* and *Philosophy of Art Reader*)