

# Leonardo da Vinci.

## The Tension between Theory & Practice

August 16-27, 2021

**Professor:** Michael W. Kwakkelstein, PhD

**Classes:** Monday-Friday

**Location:** The Dutch University Institute for Art History, Florence (NIKI)

**Credits:** 6 ECTS

**E-mail:** kwakkelstein@nikiflorence.org

**Office hours:** after class

**Costs:** € 10\* per person per night (museum visits and travel expenses not included).

€ 12-15 Reader

\*€ 25 per person per night for those who are not registered as a student at one of the six participating universities.

### Course Description:

An in-depth study of the drawings, paintings, and writings of Leonardo da Vinci (Vinci 1452-Amboise, France 1519). This course seeks to define the relationship between Leonardo's development as a painter and his scientific research. The student will become familiar not only with the artist's individual masterpieces, but also with his writings on painting and the implications of his concept of painting as a science. The student will gain insight in the design process of Leonardo's painted works through an attentive analysis of the preparatory drawings that reveal a close study of cause and effect in Nature.

### Course Objectives

To introduce the student to the art and scientific thought of Leonardo da Vinci and to enable him or her to understand and appreciate the originality and universality of his genius. The student will learn the significance of Leonardo's pioneering research in various branches of knowledge and will understand how that research relates to his artistic ideas about painting and his practice. The student will become familiar with the role drawing played not only in the creative process, but also in the transmission of the vast body of knowledge Leonardo gathered with the intention to compile illustrated treatises for the benefit of the painter. Finally, daily class discussions of the literature in the Reader will aid the student in developing academic skills.

### Course Structure

The course will be a combination of lectures with power point presentation/discussions of the readings in class and guided visits on site in museums in Florence.

A reader will be handed out during an introductory class (Utrecht, date and time t.b.a.).

### Course Requirements

Students will write a research paper with a 20 minutes-presentation at the institute (list of topics and outline term paper will be handed out at the beginning of the course). Paper: 2500 word (MA-level: 4000 words). Your presentation should include: brief outline of research question, state of research, method of research, sources used, additional questions raised, new insights, bibliography.

Knowledge should reflect research, readings (Reader) and lectures.

Deadline paper: Monday, **October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021.**

The following research questions are of importance to this course:

- 1 How do Leonardo's ideas about good painting relate to his own artistic practice?
- 2 What visual strategies did he develop for the transmission of scientific knowledge and how do the image and the writing relate to each other?
- 3 How do Leonardo's ideas about good painting relate to such ideas expressed by ancient authors (e.g. Pliny) and his contemporaries or near contemporaries?
- 4 How do Leonardo's ideas about painting relate to contemporary painting (does he criticize Italian painting and if so, why?)
- 5 What is the influence he exerted on his contemporaries both as a painter and as a teacher of art?

**Please send your cv with GPA and letter of motivation before May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 to [kwakkelstein@nikiflorence.org](mailto:kwakkelstein@nikiflorence.org)**

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