

Course Information: Dante and Michelangelo: From Renaissance Alpha to Omega (AH 235/EN 280) – Colorado College

Type: Group project
Oral presentation
Performance

Professors Rebecca Tucker and Regula Meyer Evitt

Level: 200

This class takes an interdisciplinary approach to the Renaissance, framing the themes, issues, and problems of the Renaissance through the works of Dante and Michelangelo. We will explore the question of artistic influence and connections between Dante’s visceral and visual *Inferno* and Michelangelo’s monumental paintings, sculpture, architecture. In addition to this primary focus, we will consider select works of their contemporaries Giotto, Masaccio, Botticelli, and Donatello, whose influence is evident in the masterpieces of these giants of the Renaissance.

Block Plan Context:

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1							
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Important Features of the Assignment:

- Encourages **critical thinking** skills by requiring students to research an individual’s activities, decisions and works from the point of view of specific historical defenders or attackers.
- **Generates interpretation and insight** by requiring students to apply their research creatively in a debate format. Students also come to better understand their historical personage.
- Students use a **variety of sources** to prepare, including both primary and secondary sources.
- Students do **cross discipline research** to be able to discuss ideas and issues relevant to both writers and artists.

Description of Assignment:

Final Project: “Michelangelo on Trial”

Goal: to explore the viewpoints and interactions of various writers, artists, and historical figures through role play and re-enactment.

Task: The “Trial” of Michelangelo is framed here as an imaginary discussion between various figures encountered during the class. Students will assume one of these identities, and prepare themselves by reading and research to hold a conversation from the viewpoint of that person. The “Trial” will be a conversation around questions provided by Re and Rebecca, who will serve as moderators.

Due: the “Trial” will take place in class on Friday, July 16.

Details: Students will research their personae individually, and then work in groups (Attackers

and Defenders), to develop their courtroom strategy. These groups will be assigned by Re and Rebecca. Research and preparation are necessary to help the students bring relevant details about their person’s past activities, decisions, and works into the conversation. A list of general accusations leveled at Michelangelo will be provided. To perform well, attackers must elaborate on this list with a specific set of objections to specific works and concepts of Michelangelo – Defenders must anticipate criticisms, and construct a specific set of responses for discussion. Accompany your details with images and quotes whenever possible. Criteria for grading include: depth of preparation, level of detail, organization, oral performance, and ultimately, how convincing your arguments are (even if these deviate from historical fact).

If you have questions, please come talk to Re or Rebecca as soon as possible.

<i>Defenders</i> 4 Students	<i>Attackers</i> 4 Students
1. Dante 2. Pope Julius II 3. Giorgio Vasari 4. Lorenzo “the Magnificent” de Medici	1. Pietro Aretino 2. Leonardo da Vinci 3. Fra Savonarola 4. Donato Bramante

Timeline:

Wk	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Weekend</i>
2			Assignment given; groups and identities assigned		Topics (List of accusations) provided	
3		Groups meet with Re and Rebecca			The “Trial” takes place.	