COURSE DESCRIPTION:
In 17th-century Europe, the Dutch Republic (the present-day Netherlands) was unique in several respects: a proto-democracy where entrepreneurship, commerce, and intellect trumped hereditary nobility in building social capital, and where people from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds put aside their differences in the pursuit of peace and profit. As the rising middle class gained wealth and sophistication, the Dutch art market broadened to include products in diverse media offered to consumers at all economic levels. This seminar will explore how producers of visual and material culture shaped and responded to this dynamic new environment. Readings and research will concentrate primarily on artists active in Amsterdam, home to the liveliest art market in Northern Europe and launching pad for Dutch colonial exploration and commerce. Rembrandt van Rijn was the most famous of dozens of artists who left their home cities to seek opportunities there. The art of Rembrandt and his circle will be studied in depth, but attention will also be given to contemporaries active throughout the Republic. Depending on student interest, this might include painters such as Johannes Vermeer, Gerard van Honthorst, Judith Leyster, or Jacob van Ruisdael, as well as printmakers (and publishers), silversmiths, architects, or sculptors. Students may also choose to conduct research from the consumer’s point of view, studying the collecting habits of an individual, family, or group or using data analysis to examine broader market trends.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & FORMAT:
A detailed list of readings and requirements will be available during the first class. Each class will be structured as a seminar discussion. Regular attendance and active class participation are expected. Assignments will include oral presentations, an annotated bibliography and proposal assignment, and a final research paper. Students enrolling in this course are expected to have a basic familiarity with early modern European art. Please contact Dr. Dickey if you need background reading suggestions in order to prepare.