

## Leonardo da Vinci: Quintessential Artist Of the Italian and French Renaissance

I will be teaching Italian and French Renaissance Art History using da Vinci as the embodiment of this astounding period in art history. Since da Vinci lived the latter part of his life in France, died and is buried in Amboise, we will zero in on him but, of course, spend time studying the renaissance movement in Italy and then in France.

1. Introduction to the life and work of Leonardo and a field trip to his manor house in Amboise and the IBM Exhibit of his inventions in the basement. Also to the Chateau where Francis I lived and the chapel where Leonardo is buried. Emphasis on his boyhood and apprenticeship to Verrochio.
2. More or less following the order in Hartt's book on Renaissance in Italy we will trace the origins of the movement in the Tricento with an emphasis on Giotto. We will concentrate on Florence as the focal point of the movement and compare the difference between it and the gothic art comparing Chartres with Duomo in Florence.
3. Moving on to the Quattrocento, we will concentrate on *perspective* as it developed in practice and then in theory as formulated by Brunelleschi and Alberti. I will actually teach the students perspective. We will concentrate on a few key examples: the Duomo; the Baptistery Doors; the paintings of Massaccio and Fra Angelico, etc.
4. Concentration on the Italian Painters of the Second Renaissance Style [perspective mastered] such as Ucello, Veneziano, Andrea del Castagno and Piero della Francesca leading up to great works of Botticelli and Pollaiuolo. I will give some classes on life drawing but not grade the students on talent, only effort and understanding of the achievements of the artists of the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> Century to depict *action*.
5. Return to da Vinci showing his development in the late 15<sup>th</sup> Century and how he took the art of creating the illusion of three dimensions on a two dimensional surface to its peak. A close work at his early paintings.
6. The drawings of da Vinci as art and as science. His theory of painting as analogous to divine creativity: "The deity which resides in the science of the painter transforms the mind of the painter into a similitude of the divine mind since is proceeds with free power to generate the diverse essences of various animals, plants, fruits, landscapes, etc." Philosophical underpinnings of da Vinci in St. Thomas.

7. The scientific studies and engineering projects as outlined in the notebooks. Since there is no library at the Abbey we will return to Clos Luce in Amboise. I will provide a big reference book on da Vinci complete with illustrations and have it for the students to peruse. His works on water and flight will be discussed and researched.
8. Leonardo's writings on art; his aesthetic theory; his notes on the science of painting and chiaroscuro; anatomy; dramatic propriety, etc. His character as an artist and a renaissance man as revealed in these writings. His conviction that art is a science, etc.
9. The Mona Lisa as the quintessence of Leonardo's art and the art of the Italian Renaissance. A site visit to the Louvre will be a must at this point. His influence on the French Renaissance. Visit to Chambord.
10. After Leonardo: Michelangelo, Raphael and the academicization of art in mannerism and beyond for the next three hundred years. The influence of the man and the movement on European Culture and imperialism.

Note: I think it would be good if each of the students had a copy of Kenneth Clark's Book on Da Vinci which can be gotten from Amazon in paperback. Since there is neither a slide collection nor library at the Abbey we will utilize real examples and try to inspire a trip to Florence over Spring Break.