



AH 340 CRACKING THE CODE: LEONARDO DA VINCI AND RENAISSANCE ART IN MILAN

IES Abroad Milan

DESCRIPTION:

This course introduces students to the history of Renaissance art with a special focus on the city of Milan and its most illustrious citizen, Leonardo da Vinci. More than simply a backdrop for Leonardo's achievements, Milan is considered here as his essential creative matrix. Throughout the course we will pay special attention not only to Leonardo's impact on the city but also to Milan as a fertile terrain for his imagination, fantasies, and ingenious problem-solving skills. Taking advantage of the student's stay in Milan, the course emphasizes in-depth examinations of works that can be seen firsthand around the city.

At the same time, students will broaden their understanding of the historical moment under scrutiny. Da Vinci's achievements in Milan are used as a prism through which to study major artistic, social and cultural issues of the period in which he lived and worked. Field studies around the city of Milan include the Castello Sforzesco, with Leonardo's fresco ceiling commissioned by the Sforza family, the Pinacoteca Ambrosiana, with Leonardo's Codice Atlantico, the bronze Sforza horse at San Siro, the Museum of Science and Technology and, of course, The Last Supper.

CREDITS: 3

CONTACT HOURS: 45

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: English

PREREQUISITES: No previous art history background is necessary, although the pace is that of a 300-level course. More advanced students such as Art History majors receive assignments personally tailored to their level and interests

METHOD OF PRESENTATION: Lectures, field studies, student presentations

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:

- Course Participation – 10%
- Assignments – 15%
- Midterm Exam – 25%
- Group Project and Oral Presentation – 20%
- Final Exam – 30%

Course Participation

Simply being present in the classroom is not enough. The class structure and amount of work involved in this course requires students: to attend each entire class session; to be prepared for and participate actively in class discussions; to submit on-time, typed, proofread, and complete reading and writing assignments; and to alert the professor to problems encountered with the class early enough for them to be resolved. Please note that classes begin promptly at 1.00 and conclude at 2.40, during which time cell phones must be turned off – no calls or text messages should be made, sent, or received during class.

Assignments

Notebook entries, which will include both creative entries and responses to readings, guest speakers and field studies. Students are asked to compile a notebook during the course – just as Leonardo did during his life. This bound notebook should contain a selection of the following: critical reflections, analyses, drawings and sketches or photographs that rethink in deeper ways issues related to the content of the class. A simple travel log or diary-type description will not be considered an entry. The notebook should contain an entry for every week of class and must be brought with you to every class. It will be turned in twice during the semester and can be asked to be presented in class at any time. The notebook is also to be used for independent and class field studies and should accompany you on your weekend travels to important Leonardo-related sites (the Louvre, The National Gallery in London, the Uffizi, the Vatican, etc...). In addition, several short written assignments covering readings, guest speakers, and field studies should be pasted into the notebook. Entries are graded for quality as well as consistency. Plagiarism will result automatically in an 'F' grade.



Note electronic submissions of notebooks and assignments are not acceptable; computer or printer failures are not an acceptable excuse. Paper copies are easily obtained by taking your memory stick to a photo/copy store.

Midterm Exam

The exams are comprised of three sections: 1) image identification and/or comparison; 2) multiple choice; 3) short answer and/or essay question based on material considered in class, required readings as well as guest lectures topics and discussion.

Group Project and Oral Presentation

Each group is asked to design a project that addresses an important question about Leonardo's work. Projects require reconstruction of a Leonardo idea, which need to be described both within its historical context and thought about / exemplified in terms of applicability to our world today. The submitted project should include documentation of group work, bibliography, illustrations and a presentation of the results to the class. Plagiarism will result automatically in the grade of 'F' (0%). Students are required to attend the presentations of all other groups.

Final Exam

The exams are comprised of three sections: 1) slide identification and/or slide comparison; 2) multiple choice; 3) short answer and/or essay question based on material considered in class, required readings as well as guest lectures topics and discussion. The final exam is comprehensive, although greater weight is given to material covered in the second half of the course.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

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ATTENDANCE POLICY:

CONTENT:

Week	Content	Assignments
Week 1 <i>Session 1</i>	Course Introduction 1. Definition of Art and Artist and their meaning during Renaissance and the present	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leonardo's Self- Portrait (1515 ca.) • Self-Portraits of other Renaissance artists <p>ALWAYS CHECK MOODLE FOR READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS</p>
<i>Session 2</i>	Leonardo da Vinci's life 1. Beginnings in Florence. Giorgio Vasari and his 'Life of the Artists'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giorgio Vasari, <i>The Lives of the Artists</i>, "The life of Leonardo da Vinci," pp.256-270
Week 2 <i>Session 1</i>	Renaissance in Florence 1. History and meaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • L.Schneider Adams, <i>Italian Renaissance Art</i>, "The Thirteenth Century," pp. 2-8
<i>Session 2</i>	Field Study 1. Leonardo3 Museum. Leonardo's machines exhibition	

Week 3 <i>Session 1</i>	Leonardo in Milan 1. Leonardo's letter to Ludovico Sforza (1482)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> L.Schneider Adams, Italian Renaissance Art, "The Cinquecento," pp. 291-306 GROUP PROJECT ASSIGNMENT ANNOUNCED
<i>Session 2</i>	Artists and patrons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> John T.Paoletti, G.M.Radke, Art in Renaissance Italy, "Introduction," pp. 14-27
Week 4 <i>Session 1</i>	How a 'bottega' worked in the Renaissance	
<i>Session 2</i>	Santa Maria delle Grazie and the Last Supper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leo Steinberg, Leonardo's Incessant Last Supper, "Introduction," pp.12-29
Week 5 <i>Session 1</i>	Science & Art – Part 1 1. Looking for Perfection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A.Richard Turner, <i>Inventing Leonardo</i>, "The body as nature and culture," pp.190-209
<i>Session 2</i>	Science & Art – Part 2 1. Finding Imperfection	
Week 6 <i>Session 1</i>	MIDTERM SIMULATION AND REVIEW	
<i>Session 2</i>	MIDTERM	
Week 7 <i>Session 1</i>	Sculpture. The Sforza steed. 1. Works that are 'sculptural'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> L.Schneider Adams, Italian Renaissance Art, "The Quattrocento," pp. 146-215 Leonardo da Vinci, The Notebooks, "Painting and sculpture," pp. 205-207
<i>Session 2</i>	Field Study 1. Sforza Castle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Martin Kemp, <i>Leonardo da Vinci: The Marvelous Work of Nature and Man</i>, "The Sala delle Asse," pp. 167-176
Week 8 <i>Session 1</i>	Guest Lecture 1. Leonardo da Vinci and contemporary Art	

Session 2	The Virgin of the Rocks <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. First version (1482-1486) 2. Second version (1508) 3. Field Study: Last Supper AFTER CLASS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Martin Kemp, <i>Leonardo da Vinci: The Marvelous Work of Nature and Man</i>, "The Virgin of the Rocks," pp. 73-79
Week 9 Session 1	PORTRAITS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "On Renaissance Portraiture," http://italianrenaissancesources.com/units/unit5/essays/portraiture
Session 2	Field Study <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ambrosiana Art Gallery. Portrait of a Musician 	
Week 10 Session 1	Mona Lisa <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. History, myth and symbolism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frank Zöllner, "'Ogni pittore dipinge sé'" Leonardo da Vinci and 'automimesis', "Leonardo's portrait of Mona Lisa del Giocondo," pp.115-138
Session 2	Field Study <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Leonardo's vineyard 	
Week 11 Session 1	Final Exam Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer Evaluation
Session 2	Group Project Presentation	

COURSE-RELATED TRIPS:

- Leonardo3 Museum. Leonardo's machines exhibition
- Sforza Castle
- Ambrosiana Art Gallery. Portrait of a Musician
- Leonardo's vineyard

REQUIRED READINGS:

- Adams, Laurie Schneider, *Italian Renaissance Art*, 2001
- Freud, Sigmund, *Leonardo da Vinci, a Memory of his Childhood*, 1910
- Kemp, Martin, *Leonardo da Vinci. The Marvellous Works of Nature and Man*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1981
- Richter, Jean Paul, *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci*, Dover Publications, 1970
- Steinberg, Leo, *Leonardo's Incessant Last Supper*, New York, Zone Books, 2001
- Turner, A. Richard, *Inventing Leonardo*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1992
- Vasari, Giorgio, *The Lives of Artists*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1998
- Zöllner, Frank, "'Ogni pittore dipinge sé'" Leonardo da Vinci and 'automimesis', 1989
- John T.Paoletti & Gary M. Radke, *Art in Renaissance Italy*, Laurence King publishing, 2005



- On Renaissance Portraiture: <http://italianrenaissancesources.com/units/unit5/essays/portraiture>

RECOMMENDED READINGS:

- Maiorino, Giancarlo, *Leonardo da Vinci, the Daedalian Mythmaker*, University Park, Pennsylvania University Press, 1992
- Poseq, Avigdor W. G., "Left and Right in Leonardo", *Konsthistorisk Tidskrift*, 66, 1997, pp. 37-50