

The Art and Science of Leonardo da Vinci
A Humanities Seminar
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Leonardo continues to fascinate and provoke, his myriad activities still studied by experts in a wide variety of fields. New discoveries are continually being made about his engineering ideas, his drawings and manuscripts, the provenance of his paintings, and his life and opinions. This seminar will examine Leonardo's emergence in the context of the progressing Renaissance in Florence, and will follow his life through his movements between Florence, Milan, Venice, and Rome, to his eventual residence at Amboise under the protection of King Francis I. We will study his anatomical drawings, his great paintings, his philosophical and theoretical speculations, his detailed engineering diagrams, his self-probing psychological analyses, and his futuristic inventions. Above all we will reconsider the current critical estimation of his paintings, and their place in our conception of what art is. Class sessions will be a combination of lecture and wide-ranging discussion.

1. July 10 The fifteenth-century background. The early Renaissance in visual art. The patronage of the Medici régime. Earliest memories. Leonardo's apprenticeship in Verrocchio's workshop. *The Portrait of Ginevra de' Benci*. The Uffizi *Annunciation*. Early works.
2. July 17 The flower of the Medici court. *The Benois Madonna*. *Adoration of the Magi*. *The Virgin(s) of the Rocks*. The letter to Ludovico Sforza. Leonardo's relations with other Italian Renaissance thinkers.
3. July 24 *Codex Leicester* and Leonardo's progress of rendering thought. Studies of water, weights, and the Moon. Gravity, optics, astronomy. The Sforza monument. *The Last Supper*.
4. July 31 The question of genius. *The Battle of Anghiari*. *Leda and the Swan*. Extraordinary symbolism in Leonardo's paintings. Dissection of a centenarian at the hospital of S. Maria Nuova. Prophetic inventions and designs. Renaissance portraiture and *The Mona Lisa*. Leonardo's students. Attributions.
5. Aug. 7 The fate of the notebooks and drawings. *St. John the Baptist* and *Bacchus*. *Salvator Mundi* and the provenance of the Leonardo canon. Leonardo's place in the history of art, medicine, engineering, anatomy, architecture, geography, astronomy, aeronautics, music, and theater. "Colorful" theories concerning Leonardo.

Required Text:

Walter Isaacson. *Leonardo da Vinci*. Simon and Schuster. 2018. Recent general bestseller on Leonardo. ISBN: 9781501139161.

Suggested or Recommended Texts:

1. Frank Zöllner. *Leonardo da Vinci: The Complete Paintings*. Taschen (Bibliotheca Universalis). 2017. ISBN: 9783836562973. This small, thick, heavy-ish book has sumptuous illustrations and good commentary.
2. Johannes Nathan and Frank Zöllner. *Leonardo: The Complete Drawings*. Taschen (Bibliotheca Universalis). 2019. ISBN: 9783836554411. Companion volume, also small, thick, and heavy-ish, with excellent color reproductions of drawings and designs of all types, grouped according to subject.
3. Leonardo da Vinci, *Notebooks*. Oxford World's Classics. Edited by Irma Richter, Thereza Wells, and Martin Kemp. Oxford University Press. 2008. ISBN: 9780199299027. This pocket-sized paperback is a collection of grouped writings from the notebooks, mainly text with few illustrations.