



## **HUAS 6315:**

### **Leonardo da Vinci:**

### **Man, Machine, Nature, Artifice**

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#### **Course Information**

HUAS 6315  
Fall 2012  
Wednesday, 10 am–12:45 pm

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#### **Professor Contact Information**

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#### **Course Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, and/or Other Restrictions**

None, other than graduate-student standing

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#### **Course Description**

We're very familiar with the concept of the Renaissance Man who gracefully strides between disciplines without showing any strain. Leonardo da Vinci—painter, courtier, musician, scientist, military engineer, mapmaker, and restless experimenter—is often seen as the quintessential representative of the type. Yet his own career had remarkable ups and downs, and much of the image that we have of Leonardo was formed in modern times (via Freud and many others) rather than reflective of how he was esteemed in his own era. This graduate seminar will explore his culture of experiment, the context in which he worked, and the possibilities then available to the interdisciplinary mind.

We will begin by getting familiar with his biography, then discuss thematic topics: his depiction of nature; his conception of the human form; his treatment of war; his consideration of optics and

perspective; his engagement with the scientific community of his time; his use and development of technology; the way his image has been manipulated over the centuries.

Because this is a graduate class, we will have a fairly sizable amount of reading which all students are expected to complete. Some weeks will demand more reading time, especially early in the semester when we all will try to get up to speed on the general facts of Leonardo's biography. Most weeks you will have a reading response due in class that addresses some question raised by the reading. Other weeks you will have some other written assignment that will develop your project into a finished seminar paper.

### Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes

- To develop the ability to read complex texts and study difficult objects closely and critically.
- To approach the subject from an interdisciplinary perspective, considering equally the artistic and scientific exigencies behind the making of the works under discussion.
- To engage in acceptable graduate-level research on material students were previously unfamiliar with, gaining an understanding of art-historical methodological practice.

### Required Textbooks and Materials

- Leonardo da Vinci, *Leonardo on Painting: An Anthology of Writings by Leonardo da Vinci*, ed. Martin Kemp, trans. Kemp and Margaret Walker (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001).
- Martin Kemp, *Leonardo da Vinci: The Marvellous Works of Nature and Man*, 2d. ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).
- Leo Steinberg, *Leonardo's Incessant Last Supper* (Cambridge, MA: Zone Books, 2001).
- **OPTIONAL:** *Leonardo da Vinci: Anatomy* (iPad app: <http://goo.gl/eKXOC>)

There are many other readings on electronic reserve through McDermott Library's website. Note also that you can compare prices for these textbooks online through [www.addall.com](http://www.addall.com), which searches a number of online retailers and compares prices for the books.

Assignments & Academic Calendar		
Class	Topic	Reading
29 Aug.	<p><b>Intro</b></p> <p><b>Biographical Sketch 1: Training and the Context of Laurentian Florence</b></p>	

5 Sept.	<b>Biographical Sketch 2: Milan, Florence (again), Milan (again), France</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vasari, “Life of Leonardo” (any edition is fine; on electronic reserve you can read translation by Julia and Peter Bondanella)</li> <li>• Kemp, <i>Leonardo da Vinci: The Marvelous Works of Nature and Man</i>, 23–90.</li> <li>• Luke Syson, “The Rewards of Service: Leonardo da Vinci and the Duke of Milan,” in <i>Leonardo da Vinci: Painter at the Court of Milan</i>, eds. L. Syson and L. Keith (London, 2011): 12–53</li> </ul> <p><b>Reading response due</b></p>
12 Sept.	<b>Portraiture</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patricia Rubin, “Understanding Renaissance Portraiture,” in <i>The Renaissance Portrait from Donatello to Bellini</i>, eds. K. Christiansen and S. Weppelmann (New Haven, 2011), 2–25</li> <li>• Mary D. Garrard, “Leonardo da Vinci: Female Portraits, Female Nature,” in <i>The Expanding Discourse</i>, 58–85</li> <li>• Various, “Beauty and Love: Leonardo’s Portraits of Women,” In <i>LdV: Painter at the Court of Milan</i>, 103–133</li> </ul> <p><b>Reading response due</b></p>
19 Sep.	<b>Leonardo’s Approach to Drawing and Painting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carmen Bambach, “Introduction to Leonardo and his Drawings,” <i>Leonardo da Vinci: Master Draftsman</i>, ed. Carmen C. Bambach, 3–30 and 141–54</li> <li>• Kemp, <i>Leonardo da Vinci: The Marvelous Works of Nature and Man</i>, 91–152</li> <li>• Kemp and Walker, <i>Leonardo on Painting</i>, 1–46, 191–280</li> </ul> <p><b>Reading response due</b></p>
26 Sept.	<p><b>No class—Jewish Holiday</b></p> <p><b>ALSO: bonus office hours Friday 28 Sept from noon to 2 pm!</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read all the material on Robert Simon’s <i>Salvator Mundi</i> website (<a href="http://goo.gl/F5oD9">http://goo.gl/F5oD9</a>), making sure to watch the BBC video (<a href="http://goo.gl/cbJii">http://goo.gl/cbJii</a>) and listen to radio program (<a href="http://goo.gl/r4jfa">http://goo.gl/r4jfa</a>) about the work.</li> </ul>
3 Oct.	<b>Religious Works and Interpretation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leo Steinberg, <i>Leonardo’s Incessant ‘Last Supper’</i> (whole book)</li> <li>• Review materials on <i>Salvator Mundi</i> from last week</li> </ul> <p><b>Reading response due</b></p>

10 Oct.	<b>Optics, Perspective, and Math</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kemp and Walker, <i>Leonardo on Painting</i>, 47–116</li> <li>• Kemp, <i>Leonardo da Vinci: The Marvelous Works of Nature and Man</i>, 152–212</li> <li>• Renzo Baldasso, “Portrait of Luca Pacioli and Disciple: A New, Mathematical Look” <i>Art Bulletin</i> 92 (2010): 83–102</li> </ul> <p><b>Reading response due</b></p>
17 Oct.	<b>War and Military Engineering</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kemp, <i>Leonardo da Vinci: The Marvelous Works of Nature and Man</i>, 213–77.</li> <li>• John Hale, “War and Public Opinion in Renaissance Italy,” in <i>Italian Renaissance Studies</i>, ed. E. F. Jacob (London, 1960), 94–122</li> <li>• Claire J. Farago, “Leonardo’s <i>Battle of Anghiari</i>: A Study in the Exchange between Theory and Artistic Practice,” <i>Art Bulletin</i> 76 (1994): 301–30</li> </ul> <p><b>Research Project abstract due</b></p>
24 Oct.	<b>Machines and Maps</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kemp, <i>Leonardo da Vinci: The Marvelous Works of Nature and Man</i>, 278–349</li> <li>• Juergen Schulz, “Jacopo de’ Barbari’s View of Venice,” <i>Art Bulletin</i> 60 (1978): 423–74</li> <li>• Bern Dibner, “Leonardo: Prophet of Automation,” in <i>Leonardo’s Legacy</i>, ed. C. D. O’Malley (Berkeley, 1969), 101–23</li> </ul> <p><b>Reading response due</b></p>
31 Oct.	<b>The Leonardo Industry</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• John Brewer, <i>The American Leonardo</i> (whole book)</li> <li>• Watch hour-long video, <i>Da Vinci: The Lost Treasure</i>, from the BBC (<a href="http://goo.gl/cbJii">http://goo.gl/cbJii</a>).</li> </ul> <p><b>Reading response due</b></p>
7 Nov.	<b>Presentations, part 1</b>	<b>Annotated Bibliography Due</b>
14 Nov.	<b>Presentations, part 2</b>	
21 Nov.	<b>Thanksgiving break</b>	No class
28 Nov.	<b>WRITING WORKSHOP DAY</b>	<b>Bring 2 copies of a 10-page draft of your final paper. This is an important part of the overall grade for the paper—you must be nearly done with it.</b>

5 Dec.	<b>Nature and Anatomy/ Writing Workshop Session</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (everyone reads): Kemp and Walker, <i>Leonardo on Painting</i>, 117–190</li> <li>• (group A reads): Webster Smith, “Observations on the <i>Mona Lisa</i> Landscape,” <i>Art Bulletin</i> 67 (1985): 183–99</li> <li>• (group A reads): Martin Kemp, “Dissection and Divinity in Leonardo’s Late Anatomies,” <i>Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes</i> 35 (1972): 200–25</li> <li>• (group B reads): <i>Leonardo da Vinci: Anatomy</i> (iPad app: <a href="http://goo.gl/eKXOC">http://goo.gl/eKXOC</a>)</li> </ul> <p><b>Bring two copies of your research paper’s bibliography to class. We are going to make sure it is ready to be in final form when turned in next week.</b></p>
12 Dec.	<b>Freud’s Leonardo</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sigmund Freud, <i>Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of his Childhood</i> [London, 1999]—available as an eBook via the campus library.</li> <li>• Meyer Schapiro, “Leonardo and Freud: An Art-Historical Study,” in <i>Renaissance Essays</i>, eds. P. O Kristeller and P. Weiner (Rochester, 1968), 303–36</li> <li>• A. Richard Turner, <i>Inventing Leonardo</i> (New York, 1993), 132–49</li> </ul> <p><b>Reading response due</b></p>
14 Dec. (Friday)	<b>FINAL PAPER DUE BY 2 PM IN MY OFFICE</b>	

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### Course Requirements

The final grade will be broken down approximately like this:

- Short reading responses: 40%
- Final research essay: 40%
- In-Class Presentation: 10%
- Participation: 10%

1. **Reading Responses**—Everyone will turn in **one-to-two-page reading responses** on the days signaled above in the syllabus. There will be 8 of these.
2. **Research Essay**—12 to 15 pages long (due 14 December) plus a three-page abstract (due 17 October) and a five-page annotated bibliography (due 7 November). You will bring a 10-page draft to class on 28 Nov. and we will workshop it together.
3. **In-class presentations on a work of art related to a research project** (7 and 14 November)

4. **Participation:** You will come to class on time, having done your reading and ready to speak about it to the group.

### **Details about the Research Essay**

You should formulate a topic related to the subject matter of this course, that is, some aspect of the history and imagery of Leonardo or the art, science, or historiography of the period. Select one of the following types of projects:

- a. A **research paper** in which you investigate a particular topic or question of interest to you, using both primary and secondary sources. Such a paper would be appropriate for future reworking and submission to an M.A. portfolio.
- b. A **historiographic paper** on a topic or issue, in which you analyze and compare the approaches and conclusions of three or more different scholars to a similar topic. This could potentially also concern what you see as a significant gap in scholarship on a specific topic, or an approach that you think would yield further insight.
- c. An in-depth **visual or textual analysis**. If you wish to closely delve into Leonardo's thoughts on anatomy, for example, you can examine his drawings and writings on the subject with great detail. You'll still need to do secondary research on the material.

In all cases, your final paper will be preceded by an abstract, an annotated bibliography, and a rough draft, and a final bibliography. In the abstract, you should present as clearly and as fully as possible your chosen topic for the written work. It should include your theme and your proposed method of approach. Your proposal must be satisfactory before you proceed on your paper.

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*These descriptions and timelines are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.*