

Art 101
Chapter 7
Writing Assignment
Painting

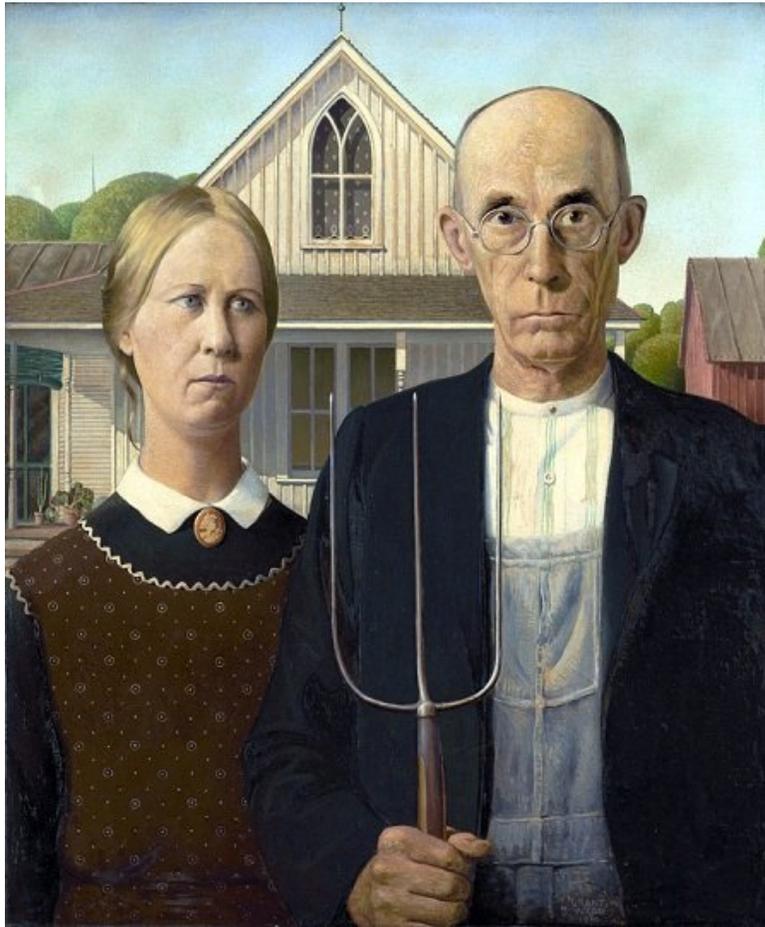
Assignment Brief: *Students must articulate their thoughts, feelings, and observations on paintings based off of lectures, assignments, and discussions from the semester.*

What to do?

Referencing the given paintings and descriptions, students must answer the following questions on each:

- 1) What design elements and principles stand out to you? Explain your answer.
- 2) Take a good look at the painting; what stands out most to you about the work? Why?
- 3) What is your take on the painting? Do you like it? Can you relate? Have you seen it somewhere before? How does it make you feel? Etc. Explain your answer.

- *Each question must be answered in a few sentences. Be as thorough as possible with your answers as well.*
- *Separate each set of questions by labeling each set of questions by painting you're discussing.*
- *Name, date, class, section (MWF or T-TR) when submitting work.*



American Gothic, Grant Wood, 1930, Oil on Beaverwood

Named from the style of the building in the background of this painting, *American Gothic* has long been a cultural icon of a nation. Painted in 1930s America, Wood's painting represents America, Middle America, and small-town America all at the same time. Along with Thomas Hart Benton and some other artists, Wood's style was linked to the Regionalist painting genre. Pictured here are a farmer and his daughter (although the actual models were Wood's dentist and his daughter). Part of the fascination people have for the work is the contradictory readings people attribute to it. Some feel that Wood was mocking the Midwest, while others think it accurately represented the Midwesterner that he saw and painted. Either way, the work suggests hardworking individuals who toil the land, a conservative America that contrasted with the growing industrial culture of the time, and a symbol of the American heartland.



Nighthawks, Edward Hopper, 1942, Oil on Canvas

Hopper's *Nighthawks* is another of the most famous American paintings of the twentieth century, depicting a snapshot of 1940s American culture. It depicts a quiet night scene, which some believe may have referenced Van Gogh's *Café Terrace at Night*. Its simplicity of form is deceptive when it comes to understanding the narrative that is being told. Both Hopper and his wife were models for the painting. Like many of Hopper's works, *Nighthawks* conveys the feeling of isolation, particularly in a crowd or a large city. For example, there is no door to the outer world of the big city, heightening a sense of isolation within the frame. The difference between the warm-colored interior and the cooler exterior highlights the sense of loneliness. The quiet conversation that the characters might be engaged in leaves us outside looking in. There is no sign of life in the buildings across the road. Hopper leaves questions unanswered for the viewer. Did the couple arrive together, or did they meet there? What about the man sitting alone? Why is he there late at night? This air of mystery has kept many a person guessing, and contributed to the painting's fame.