

Why Leonardo?

The inspiration for this course was a result of a chance reading of an advertisement in the Portland Oregonian. The ad was for a festival to be held in Corvallis, Oregon, home of Oregon State University. The festival, "Da Vinci Days," was dedicated to the Italian Renaissance artist, Leonardo da Vinci. In honor of his many talents and interests, and as part of the festivities, Oregon State engineering students had devised a specific competition. This competition was a race between different teams' kinetic sculpture. (Kinetic implies movement). Although unable to attend this "race", I began to think more seriously about the connections between this artist and his many, many interests. Pick up any book on Leonardo da Vinci and it will invariably list his interests/explorations in a variety of disciplines, e.g., painting, sculpture, architecture, anatomy, botany, engineering, optics, perspective, science, medicine, military equipment, flying machines, etc. These he explored throughout his life.

- **Mary Wills**

When I was in high school I was obsessed with art and physics. I spent almost all of my free time in the sculpture studio and I took as much physics as I could. When I began college I tried to major in physics and minor in art. But I was also trying to finish school in record time – don't ask me why – just too young to know better – and was overwhelmed by taking 20 some odd credits per semester. What a surprise????!!!! It felt to me as though I had to choose between art and physics - that I couldn't be both a scientist and an artist. Twenty years later I no longer believe this is true. My hope for you is that by studying a time when a scholar was both an artist and a scientist that you may see the power in not choosing between the two sides of your brain. Instead I hope this course makes you determined to learn how to use them both equally well! I hope that you experience the power of the combination of art and science.

- **Rebecca Hartzler**

We felt it would be interesting to plan a coordinated studies course that focused historically and artistically on the time of Leonardo da Vinci, while at the same time looking at the physics of some of the many technologies that were discovered (rediscovered) or invented (reinvented) by Leonardo and others at this time. While the Renaissance begins in Italy, we will also explore this cultural/scientific/technological "rebirth" throughout Europe. Although we may begin with the Renaissance, expect to also explore the 17th century Baroque period. At times the art history and physics discussion and projects will link up perfectly, but at other times, they will not. However, it is our goal, that by the end of the class, you will be familiar not only with a specific art historical time period, its painters, sculptors and architects, but also with the knowledge that you now understand what their discoveries and inventions were and how they work. The depth of your understanding of their accomplishments will be far greater than had these two courses been taught separately.