

GONZAGA-IN-FLORENCE SYLLABUS - Spring 2008

Course: PHIL 472 / VART 466: Philosophy of Art
Credits: 3 Credits
Instructor: Dr. Francesco Vossila



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COURSE DESCRIPTION

The Spring Semester 2008 seminar on the 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.

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

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 3th.
- 5) A 5 to 8 pages final paper due on, April 14th. 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.

COURSE SCHEDULE

January 7-10

- Monday 7th -----
Presentation of the Syllabus. Forming influences behind Michelangelo's art: an introduction
- Tuesday 8th
Plato's philosophy of art (1).
- Thursday 10th
Plato's philosophy of art (2).. Reading assignment: Plato, from *Republic (II, X)* in **Philosophies of Art and Beauty**, pp. 8-14, 30-34.

January 14-17

Monday 14th Plato's philosophy of art (3). Reading assignment: Plato, from *Ion and Symposium* in **Philosophies of Art and Beauty**, pp. 53-57, 75-77.

Tuesday 15th Aristotle's philosophy of art (1).

Thursday 17th 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 22-24

Monday 21st The ordeal of sculpture (1).

Tuesday 22nd The ordeal of sculpture(2).

Thursday 24th 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

January 28- January 31

Monday 28th Plotinus's philosophy of art.

Tuesday 29th Plotinus's philosophy of art (2). Augustine

Thursday 31st 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 4-7

Monday 4th Michelangelo's early works (1)

Tuesday 5th Michelangelo's early works (2)

Thursday 7th Forming influences behind Michelangelo's early works. Girolamo Savonarola and the visual arts. Reading assignment: Savonarola, *Sermons*, in **Renaissance Philosophy of Art Reader**, pp.149-150

February 12-14

Monday 11st The Quattrocento Background for Michelangelo

Tuesday 12nd The *Bacchus*.

Thursday 14th 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 18-21

Monday 18th Class discussion on the Social Role of Art and Beauty for You (1).

Tuesday 19th Class discussion on the Social Role of Art and Beauty for You (2).

Thursday 21st Mid-term examination.

February 25- February 28

Monday 25th Pico della Mirandola. Reading assignment: Pico della Mirandola, *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, in **Renaissance Philosophy of Art Reader**, pp.120-140

Tuesday 26th Michelangelo's *David* (1)

Thursday 28th Michelangelo's *David* (2). Charles Seymour, *Homo magnus et albus* in: Wallace William E., *Michelangelo Selected Scholarship in English*, New York 1995, I, pp.278-287.

March 3-6

Monday 3rd Michelangelo's *Slaves*

Tuesday 4th Andrea Sansovino, Iacopo Sansovino, Leonardo and Rustici

Thursday 6th Baccio Bandinelli and Michelangelo: Reading assignment: Michelangelo, *Selected Poems*, in **Renaissance Philosophy of Art Reader**, pp.194-202.

March 10-13

Monday 10 th	The New Sacristy
Tuesday 11 st	The New Sacristy.
Thursday 13 ^d	Michelangelo's frescoes in the Sistine Chapel (1)

March 17-20

Monday 17 th	Michelangelo's frescoes in the Sistine Chapel (2)
Tuesday 18 th	Michelangelo's faith and mysticism. "La riforma cattolica" Reading assignment: John W. Dixon, <i>Christology...</i> , in Wallace William E., <i>Michelangelo Selected Scholarship in English</i> , New York 1995, I, pp.295-319.

March 24-27

Monday 24 th	Michelangelo's theories and the development of architecture and sculpture in the 16 th Century (1).
Tuesday 25 th	Baccio Bandinelli and Michelangelo. The Florence civil war and the Hercules (1)
Thursday 27 th	Baccio Bandinelli and Michelangelo. The Florence civil war and the Hercules (2) Reading assignment: Blunt Anthony, <i>The Social Position of the Artist</i> , in Philosophy of Art Reader I , pp.188-193

March 31-April 3

Monday 31 st	Michelangelo's theories and the development of architecture and sculpture in the 16 th Century (2).
Tuesday 1 st	Classical themes and veneration of classic art.
Thursday 3 ^d	Class discussion on the Social Role of Art and Beauty for You (3).

April 7-10

Monday 7 th	The <i>Last Judgement</i> .
Tuesday 8 th	Beauty and realism
Thursday 10 th	Leonardo, Dürer, Michelangelo on Beauty.

April 14-17

Monday 14 th	Moral nature and function of art
Tuesday 15 th	Review for final examination
Thursday 17 th	Final examination.

READINGS

- 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.
- 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

Selected readings

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