ARTH789C Renaissance Darkness
Thursday 12:30-3:00
Professor Honig

This seminar addresses the visual phenomenon of darkness: how it was experienced, conceptualized, and represented in cultural products of the early modern period. We will look at literary, philosophical, and scientific texts to unpack ideas about darkness, night, and shadows. We will consider how visual media physically registered night and shadow – the importance of medium (tempera, oil), the use and locus of the color black, the dark line of prints – and what subjects were depicted in darkened settings. Other issues may include: darkness, fear, crime, and punishment; sleep; blindness; dark clothing; the use of artificial illumination; and the development of ideas about dark skin in a “pre-racial” era.