Dr. Berger’s lecture will examine the Narcissus (c. 1599–1620) that has been attributed to Caravaggio through the lens of cultural history before exploiting a methodology that understands Caravaggio’s paintings and those of his followers as works that thematise their own fictiveness. Dr. Berger will move beyond this method by thinking about how such self-aware paintings could likewise thematise the potential fictiveness of visual experience. In so doing, she will examine scientific medicine prevalent in Caravaggio’s age to explain the ambiguities, dislocations, and shifting identities raised in part by a reading of the canvas’ self-reflexivity and to shed light on its sensual power. She argues that this painting shows Narcissus’s own narcotic-induced hallucination and cues a similar response in the painting’s beholders. The Narcissus both portrays a physical and emotional malaise and functions as an instrument for alleviating it in the observer, first through an amplification of symptoms and then by opening a speculative route.