

ARTH 440-001
Controversies in Renaissance Art
Professor Lisa Passaglia Bauman

Seminar: Mondays 4:30-7:10

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Office hours: Monday 3:00-4:15 or by appointment Robinson B, room 373A

Introduction:

This seminar will examine controversial, problematic or enigmatic works of art produced in Renaissance Italy—Donatello’s “sexy” David, Michelangelo’s famous Sistine Ceiling, Bronzino’s bewildering *Venus, Cupid, Folly and Time*. In a survey course, these works would be presented according to one point of view. In this seminar, we will devote each week to one particular work for an extended study. Some weeks we will be primarily concerned with social or iconographic interpretations of subject matter; other weeks the focus will be on conservation or restoration issues. This seminar will provide us with the leisure to examine each work carefully, assessing various viewpoints and opinions, and perhaps even formulate new ones.

Each week will begin with the reading for that week. You are expected to come to class with reading done, notes taken, and the weekly writing assignment completed (if you are doing one that week). Most weeks one of you will take the lead in the presentation of an article and class discussion; some weeks there will be two of you. The last 30 minutes of class, I will present a brief lecture on the artist we will be covering the following week, providing background to contextualize that artist’s controversial work.

Course goals:

- To become familiar with the life and work of two of the most well-known artists of the Italian Renaissance
- To read primary and secondary sources critically
- To develop your ability to analyze an argument
- To practice organizing a discussion
- To learn how to do research in art history
- To practice articulating an argument in both written and oral formats

Required Texts:

All readings for this course are posted in Blackboard. I would like you to print off each week’s readings and bring them to class. Printing ALL the readings for this class should cost about \$30; that is far less expensive than a textbook, so there is no excuse not to do so. I want you to print the readings because then you can take notes and ask questions right onto the reading itself as you read. You’ll need notes to be able to organize your thoughts and be prepared for discussion. There will be no laptops in seminar.

I have put three books on reserve in the library (JC reserve desk) that will be helpful for the paper assignment.

- Pietro C. Marani. *Leonardo da Vinci—the complete paintings* (2000)

- Frank Zollner. *Leonardo da Vinci, 1452-1519: the complete paintings and drawings* (2007)
- Martin Kemp. *Leonardo* (2011)

Assignments:

1. Weekly attendance and participation in weekly discussions

Readings are assigned for each week and it is expected that all readings are completed **before** class meetings. Participation in class discussion is not only encouraged, **it is required**, and will be factored into your participation grade.

- (13 weeks x 2 points each week = 26 points)

2. Short writing assignments

Beginning in week 2, there is a weekly writing assignment of approximately 2 pages. Each week's writing assignment is already posted on the SCHEDULE right next to the list of readings. Sometimes you will answer assigned questions, sometimes you are responsible for thinking up a question, occasionally you will write an essay or analyze an argument. Sometimes I am making sure the reading is done so that we can have an interesting discussion, sometimes I am getting you to practice thinking critically and creatively, sometimes I just want you to practice writing. Hard copies are due in class on the day we discuss those readings. **No late work accepted.** There are 10 total writing assignments; **you need to do 8.**

- (8 assignments x 4 points each = 32 points)

3. Article presentation/discussion lead

Each week will have either one or two discussion leaders. The Discussion Leader is expected to present an oral assessment of one of the major articles, summarizing its main points, in a 10 minute presentation. After this, the Discussion Leader then directs the class discussion of that reading, involving other people and their ideas regarding that reading and the other readings from that week, or even previous weeks' readings. The Discussion Leader should be prepared to encourage discussion by bringing in at least 5 topics of discussion (ideas, quotes, comparisons with other material discussed in class). The Discussion Leader should also distribute to everyone in the class a typed/printed list their discussion points, quotations, etc. I will circulate a sign-up sheet week 1.

- (1 time = 10 points)

4. Research paper

6 page research paper on a Leonardo topic of your choice. This paper is broken down in to separate components, each of which has a deadline and is worth points toward your final grade.

- Annotated Bibliography (5 points) **Due October 16.** I will return it in one week.
- First two pages (5 points) **Due November 6.** I will return it in one week.
- Final paper (10 points) **Due Monday, December 11**

5. Oral presentation (15 minutes) of your research paper

- (1 time = 10 points)

6. Rewrite the weekly writing assignment with the lowest grade.

- (2 points + the grade change)
- Can be turned in any time until December 4

Here's a little chart that may help:

What	Scored when	# points possible	Total points
Attendance/Participation	Each week (13 total)	0-2	26
Weekly writing assignment	Each week (8 total)	0-4	32
Article presentation/ Discussion lead	One time	0-10	10
Research paper BIBLIO	Oct. 16	0-5	5
Research paper Pgs.1-2	Nov. 6	0-5	5
Research paper FINAL	Dec. 11	0-10	10
Research paper Oral presentation	One time	0-10	10
Rewrite	One time	0-2	2
			100

Writing Intensive Designation: This course has been approved by the Faculty Senate Writing Across the Curriculum Committee to fulfill all/in part the Writing Intensive requirement in the Art History major. It does so through the **eight** 200-word article analysis papers due throughout the semester, the 500-word article analysis rewrite, and the 1500-word research report. The research report will be completed through a draft/feedback/revision process. The first draft will be due on November 6; I will provide commentary on the draft, and the revised draft will be due on December 8.

Assessments: This is not a lecture class. Seminar is interesting when people are engaged. Attendance and informed participation are the coin of the realm and are therefore required of all students. If you cannot attend seminar due to medical reasons or an emergency, will need to bring me proper documentation for that absence for it to be excused. If you just miss because your heart was recently broken and you are having a hard time leaving your bed or you have too much work in your other classes, then that impacts your attendance and participation grade. This is the sort of thing I really hate having to keep track of, so let me be blunt—please do not take a seminar if you cannot be part of the collaborative work of the group. I have points listed for participation, but if I see that your attendance is a problem, I reserve the right to dock your final course grade by an additional 10%.

To receive a grade, all assignments must complete and **submitted in hard copy** by the due date (or a later date IF you demonstrate progress on the assignment and obtain an excuse **in advance of** the due date). ASSIGNMENTS SENT VIA E-MAIL ARE NOT

ACCEPTED. If you do not submit an assignment (or do not obtain an excuse IN ADVANCE of the due date) you receive a **zero**. Any *excused* work submitted late will be **graded down**. If you are experiencing difficulty completing an assignment on time, don't wait! Please consult with me immediately. Final grades will NOT be calculated from a fraction of required work completed.

The grading model is as follows: A+ (100-97); A (96-93); A- (93-90); B+ (89-87); B (86-83); B- (82-80); C+ (79-77); C (76-73); C- (73-70); D (69-60); F (59 and below).

IMPORTANT DATES:

Monday, September 4. No school. Labor Day.

Friday, September 29. Last day to drop a class

Monday, October 9. No class. Columbus Day. BUT Monday classes/labs meet

Tuesday, October 10.

Tuesday classes do not meet this week

Wednesday, November 22. No school. Thanksgiving break.

Saturday, December 9. Last day of classes.

English as a second language: If English is not your first language, please discuss any concerns you might have about the writing assignments with me. And don't forget about the Writing Center (<http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>).

Standards of Academic Integrity: GMU has an Honor Code that you can consult at the Office for Academic Integrity (<http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/>). Aristotle famously described the relationship between an abstraction and its human manifestation. How does one become honorable? By doing honorable deeds. Who does honorable deeds? The man with the sense of honor. Through persistence and habit, we can increase our sense of honor.

Students with disabilities: All accommodations must be arranged through the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 993-2474. If you qualify for accommodation, the ODS staff will give you a form detailing appropriate accommodations for you to give to me. Please do that within the first month of class.

Tech requirements and policy: All students must activate and check their GMU e-mail accounts on a regular basis. I will ONLY use the e-mail distribution list from the class registration. If you prefer to use a commercial account, you must activate the forwarder on your GMU account.

A successful seminar is made by the collaborative efforts of the group. That means being a group—doing the reading before seminar, being engaged in seminar. To that end, there are no cell phones in my classroom (unless you are awaiting an organ transplant, are a volunteer fire fighter and may be called into action, or need to be accessible to young children or elderly parents). No laptops either.

Schedule. I think it works, but if something needs to be changed, I will let you know well in advance.

Expectations: And finally, what are my expectations for a seminar? First we will read some things, we will write about them, and we will talk about them. Reading fills us, discussion prepares us, and writing—the fruits of our labors—makes us precise, faithful, meticulous, organized, and thorough. Then, no matter where you go or what you do, when people ask you what you are going to do those art history credits you'll say: *Carry them with me, as I do everything that matters.*