



## Understanding Art

**Leonardo da Vinci:  
Artist, Scientist, Humanist**

**PROF. MARK ROSEN**

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### Course Information

AHST 2331 Section: 001  
Fall 2020

Online (the “scheduled” slot is MW 1–2:15, but course lectures and meetings are asynchronous and can be watched at any time). All the links to lectures, discussions, readings, and videos are on our course’s eLearning page.

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### Professor and TA Contact Information

**Dr. Mark Rosen**

Office: JO 4.510b

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Office phone: 972-883-2931

Professor’s office hours: **Wed., 1:30–2:15 pm**—this will be a weekly synchronous session in the Microsoft Teams section of our eLearning page for anyone who wants to visit. (A link is on our course’s eLearning homepage). It is, however, an open discussion that any student can participate in alone or in groups. If you’d like to make an individual appointment to discuss grading or some personal matter, email either the professor or TAs to set up an appointment and it can be scheduled via Teams.

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TAs: **Amanda Dunbar**

([Amanda.Dunbar@utdallas.edu](mailto:Amanda.Dunbar@utdallas.edu))

**Ze Zawng** ([zxz170230@utdallas.edu](mailto:zxz170230@utdallas.edu))

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

Prerequisites: None. This course welcomes non-Arts & Humanities students as well as those planning to major in a Humanities discipline. The course fulfills the 050 Creative Core Curriculum as designated by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, as well as the 090 Component Area Option.

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### Course Modality, Platform, and Expectations

For the Fall 2020 semester, this class will of necessity take place online. There will be some gains and losses in this approach. The main lectures and course materials will be **asynchronous**: that is, you can

access course recordings at any time, and review images, readings, and material from your computer. You don't have to be online at our course time for the professor's lectures; they will be available on the eLearning page on the morning of the "session" listed in the syllabus. Our course will run through our eLearning page. The links into our course sessions and materials will all be available through our eLearning page. The lectures for each class session will be broken up into several different recordings (plus links to videos), so as not to make any one recording too long or difficult to download, but they will total around 75 minutes for each meeting.

In addition to those asynchronous "lectures," the TAs will be **synchronously** meeting with smaller groups of students **each week for 30 minutes** (and will meet M 1-1:30, M 1:45-2:15, or W 1-1:30—i.e., for a subset of one of our scheduled class times) to allow for discussions of readings, lectures, and topics. Your TA group will be determined at the end of the first week of the semester, via a poll about your availability. These meetings are an important part of the course. (For more information on the modalities of courses, see <https://www.utdallas.edu/fall-2020/fall-2020-registration-information/>. On the nature of asynchronous learning, see <https://www.utdallas.edu/fall-2020/asynchronous-access-for-fall-2020/>. For any additional COVID-19 resources, please see <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies>.)

**Expectations:** As an online, predominantly asynchronous class, we have differing expectations than the usual face-to-face course. You're encouraged to watch the lectures and videos on your own time, not during the time slotted in the schedule for the class. Throughout the lectures are built in questions as you progress, but the most important aspect of your grade is the written assignments (see below) scattered across the semester. It is also important that you view the course-meeting materials for the previous two classes before joining your synchronous TA session for the week. Your participation matters, both to the live TA sessions and the asynchronous lectures (i.e., we will monitor that you've been on the eLearning site and downloaded/watched the material).

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## Course Description

Because UTD encourages exploration of the relationship between science and the humanities, this course will devote its time to a single figure—Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519)—that can help us better understand this relationship, in particular the role that art can serve to bridge the two. We will approach his life and work from many different directions and discuss what meaning he might have held to his era and to our own. Considering the many controversies that still surround his life—Did he actually design wings for flight? How many of the inventions in his notebooks were actually made? Does the *Mona Lisa*'s smile carry a secret?—he can help us grasp the long-enduring historical stakes connected to a great artist's life. This class is a celebration of an artist/scientist/thinker who died 501 years ago, yet whose work continues to carry relevance and serve as a model in our time.

This class will not be a survey of the history of art nor centered on art appreciation. Instead, it will use Leonardo da Vinci to go deep on a few topics that are important in any historical era: how an artist is trained; the relationship between politics, religion, and art; the process of experimentation; the biographical details informing the artist's life; the role of patronage; how events and people are commemorated; the influences that shaped the artist; the commemoration of political, military, and religious events. In more specific terms, Leonardo and his notebooks can also give us insight into war, machines, the human body, mathematics, perspective, propaganda, and optics. Each class meeting will have a topic, and we'll move both into the historical specificity of Leonardo's moment as well as considering how his ideas and solutions pointed to larger artistic, scientific, and humanistic concerns, some of which are very pressing during this moment of pandemic and social upheaval.

## General Core Area 050—Creative Arts

**Description:** Courses in this category focus on the appreciation and analysis of creative artifacts and works of the human imagination. Courses involve the synthesis and interpretation of artistic expression and enable critical, creative, and innovative communication about works of art.

**Objectives:** **Critical Thinking (CT)**—to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information  
**Communication (COM)**—to include effective development, interpretation, and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication  
**Teamwork (TW)**—to include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal  
**Social Responsibility (SR)**—to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities

### Student Learning Objectives

All semester long we will be investigating the intersection of society, culture, and intellectual thought during a distant historical period. The objectives for students are:

- To learn and employ a broad knowledge of the principles and history of the visual arts (CT, COM)
- To develop skills of visual analysis and critical reading through oral and written communication (COM, CT)
- To grasp and demonstrate the interdisciplinary ways that historical and contemporary works of art and culture communicate to their audiences (COM, CT, SR)
- To discover, define, and explore parallels between historical eras and the present through oral and written communication and group work (COM, CT, TW, SR)

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### Textbooks and Materials

#### Required books:

The first two are paperbacks that are cheaply available at the bookstore or in used copies wherever you may search for them. The third and fourth are free PDF downloads of exhibition catalogues, one of Leonardo's drawings and the other of world art of the fifteenth century.

1. *Leonardo on Painting*, ed. Martin Kemp (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989) [in syllabus as "*Leonardo on Painting*"]
2. Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy* (2d ed., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988 [in syllabus as "Baxandall"])
3. Carmen C. Bambach, ed., *Leonardo da Vinci: Master Draftsman* (NY: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2003): **free download** of the catalog at [https://www.metmuseum.org/art/metpublications/Leonardo\\_da\\_Vinci\\_Master\\_Draftsman](https://www.metmuseum.org/art/metpublications/Leonardo_da_Vinci_Master_Draftsman) [in syllabus as *Master Draftsman*. We'll refer to this catalog a lot during the semester.]

4. Jay A. Levinson, ed., *Circa 1492: Art in the Age of Exploration* (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1991): **free download** at <https://www.nga.gov/research/publications/pdf-library/circa-1492.html> [in syllabus as *Circa 1492*]

Other required readings will be available online through the course’s eLearning page (see the “Library Course Reserves” tab on our eLearning homepage). Readings should be done **before** each class “meeting”—that is, make sure to have done the reading by the time you sit down to your weekly 30-minute Teams session with your TA. Some readings will be discussed during the lectures and it is expected that students will be prepared to follow the discussion and be familiar with the works. In addition to the recorded lectures, a PDF of the slide deck will be posted on eLearning that you can download and read through Adobe Reader. That will allow you to study the images at your own speed without having the narration attached.

Finally, there are a number of useful web resources that can be useful references to learn more about Leonardo (the eLearning Course Reserves page has links for them):

A Timeline of Leonardo’s life, from the Royal Collection Trust: <https://bit.ly/3edJmad>.

Complete digital editions and translations of his notebooks: <https://www.leonardodigitale.com/en/>

*Leonardo da Vinci: Anatomy* (only available as an iPad app, but a first-class exploration): <https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/leonardo-da-vinci-anatomy/id520564038>.

“Leonardo da Vinci’s Drawing Materials,” video from Royal Collection Trust: <https://vimeo.com/154869931>.

A video about the National Gallery of Art’s 2019–20 exhibition on Andrea del Verrocchio, Leonardo’s teacher: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=py3QdKjQ\\_E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=py3QdKjQ_E).

## Papers and Assignments

You will have regular short writing assignments (due weekly), longer projects designing a monument (due Oct. 12) and a virtual gallery (due Nov. 23), an open-book midterm (due Sept. 30), and a final (early Dec.). It’s a large class and most of it is done asynchronously; however, your virtual attendance (i.e., regularly visiting the eLearning site and watching/participating in the course presentations) is important.

For information regarding plagiarism and other issues of academic integrity, see the university’s website: <http://coursebook.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies>. Let me confirm that plagiarism is a very serious offense and will not be tolerated. It will result in your being forced to rewrite a paper or accept a failing grade for the assignment. Your own intellectual honesty is of the greatest importance in this class.

Assignments & Academic Calendar		
[readings other than <i>Leonardo on Painting</i> and Baxandall on e-reserve or at website indicated]		
Class	Topic	Reading

17 Aug.	<b>Introduction and Welcome</b>	
19 Aug.	<b>Why is the Art of the Past Often So Controversial in the Present Day?</b>	Articles on the George Washington High School murals by Carol Pogash ( <a href="https://nyti.ms/3iHQCPj">https://nyti.ms/3iHQCPj</a> ) and Peter Dreier ( <a href="https://bit.ly/2CoTsYs">https://bit.ly/2CoTsYs</a> )  Videos on the <i>Salvator Mundi</i> from the Robb Report ( <a href="https://bit.ly/3gBZJPs">https://bit.ly/3gBZJPs</a> ) and Vice News ( <a href="https://bit.ly/31W1VgK">https://bit.ly/31W1VgK</a> )
24 Aug.	<b>The Environment of Renaissance Florence and the Training of Artists</b>  <b>Weekly writing assignment due by the end of today</b>	Carmen Bambach, “Introduction to Leonardo and His Drawings” and “Documented Chronology of Leonardo’s Life and Work,” in <i>Master Draftsman</i> , 3–31 and 227–241.  <i>Leonardo on Painting</i> , 9–46
26 Aug.	<b>Religious Ritual and the Function of Religious Art</b>	Giorgio Vasari, “Life of Leonardo da Vinci” (1550/68) ( <a href="https://bit.ly/2OatquS">https://bit.ly/2OatquS</a> ).  Patricia Rubin, “‘What men saw’: Vasari’s Life of Leonardo and the Image of the Renaissance Artist,” <i>Art History</i> 13 (1990): 34–46.  Alessandro Cecchi, “New Light on Leonardo’s Florentine Patrons,” in <i>Master Draftsman</i> , 121–139.
31 Aug.	<b>Perspective and Early Renaissance Science</b>  <b>Weekly writing assignment due by the end of today</b>	Martin Kemp, “The Mean and Measure of All Things,” in <i>Circa 1492</i> , 95–110, and cat. items 138–151 (pp. 240–255).  Baxandall, section I (Conditions of Trade)
2 Sept.	<b>Political Systems and the Art of Propaganda</b>	<i>Leonardo on Painting</i> , 47–88, 251–55  Baxandall, section II (The Period Eye)
7 Sept.	<b>Labor Day—no class</b>	<b>No TA meetings this week</b>
9 Sept.	<b>Global Art circa 1492</b>  <b>Weekly writing assignment due by the end of today</b>	Suzanne Preston Blier, “Imaging Otherness in Ivory: African Portrayals of the Portuguese c. 1492,” <i>The Art Bulletin</i> 75 (1993): 375–396.  Browse <i>Circa 1492</i> catalogue
14 Sept.	<b>Renaissance Portraiture and Self-Portraiture</b>  <b>Weekly writing assignment due by the end of today</b>	<i>Leonardo on Painting</i> , 88–115  Baxandall, section III (Pictures and Categories)

16 Sept.	<b>Leonardo's Portraits</b>	Mary D. Garrard, "Leonardo da Vinci: Female Portraits, Female Nature," in <i>The Expanding Discourse</i> (New York, 1992), 58–85.  Emanuele Lugli, "Leonardo and the Hair Makers," in <i>Leonardo in Dialogue</i> , eds. F. Borgo, R. Maffei, and A. Nova (Venice, 2018), 19–46, 370, 387–393.
21 Sept.	<b>Monuments</b>  <b>Weekly writing assignment due by the end of today</b>	<i>Leonardo on Painting</i> , 117–158  Jonah Engel Bromwich, "What Does It Mean to Tear Down a Statue?" <i>The New York Times</i> (June 11, 2020): <a href="https://nyti.ms/2O48YvJ">https://nyti.ms/2O48YvJ</a>
23 Sept.	<b>Leonardo's Horses</b>	<i>Leonardo on Painting</i> , 159–189  James S. Ackerman, "Art & Science in the Drawings of Leonardo da Vinci" in <i>Origins, Imitation, Conventions: Representation in the Visual Arts</i> (Cambridge: MIT Press: 2002), 143–173.
28 Sept.	<b>No meeting today or with your TAs this week</b>  <b>Do-at-home midterm posted on eLearning</b>	
30 Sept.	<b><i>The Last Supper</i></b>  <b>Do-at-home midterm due</b>	Joseph Polzer, "Reflections on Leonardo's <i>Last Supper</i> ," <i>Artibus et Historiae</i> 32 (2011): 9–37.  <i>Leonardo on Painting</i> , 255–258
5 Oct.	<b>Artistic Techniques: Drawing, Casting, Printing, Sculpting</b>  <b>Weekly writing assignment due by the end of today</b>	<i>Leonardo on Painting</i> , 191–214  Martin Kemp, "Drawing the Boundaries," in <i>Master Draftsman</i> , 141–154.
7 Oct.	<b>The Young Michelangelo</b>	William E. Wallace, <i>Michelangelo: The Artist, the Man, and His Times</i> (Cambridge, 2010), 50–71
12 Oct.	<b>Representing War</b>	James S. Ackerman, "Art & Science in the Drawings of Leonardo da Vinci." In <i>Origins, Imitation, Conventions: Representation in the Visual Arts</i> (Cambridge: MIT Press: 2002), 143–173.  <b>Monuments Project due</b>

14 Oct.	<b>Michelangelo and Leonardo in Competition</b>	Frank Fehrenbach, "Much ado about nothing: Leonardo's Fight for the Standard." In <i>Bild-Geschichte: Festschrift für Horst Bredekamp</i> , ed. Philine Helas et al., (Berlin: 2007), 397–412.  Watch National Geographic Explorer video <i>Finding the Lost Da Vinci</i> [sic] (2017): <a href="https://bit.ly/2W0jpVy">https://bit.ly/2W0jpVy</a>
19 Oct.	<b>Maps and the Renaissance Conception of the World</b>  <b>Weekly writing assignment due by the end of today</b>	David Woodward, "Maps and the Rationalization of Geographic Space," in <i>Circa 1492</i> , 83–87 <i>Amerasia</i> website ( <a href="http://www.ifaresearch.org/amerasia/#">http://www.ifaresearch.org/amerasia/#</a> )
21 Oct.	<b>Leonardo as Cartographer and Engineer</b>	Martin Clayton, "1502–1504: Leonardo's Maps," in <i>Leonardo da Vinci: A Singular Vision</i> (New York: Abbeville Press, 1996), 89–105.  Stephen Jay Gould, "The Upwardly Mobile Fossils of Leonardo's Living Earth," in <i>Leonardo's Mountain of Clams and the Diet of Worms: Essays on Natural History</i> (New York: Harmony Books, 1988), 17–44.
26 Oct.	<b>Race and Renaissance Art</b>  <b>Weekly writing assignment due by the end of today</b>	Kate Lowe, "The Lives of African Slaves and People of African Descent in Renaissance Europe," in <i>Revealing the African Presence in Renaissance Europe</i> , ed. Joaneath Spicer (Baltimore: The Walters Museum, 2012), 12–33.  Megan Holmes, "'How a Woman with a Strong Devotion to the Virgin Mary Gave Birth to a Very Black Child': Imagining 'Blackness' in Renaissance Florence," in <i>Fremde in der Stadt</i> , eds. P. Bell, D. Stuckow, and G. Wolf (Frankfurt, 2010), 333–351 and figs. 93–101.
28 Oct.	<b>The Mona Lisa and Other late Florentine Projects</b>	Jack M. Greenstein, "Leonardo, Mona Lisa and <i>La Gioconda</i> : Reviewing the Evidence," <i>Artibus et Historiae</i> 25 (2004): 17–38  <i>Leonardo on Painting</i> , 214–248, 258–261
2 Nov.	<b>The Renaissance Church and the City of Rome</b>  <b>Weekly writing assignment due by the end of today</b>	Loren Partridge, "Patronage and Popes: Saints or Sinners?" (from <i>The Art of Renaissance Rome</i> , 1996), 9–17
4 Nov.	<b>Anatomy and the Human Body</b>	<i>Circa 1492</i> , cat. items 173–179 (pp. 274–280).  Rebekah Frumkin, "How to Draw the Coronavirus," <i>The Paris Review</i> (May 18, 2020): <a href="https://bit.ly/3gCjVRl">https://bit.ly/3gCjVRl</a>

9 Nov.	<b>Gender and Renaissance Art</b>  <b>Weekly writing assignment due by the end of today</b>	Yael Even, “The Loggia dei Lanzi: A Showcase of Female Subjugation,” <i>Woman’s Art Journal</i> 12 (1991): 10–14.  Frederika Jacobs, “Woman’s Capacity to Create: The Unusual Case of Sofonisba Anguissola,” <i>Renaissance Quarterly</i> 47 (1994): 74–101.
11 Nov.	<b>Recent Controversies in Leonardo Studies</b>	<i>Mystery of a Masterpiece</i> , from PBS’s <i>Nova</i> ( <a href="https://dalzellance.caminonuevo.org/apps/video/watch.jsp?v=123562">https://dalzellance.caminonuevo.org/apps/video/watch.jsp?v=123562</a> )
16 Nov.	<b>Interview with scholar Leslie Geddes</b>  <b>Weekly writing assignment due by the end of today (last one!)</b>	Leslie Geddes, “Drawing Bridges: Leonardo da Vinci on Mastering Nature,” in <i>Illuminating Leonardo</i> , eds. C. Moffatt and S. Tagliagammba (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 285–299.
18 Nov.	<b>Understanding Renaissance Drawings and Prints</b>	Carmen Bambach, “On the role of scientific evidence in the study of Leonardo’s drawings.” In <i>Leonardo da Vinci’s Technical Practice: Paintings, Drawings, and Influence</i> , ed. Michel Menu (Paris, 2014), 222–253.  Review <i>Master Draftsman</i> drawings catalog.
23 Nov.	<b>Exam review with Prof.</b>	There will be a <b>synchronous</b> meeting in our class slot (Mon., 1–2:15) featuring Q&A with the professor. It will also be recorded and made available after the meeting.  <b>Gallery project due</b>
25 Nov.	<b>Exam review with TAs</b>	
2–8 Dec.	<b>Take home final</b>	

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## Grading Policy

**Weekly short writing assignments:** 30%. There are 11 of these throughout the semester; you only have to do 9 of them. If you do all 11 and get a C+ or above on all of them, you will receive an extra credit bump of 3 points on your final semester grade.

**Exams:** 25% (10% midterm, 15% final)

**Monuments project (due 10/12):** 15%

**Virtual Gallery (due 11/23):** 20%

**Participation in TA synchronous sessions:** 10%

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## COVID-19 Guidelines and Resources

The University’s COVID-19 resources for students and instructors of record is at <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies>.

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## **Class Participation**

Regular class participation is expected regardless of course modality. A portion of the grade for this course is directly tied to your participation in this class. It also includes engaging in group or other activities during TA meetings that solicit your feedback on homework assignments, readings, or materials covered in the lectures. Class participation is documented by faculty and TAs. Successful participation is defined as consistently adhering to University requirements, as presented in this syllabus. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

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## **Class Recordings**

Students are expected to follow appropriate University policies and maintain the security of passwords used to access recorded lectures. Unless the Office of Student AccessAbility has approved the student to record the instruction, students are expressly prohibited from recording any part of this course. Recordings may not be published, reproduced, or shared with those not in the class, or uploaded to other online environments except to implement an approved Office of Student AccessAbility accommodation. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

The instructor and TAs will record meetings of this course. Any recordings will be available to all students registered for this class, since not everyone can be present synchronously, aside from at most of their TA sessions. Students are expected to follow appropriate University policies and maintain the security of passwords used to access recorded lectures. Unless the Office of Student AccessAbility has approved the student to record the instruction, students are expressly prohibited from recording any part of this course. Recordings may not be published, reproduced, or shared with those not in the class, or uploaded to other online environments except to implement an approved Office of Student AccessAbility accommodation. If the instructor or a UTD school/department/office plans any other uses for the recordings, consent of the students identifiable in the recordings is required prior to such use unless an exception is allowed by law. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

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## **Course & Instructor Policies**

- There is a very high probability owing to the Covid-19 situation that some changes in the syllabus might be necessary owing to altered circumstances. When that happens, we will spell out directly how that will affect grading, due dates, deadlines, and other matters.
- We have set up office hours for the professor and TAs; these can be used to discuss class materials, assignments, and questions arising from the readings, or other issues you'd like to ask about. However, if you want to discuss grading or some personal matter, send an email and we can schedule (via Teams) an individual appointment at some other time.
- We can be reached by email/Teams and will make efforts to respond in a timely manner, but we're not on call at all hours; use email sparingly, please. Use our emails on the front of this syllabus to reach us.

- Please send emails to us from your UTD accounts. Even if we receive email from some other account of yours, we reply to the official university account, so check that one regularly.
- All major assignments must be completed to successfully pass the class (you can't skip the first paper and still expect to get a B+).
- Written assignments are submitted through eLearning.
- Late assignments will be marked down substantially.
- If you are struggling to keep up, please let us know. If you're having trouble with internet access, computer availability, or some extracurricular matter brought on by the Covid-19 situation, please keep us informed. We recognize this is a difficult time for college students and want to make sure you're able to complete the class successfully.

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