

ART 356-01, Michelangelo, Spring 2008

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Office Hours: TTH 12:30-2:00
Or by Appointment

Art 356: Michelangelo
Spring 2008
TTH 9:30-10:45

Course Objectives and Description

This course is designed as a rigorous study of the art of Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475-1564). It will be conducted partly as lecture and partly as a seminar through which students develop their own expertise in particular areas of Michelangelo scholarship. Various methodological approaches will be introduced, and students will grapple with the most current issues in Michelangelo studies and acquire basic research skills necessary for further research in art history. Through lectures, the instructor will acquaint students with an overview of the artist's life and career. Students will supplement these lectures with class presentations on specific works of art. Extensive reading and original interpretation of difficult material is expected.

Note:

sem·inar: a group of advanced students studying under a professor with each doing original research and all exchanging results through reports and discussions
Webster's Collegiate Dictionary

Students in this class **MUST** be prepared to do original research, exchange their results articulately, and engage in group discussion.

Required Textbooks:

- Anthony Hughes, *Michelangelo*
- *Michelangelo: Life, Letters, and Poetry*, trans. By George Bull and Peter Porter
- Additional readings as assigned.

Optional Books

- Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the Artists*, any translation of 1568 edition (with important chapter on Michelangelo). A copy is on reserve.
- William E. Wallace, *Michelangelo: The Complete Sculpture, Painting, Architecture* (this useful book is a remainder available from discounters very cheaply and is highly recommended). A copy is on reserve.
- William Wallace, ed., *Michelangelo: Selected Readings* (principal articles from 5-volume set in handy paperback edition). The full set is on reserve.

Grading:

Final grades will be based on the following:

- 2 Class Presentations (25% each for a total of 50%)
- Midterm Exam (25%)
- Final Exam (25%)

Further instructions on assignments will be provided. All exams and assignments are to be completed in accordance with the honor code regulations followed at Rhodes College. Excessive absences (more than 2) may result in a lowering of the final grade.

Schedule of Classes

The following is the intended schedule. Modifications are usually necessary, especially depending on the length of individual presentations and student preferences for discussion.

Secondary Readings, unless otherwise specified, are from William Wallace, ed., *Michelangelo: Selected Scholarship in English*, 5 vols., New York, 1995. All five volumes are on reserve in the library. Some articles, but not all, are also available through full-text online databases such as JSTOR. I have put links to those I am aware of. Do not wait until the last minute to find out if articles are available online.

Primary Readings: All students must be prepared to discuss these selections

Secondary Readings: Students must be prepared to discuss one of the listed readings, either assigned or chosen.

January

10 **Introduction**

15 **Who Was Michelangelo?: Sources, Historiography, and Current Scholarship**

Primary Readings:

Hughes, chapter 1

Secondary Readings:

Johannes Wilde, "Michelangelo, Vasari, and Condivi"

or

Paul Barolsky, "The Metamorphoses of Michelangelo"

<http://www.vqronline.org/articles/1992/spring/barolsky-metamorphoses-michelangelo/>

17 **Florence and the Arts in 1475**

Primary Readings:

"Life of Michelangelo Buonarroti by Ascanio Condivi" (skim this version in *Michelangelo: Life, Letters, and Poetry*)

22 **The Earliest Works by Michelangelo**

Head of a Faun, Lost

***Battle of the Centaurs** (ca.1489-92), Casa Buonarroti, Florence

***Madonna of the Stairs** (ca.1489-92), Casa Buonarroti, Florence

Secondary Readings:

Colin Eisler, "The Madonna of the Steps: Problems of Date and Style"

24 **The Earliest Controversies**

Hercules (1493), Lost

***Crucifix for Santo Spirito** (ca.1492), Casa Buonarroti, Florence

***Angel, St Petronius, and St Proclus** (ca.1495), San Domenico, Bologna

Sleeping Cupid (ca.1495-6), Lost

Primary Readings:

Hughes, chapter 2

Secondary Readings:

[The Crucifix from Santo Spirito and the Crucifixes of Taddeo Curradi](#) by [Margrit Lisner](#), *The Burlington Magazine* > [Vol. 122, No. 933](#) (Dec., 1980), pp. 812-819

[Michelangelo and the Eye of the Beholder: The Early Bologna Sculptures](#) by Ellen L. Longworth, *Artibus et Historiae*, Vol. 23, No. 46. (2002), pp. 77-82.

29 From Florence to Rome

***Bacchus** (1496-98), Bargello Museum, Florence

***New York Cupid**, French Consulate, New York

Primary Readings:

Letters: 1 and 2

Secondary Readings:

[A Marble in Manhattan: The Case for Michelangelo](#) by [Kathleen Weil-Garris Brandt](#), *The Burlington Magazine* > [Vol. 138, No. 1123](#) (Oct., 1996), pp. 644-659

Detlef Heikamp, "The youth of Michelangelo: the New York "Archer" reconsidered," *Apollo*, 460, 2000, pp. 27-36.

[Michelangelo's Reflections on Bacchus](#) by Luba Freedman, *Artibus et Historiae*, Vol. 24, No. 47. (2003), pp. 121-135.

31 Rome: Fame Arrives

***Vatican (Rome) Pietà** (1498-1500), St. Peter's, Rome

Secondary Readings:

William E. Wallace, "Michelangelo's Rome *Pietà*: Altarpiece or Grave Memorial?"

February

5

Controversy and Connoisseurship

***Entombment Painting**, National Gallery, London

***Manchester Madonna**, National Gallery, London

***Piccolomini Altar** (1501-04), Siena Cathedral

***Bruges Madonna** (1501-04), Notre-Dame, Bruges

Secondary Readings:

Michael Hirst, "The Entombment," in *Making and Meaning: The Young Michelangelo* by Michael Hirst and Jill Dunkerton, pp. 57-71. (Book on reserve)

7 Florence and Il Gigante

***David** (1501-4), Accademia Museum, Florence

David Model, Private Collection, Switzerland

Primary Readings:

Hughes, chapter 3

Secondary Readings:

Charles Seymour, Jr., "'Homo Magnus et Albus' The Quattrocento Background for Michelangelo's *David* of 1501-4"

David Summers, "David's Scowl"

12 The Three Tondi

- ***Taddei Tondo** (ca.1504), Royal Academy, London
- ***Pitti Tondo** (ca.1504), Bargello Museum, Florence
- ***Doni Tondo** (ca.1504), Uffizi Gallery, Florence

Secondary Readings:

[The Doni Madonna by Michelangelo: An Iconographic Study](#) by [Mirella Levi d'Ancona](#), *The Art Bulletin* > [Vol. 50, No. 1](#) (Mar., 1968), pp. 43-50.

14 Michelangelo versus Leonardo

- ***Battle of Cascina** (1504), Originally for Palazzo Vecchio, Florence
- ***St. Matthew** (ca.1504-8), Accademia Museum, Florence

Secondary Readings:

Cecil Gould, "Michelangelo: Battle of Cascina"

[The Dating of Michelangelo's St Matthew](#) by [Michaël J. Amy](#), *The Burlington Magazine* > [Vol. 142, No. 1169](#) (Aug., 2000), pp. 493-496

19 The Sistine Chapel: Style and Interpretation

- ***Sistine Chapel Ceiling** (1508-12), Vatican
- Style
Interpretation

Primary Readings:

Hughes, chapter 4
Poems: p. 139
Letters: 3-9

Secondary Readings:

[Who's Who in Michelangelo's Creation of Adam: A Chronology of the Picture's Reluctant Self-Revelation](#) by [Leo Steinberg](#), *The Art Bulletin* > [Vol. 74, No. 4](#) (Dec., 1992), pp. 552-566 AND ["Who's Who in Michelangelo's Creation of Adam" Continued](#) by [Marcia Hall](#); [Leo Steinberg](#), *The Art Bulletin* > [Vol. 75, No. 2](#) (Jun., 1993), pp. 340-344.

21 Mid-term Exam

Note that I will be at the College Art Association Conference during this class and will have the exam administered in my absence.

26 The Sistine Chapel Ceiling: The Controversy of Restoration

Viewing of video on restoration

- ***Sistine Chapel Ceiling** (1508-12), Vatican

Secondary Readings:

David Cast, "Finishing the Sistine"

James Beck, "The Final Layer," *Art Bulletin*, LXX, 1988, 502-3.

[The Final Layer: "L'ultima mano" on Michelangelo's Sistine Ceiling](#) by [James Beck](#), *The Art Bulletin* > [Vol. 70, No. 3](#) (Sep., 1988), pp. 502-503 AND

["L'ultima mano" on the Sistine Ceiling](#) by [Frederick Hartt](#)
The Art Bulletin > [Vol. 71, No. 3](#) (Sep., 1989), pp. 508-509
Kathleen Brandt, "Twenty-five Questions" (Handout)

- 28 The Tomb of Julius II**
Tomb Projects of Julius II (1505-1545), Unfinished
***Rebellious Slave** and **Dying Slave** (ca. 1510-16), Louvre, Paris
***St Matthew**, Accademia, Florence

Secondary Readings:

[Michelangelo's Unfinished Works](#) by [Juergen Schulz](#), *The Art Bulletin* > [Vol. 57, No. 3](#) (Sep., 1975), pp. 366-373

Spring Recess

March

- 11 The Tomb of Julius II**
***Moses** (1513-1515), San Pietro in Vincoli, Rome
***Florence Slaves** (ca.1520-30), Accademia Museum, Florence
***Rachel and Leah** (1542-55), San Pietro in Vincoli, Rome

Secondary Readings:

[Michelangelo's Moses, dal di sotto in sù](#) by [Earl E. Rosenthal](#), *The Art Bulletin*
> [Vol. 46, No. 4](#) (Dec., 1964), pp. 544-550.

- 13 Forgotten Works**
***Model for San Lorenzo Façade** (ca.1517), Casa Buonarroti, Florence
***Risen Christ** (1519-20), Santa Maria Sopra Minerva, Rome
***Victory** (ca.1527-30), Palazzo Vecchio, Florence

Primary Readings:

Hughes, Chapter 5

Secondary Readings:

Johannes Wilde, "Michelangelo's 'Victory'"

[The First Version of Michelangelo's Christ for S. Maria Sopra Minerva](#) by
Irene Baldriga, *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 142, No. 1173. (Dec., 2000), pp.
740-745.

- 18 The Medici Chapel**
***Medici Chapel Architecture** (1519-34), San Lorenzo, Florence
***Medici Tomb Statues** (1520-34), San Lorenzo, Florence
***Medici Madonna and Saints** (1524-34) San Lorenzo, Florence

Primary Readings:

Hughes, Chapter 6

Letters: 10-21

"The Breasts of 'Night': Michelangelo as Oncologist" by J.J. Stark and J.K.
Nelson, *New England Journal of Medicine* (Handout)

Secondary Readings:

Frederick Hartt, "The Meaning of Michelangelo's Medici Chapel"
Creighton E. Gilbert, "Texts and Contexts of the Medici Chapel"
[True Light Shining: vs. Obscurantism in the Study of Michelangelo's New Sacristy](#) by Richard C. Trexler, *Artibus et Historiae*, Vol. 21, No. 42. (2000), pp. 101-117.

Easter Recess

- 25 **Michelangelo and the Medici**
***Laurentian Library** (ca.1524-34), San Lorenzo, Florence

Secondary Readings:

Ralph Lieberman, "Michelangelo's Design for the Biblioteca Laurenziana"

- 27 **Some Forgotten and Controversial Works**
Crouching Boy (ca.1530), Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg
***Apollo/David** (ca.1530), Bargello Museum, Florence
***Leda**, Lost

Secondary Readings:

Jonathan Katz Nelson, "The Florentine 'Venus and Cupid': A heroic female nude and the power of Love", in *Venus and Love: Michelangelo and the New Ideal of Beauty*, pp. 27-63

April

- 1 **Michelangelo's Sexuality and His Great "Loves"**
***Drawings for Tommaso De' Cavalieri** (ca.1530-49)
***Drawings for Vittoria Colonna** (ca.1530-49)

Primary Readings:

Hughes, Chapter 7
Poems: 140-152 (Cavalieri) and 153-157 (Colonna)
Letters: 22-28

Secondary Readings:

James M. Saslow, "Michelangelo: sculpture, sex, and gender," in Sarah Blake McHam, ed., *Looking at Italian Renaissance Sculpture*, Cambridge, 1998, 223-245.

[Michelangelo's Dream](#) by Maria Ruvoldt, *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 85, No. 1. (Mar., 2003), pp. 86-113.

- 3 **The Last Judgment**
***Last Judgment** (1534-41), Sistine Chapel, Vatican
Interpretation
Style and Restoration

Secondary Readings:

Marcia B. Hall, "Introduction," in *Michelangelo's Last Judgment*, Cambridge, 2005, pp. 1-50.

- 8 **Of Popes and Politics**
***Bust of Brutus** (ca.1539-42), Bargello Museum, Florence

***Pauline Chapel Frescos** (ca.1542-50), Pauline Chapel, Vatican

Primary Readings:

Hughes, Chapter 8

Secondary Readings:

Charles de Tolnay, "Michelangelo's Political Opinions"

William E. Wallace, "Narrative and Religious Expression in Michelangelo's Pauline Chapel"

10 Reflections on Death and Dying

***Florence Pietà** (ca.1547-55), Museo dell Opera del Duomo, Florence

<http://www.research.ibm.com/pieta/>

Secondary Readings:

[Michelangelo's Florentine Pietà: The Missing Leg Twenty Years After](#) by [Leo Steinberg](#), *The Art Bulletin* > [Vol. 71, No. 3](#) (Sep., 1989), pp. 480-505.

[Michelangelo's Tomb in Rome: Observations on the "Pietà" in Florence and the "Rondanini Pietà"](#) by Philipp Fehl, *Artibus et Historiae*, Vol. 23, No. 45. (2002), pp. 9-27.

15 Michelangelo's Architecture in Rome

***Capitoline Hill** (ca.1538), Rome

***Porta Pia, Rome** (ca.1561), Rome

Primary Readings:

Hughes, Chapter 9

Secondary Readings:

[Michelangelo and the Porta Pia](#) by [Elisabeth B. Mac Dougall](#), *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* > [Vol. 19, No. 3](#) (Oct., 1960), pp. 97-108.

17 St. Peter's Before, During, and After Michelangelo

***St. Peter's** (1546-64), Vatican (Rome)

Primary Readings:

James S. Ackerman, "Michelangelo's 'Theory' of Architecture"

22 More Meditations on Death

***Rondanini Pietà** (1555-1564), Castello Sforzesco, Milan

***Late Crucifixion Drawings** (ca.1540-1560)

Palestrina Pietà

Primary Readings:

Poems: pp. 158-160

"Life of Michelangelo by Giorgio Vasari" (skim any 1568 edition)

Secondary Readings:

Paul Joannides, "'Primitivism' in the Late Drawings of Michelangelo: The Master's Construction of an Old-age Style"

24 The Final Chapter
Michelangelo's Monument
***Letters and Poetry of Michelangelo**

Primary Readings:

Hughes, Chapter 10
Selections of Michelangelo's Poetry (Handouts)
Letters: 29-51

Secondary Readings:

Creighton Gilbert, "Translator's Foreword to the Second Edition"
[What Is Expressed in Michelangelo's "Non-Finito"](#) by Creighton E. Gilbert,
Artibus et Historiae, Vol. 24, No. 48. (2003), pp. 57-64.

*These works are those to be chosen for individual student presentations. Each student will choose one before Spring break and one after spring break.

Presentations

Presentations will follow a seminar format. Students will be largely responsible for preparing the material for discussion each week. Students will develop the skills necessary to synthesize vast amounts of information and make original constructive use of that material. It will be labor intensive, especially at first, but students will soon acquire increasingly efficient means of preparation and presentation. The course will focus on the life and works of Michelangelo, but keep in mind that the class is as much about methodology and critical analysis as it is about the artist. For the presentations, students should cover the general topics that follow:

The Issue and Its Significance

Present the chosen topic and discuss its importance. Though a topic may focus on a single work, one must be able to see the big picture. Do not take anything for granted. In effect, you must justify the validity of your topic. You must be able to answer why we (or anyone else) should be interested in the topic.

Historiography

Students must discuss previous responses to the topic and the adequacy (or inadequacy) of those approaches. For this portion, students will prepare a bibliography as discussed below. In essence, think of this portion as presenting a report on the State of the Research.

Original Analysis

After reviewing the issue, students should be prepared to make an original contribution to the discussion. In other words, students must develop a thesis, hypothesis, observation, or approach whereby one may further engage with the issue. This need not entail an earth-shattering conclusion, but merely suggesting possibilities for further exploration. Think about where the interested scholar may go from here. Can conclusions be drawn? If not, where are the most exciting avenues for further research? What new methods can be applied? How may new methods change the significance of the issue? How is the big picture affected by changes in approaches to the topic? Ultimately, these are the questions most central to the course and your evaluation.

Presentation Style

I strongly encourage all students to use Powerpoint presentations. Each student will eventually find a most comfortable style of presentation. The individual method chosen in order to convey information is of little consequence to the grade but the preparation and execution of that method will be crucial. You may choose to work from note cards or no notes at all; you may also choose to read from a script. In either case, the student must be prepared to respond to questions, lead discussion, and otherwise show competency with the material presented. This is a good chance to experiment and try new methods.

Images

Excellent images are available on the web and are perfectly appropriate to use for educational purposes (but for no other uses that might infringe on copyrights). I expect that most images are easily found on the web but students should be prepared to scan select or obscure images on occasion.

Final Copy

After the in-class presentation, each student will submit the Powerpoint presentation to my inbox on the academic volume and a separate written version of their findings. This copy should be professionally

written and properly referenced. The content should essentially cover the same material as covered in class with the addition of responses to questions, new ideas, and discussion. In the written version it is not necessary to illustrate works by Michelangelo if they are included in the Powerpoint. The written copy is due within a week of the oral presentation.

Bibliography

For each presentation the student will also present a bibliography. This will not be lengthy but it should be relevant and current. You will be evaluated on the quality of the bibliography rather than quantity, so do not give filler or extraneous sources. The bibliography should list the most relevant articles and books dealing with the subject. Generally, there should be at least four sources not listed on the essential bibliography sheet. *Art Bulletin* or *Chicago Manual of Style* should be used and incorrect formatting will affect the grade. Please submit this paper to my inbox in the academic volume.

Grading

Grading will be based on the quality of both the oral and written presentations. Professionalism of preparation, quality of content, and articulation of ideas will be crucial determinants of grading.

Essential Bibliography

The literature on Michelangelo is vast. In fact, there is more written about Michelangelo than on any other artist. These are just a few of the principal sources to get your research started.

Original Sources

Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the Artists*, any translation with Life of Michelangelo.
Ascanio Condivi, *The Life of Michelangelo*, 2nd edition, trans. A.S. Wohl, ed. H. Wohl, Baton Rouge, 1999.
Michelangelo's letters and poems are available in many good translations.

Monographs

James Ackerman, *The Architecture of Michelangelo*, Chicago, 1986.
Howard Hibbard, *Michelangelo*, New York, 1974.
Anthony Hughes, *Michelangelo*, London, 1997.
Charles de Tolnay, *Michelangelo*, 5 vols., Princeton, 1943-60.
Charles de Tolnay, *Michelangelo: Sculptor, Painter, Architect*, Princeton, 1975.
William E. Wallace, *Michelangelo: The Complete Sculpture Painting Architecture*, Hong Kong, 1998.

Essential Articles

William Wallace, ed., *Michelangelo: Selected Scholarship in English*, 5 vols., New York, 1995.
[Selections from these volumes make up *Selected Readings*.]

Contextual Material

Frederick Hartt, *History of Italian Renaissance Art*, most recent edition.
John Pope-Hennessy, *Italian High Renaissance and Baroque Sculpture*, 4th ed., London, 1996.

Web Sites

There are many excellent web sites for images and information on Michelangelo. Among the most useful is the Web Gallery of Art:

<http://www.kfki.hu/~arthp/html/m/michelan/index.html>

Another interesting site (with annoying music) that has links to others is:

<http://www.michelangelo.com/buonarroti.html>

Here is a site in progress called the Digital Michelangelo Project at Stanford University:

<http://graphics.stanford.edu/projects/mich/>

You will easily find many others.