Course Description:
The Fall Semester 2017 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 in Michelangelo’s art.

Learning Outcomes:
At the completion of the course, students will be able to
A) Discriminate how art and beauty are recurrent concerns of Western philosophy, since our philosophers and artists (ancient as well as Christians, classical or modern) have monitored artistic creativity for their exploration of the human situation and reality
B) Identify and compare different historical approaches to art and beauty in due order and succession (from ancient Greece to Michelangelo’s renaissance Florence)
C) Analyze the interdependence of philosophy and art as historically useful to the development of the human person.
D) Evaluate in which manner the interdependence of philosophy and art concerns values like rationality and creative freedom, and emphasizes both the creative opportunities as well as the limitations of the human beings.
E) Understand the specific moral, social, religious and philosophical tendencies that can be read in Florentine art, and how those tendencies constituted a rebirth of classical ideas of Plato, Aristotle and Plotinus, as this appears clear in philosophers like Marsilio Ficino and Pico della Mirandola, poets like Dante, Petrarca and Boccaccio, artists like Alberti, Leonardo, and Michelangelo.
F) Become aware of a possible integration between Western aesthetics with the origin and principles of Jesuit culture and education.

A list of reading assignments will be handed weekly. A detailed list of images will be handed at the beginning of the semester.
**Course requirements**

1) Attendance at scheduled classes.
2) Careful reading of the assigned pages prior to class sessions, and thorough review of class notes.
3) Because the course will be conducted in an interdisciplinary seminar style, students are expected to participate imaginatively and effectively in every discussion. The professor will distribute, in advance of some seminar sessions, a set of questions that will serve to focus the readings and guide the discussions. Students are expected to prepare responses to these questions prior to the pertinent class session.
4) A 3 to 5 pages short essay expressing your feelings about the Role of Art and Beauty in Contemporary Life.
5) A 6 to 9 Pages Final Project. Each paper, or project, 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.

All academic work must be completed on time. No work will be accepted late or after the programs ends. On the delivery date hard copies typed in standard format are to be handed in to the professor at the end of class.

Standard format: Title, Times New Roman 12, 2 line spacing, notes and bibliography. Essays submitted late will receive a grade penalty as follows: 1 day 1 letter grade (e.g., A- to B-), 2 days 2 letter grades (e.g., A- to C-), more than 2 days grade of 0 / F on the assignment.

A plagiarized assignment/paper, research project, etc will be graded 0 (zero) and sent to the Main Campus accompanied by a report.

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Mid-Term and Final examinations are comprehensive written exams. Both Midterm and Final consist of two sections: slide identifications with comments and a longer essay question. The Mid-Term (Oct. 26th.) will regard Michelangelo’s art and the art theories of Plato, Aristotle and Plotinus; the Final will regard Michelangelo’s art, as well as his theories about art and beauty.

Final examinations must be administered only during the week indicated in the GIF Academic Calendar (Dec.15th.-20th.), and only on the day and at the time
indicated in the Final Exam Schedule, which will be published by the Registrar's Office.

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Grading System
Research papers 30%
Midterm Exam 20%
Final Exam 40%
Attendance and Participation 10%

There is to be no eating during class. Cell phones must be switched off during class. Laptop computers may not be used during class to take

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Week 1 (Sept. 18th, 19th, 21st)
Presentation of the Syllabus. Forming influences behind Michelangelo's art and theories: an introduction.
Plato's philosophy of art (1).
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

Week 2 (Sept. 25th, 26th, 28th)
Plato's philosophy of art (2). Plato and Aristotle.
Aristotle's philosophy of art (1).
Aristotle's philosophy of art (2).

Week 3 (Oct. 2nd, 3rd, 5th)
The ordeal of sculpture.
Design, unifier of all arts.
Reading assignment: Plotinus, form 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

Week 4 (Oct. 9th, 10th, 12th)
Plotinus's philosophy of art.
Plotinus's philosophy of art (2).
Marsilio Ficino's philosophy of art.

**Week 5** (Oct. 16th, 17th, 19th)
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

**Week 6** (Oct. 23rd, 24th, 26th)
Forming influences behind Michelangelo’s early works. Dante. Alberti.
The Bacchus. The body of a god. The Pietà. The body of God.
**Mid-term examination (Oct. 26th).**

**Week 7** (Oct. 30th, 31st, Nov. 2nd)
**Class discussion** on the Social Role of Art and Beauty for You
Pico della Mirandola’s philosophy
A new dignity for artists.
Reading assignment: Pico della Mirandola, *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, in *Renaissance Philosophy of Art Reader*, pp.120-140

**Week 8** (Nov. 6th, 7th, 9th)
Michelangelo’s *David*.
Art and politics in Renaissance Italy

**Week 9** (Nov. 13th, 14th, 16th)
Michelangelo’s *Slaves* and Neo-Platonism
**Week 10 (Nov. 27th, 28th, 30th)**

**Week 11 (Dec. 4th, 5th, 7th)**

**Week 12 (Dec. 11th, 12th, 14th)**

**Week 13 (Dec.15th - 20th)**
Final exams

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

**Selected readings**

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