This course examines the way that works of art participate in the discourses of their times (e.g. shaping values, constructing identities, promoting beliefs, and giving visual form to new concepts). It also considers how art defines itself by exploring new modes of representation in dialogue with the art of the past. The focus will be on significant works that shaped—and were shaped by—western social, political, economic, and intellectual history. The goal is to impart not only a body of knowledge but also a set of critical tools that you should be able to apply to a wide range of material not specifically covered in the course. There will be considerable emphasis on questions of analysis and interpretation and in exploring both the means by which the object engages the beholder in extended viewing and the way that visual forms can be deployed to structure the viewer’s experience and elicit particular responses. *** This course will also include a trip to the Cleveland Museum of Art.