Course Syllabus

ART 490-04
Independent Study:
Leonardo da Vinci and the Renaissance

Course Description
Leonardo da Vinci was the epitome of the Renaissance man. His art, his writings, his inventions, touched on nearly every aspect of human endeavor. In the history of the Western world his name has become synonymous with inventiveness, curiosity, and creative genius. He studied all aspects of life, from science to painting and captured the essence of mankind. His insatiable pursuit of perfection lead him to finish very few paintings in his long life, but he left many drawings, sketches and writings that helps us understand the genius behind the man.

This course provides an overview of the Renaissance and the life and work of Leonardo Da Vinci. The number of documents that Leonardo left us permits the recognition of his creative process and his talent. As we encounter his creations we get to understand the new style that was developed in Italy. Some of the renowned oeuvres done by Da Vinci can be found in museums around Europe where the student will be able to have a firsthand appreciation of his skill as a painter and as an inventor. Students will learn about his life and the development of his art, and will analyze his legacy. To see the Last Supper and the Mona Lisa is an experience on its own right.

Course Objectives
Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Recognize the characteristics of the Renaissance
- Understand the circumstances that helped developed this style
- Become familiarized with names and places related to Leonardo da Vinci and his time
- Identify the main differences between the Medieval styles and the Renaissance in art and architecture
- Develop an understanding of the importance of the Renaissance in Europe
- Learn about the life of Leonardo Da Vinci
- Experience the privilege to see first-hand the masterworks of Leonardo Da Vinci and other Renaissance artists
Required Textbook

Art Style, and Society: Siena, Florence, and Venice, 1300-1600
by Sarah Stever
Amazon Digital Services, Kindle Edition, 2014

Recommended Readings

Leonardo, Michelangelo, Raphael. The Greatest Artists of the Renaissance

Leonardo da Vinci: Notebooks
by Irma A. Richter

Leonardo Da Vinci: 1452-1519: The Complete Paintings and Drawings
by Frank Zollner

Course Requirements

- As a part of this course, students will visit museums, cathedrals, buildings, monuments, and other sites related to Leonardo da Vinci and the Renaissance

- Throughout the course, each student will be responsible for submitting 3 analytical essays, focused on agreed-upon topics. Each essay will consist of 2-3 pages (double-spaced, 12 point font) of content, i.e. not counting the cover page, list of references, and appendices. APA writing format should be followed. The essays should include photographs illustrating the main issues discussed.

- Please note that entrance fees to museums and other sites are not included in the price of the program.

- On the last two days of classes, each student will:
  o Make a 15-minute oral presentation, which will summarize the main findings of the 3 analytical essays; and
  o Take a final exam based on the modules listed in the syllabus

Components of Final Grade

Analytical essays 60%
Final exam 30%
Oral presentation 10%

Grading Scale

93-100 % A
90-92.9 % A-
87-89.9 % B+
83-86.9 % B
80-82.9 %  B-
77-79.9 %  C+
73-76.9 %  C
70-72.9%  C-
67-69.9 %  D+
63-66.9 %  D
60-62.9 %  D-
Below 60 %  F

Course Outline

Module 1
- Introduction to the Renaissance
- Precursors: Cimabue and Giotto
- The doors of the Baptistery in Florence
- Italy in the Fifteenth Century
- How the Renaissance came to be
- Early Fifteenth-Century Sculpture: Donatello’s David
- The first years of Leonardo’s life
- Da Vinci’s background
- Leonardo’s first artistic achievements

Module 2
- Leonardo’s manuscripts
- What Da Vinci wrote about war
- Anatomy experiments and drawings by Leonardo
- Leonardo’s inventions
- The masterpieces of Leonardo
- The development of new techniques: oil vs tempera and fresco
- Other artists: Michelangelo and Raffaello
- Michelangelo and Da Vinci

Module 3
- The Last Supper and the Sistine Chapel
- Architecture in Renaissance Italy
- The last years of Leonardo in France
- His obsessions with the Mona Lisa
- Leonardo’s mistakes
- The Vatican museums and Saint Peter’s Cathedral
- Da Vinci’s legacy

Academic Integrity
The Ramon Llull University, the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart and Franklin University Switzerland place a high value on the integrity, good conduct and academic honesty of all students. Students are expected to maintain high standards of academic integrity at all times. Any instance of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, will result in a grade of F for the course.