

MODULE 5 COMPARATIVE ESSAY: ASIAN VS. EUROPEAN LANDSCAPES

OVERVIEW

In this assignment, students have an opportunity to employ art history knowledge and comparative essay writing skills covered in this module. Students will choose one Asian landscape artwork and one European landscape artwork (both from between the Eleventh-Seventeenth centuries). They will then compare and contrast the two paintings, drawing on course vocabulary, contextual analysis, and formal analysis.

OUTCOMES

Outcomes 1-4, 8

INSTRUCTIONS



School of/style of Wang Yuanqi. *Mountain with River and Trees*. ca. 1642-1715. Ink on Paper. Used with permission of the British Museum.

The Eastern (Asian) landscape tradition is markedly different from that of the Western (European). Traditional Asian artists intended to evoke meditative contemplation through visual imagery using atmospheric perspective, placement, and asymmetry. Eastern works also stress a

reverence for nature and often include calligraphy or poetry as part of the primary subject. What ideas do European landscapes of the same time period convey?

For this assignment, you will choose one example each of paintings that represent the Eastern and Western landscape tradition. In your essay, compare and contrast each work's individual similarities and differences and identify major contrasts in these two cultural approaches. For basic information on how to approach this comparative essay, visit the Module 5 Writing Skills page.

STEP 1: RESEARCH

First, conduct basic research on Eastern and Western landscape paintings and create a list that includes three major ways in which they differ. Then, using the ART 110 Research Guide sources or comparable sites, browse examples of both Eastern and Western landscape art and choose two examples that will allow you to write a fully-developed essay based on your three or more major points of comparison. Next, summarize the primary differences you will write about in one "thesis statement" that will appear as a sentence in your essay's introduction. Note that not all Eastern and Western landscapes will make strong enough statements to support your thesis statement. For example, if Eastern landscapes stress a reverence for nature, look for Western examples that either clearly do or do not represent the same idea. Your choices should provide you with at least three clear, strong points of comparison.

Recommended Research Sources:

[The Freer/Sackler Smithsonian Museums of Asian Art](#)

[Met Museum: Landscape Painting in the Netherlands](#)

[Met Museum: Claude Lorrain](#)

[Met Museum: Korean Landscape Painting](#)

[Metropolitan Museum of Art, Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History](#)

[Metropolitan Museum of Art, Heilbrunn Timeline Thematic Essays, Keyword: "Landscape"](#)

STEP 2: WRITING

Essay (800 - 1200 Words)

1. First, review the information regarding "comparative essays" in the Module 5 Writing and decide which strategy you will follow to write your essay. Insert an image file of each of the landscape examples—one by an Eastern artist and one by a Western artist—you have chosen to write about at the beginning of your document file. In your introduction, identify the artists who created the landscapes, the subject of the works, and the era in which they were painted. For the next part of your introduction, provide a brief description of how each work represents the ideals of the Eastern and Western landscape traditions or philosophies. As before, this is a "thesis-driven" essay. Include your thesis statement in the introduction

and explain the three or more points of comparison you will be using in your analysis of the different attitudes towards nature, landscape, or the environment that you find in these two works.

2. Using one of the strategies explained in the Module 5 Writing Skills material (Compare and Contrast Strategies), explain how the two works contrast according to your three points of comparison. Use terminology from the elements of art and principles of design as you examine each work. Consider the following questions as you develop your comparisons: What did this artist hope to accomplish with this work? What aspect of the landscape did the artist most value? Did the artist demonstrate a personal connection with the landscape, or were they conveying a broader cultural message? Does each work represent attitudes towards nature continue on today? Explain each consideration in detail and refer directly to how they are demonstrated in the art itself.
3. Conclude by explaining any major differences, similarities, or attitudes towards nature that were revealed by the artists of the works you chose. Do you think the Eastern and Western philosophies concerning nature are vastly different, or are they the same? Explain why. Is this still true in the modern era?

Basic Information for all AP Submissions:

Create a "Works Cited" section that lists your various sources in MLA Style format at the end of your minimum 3-paragraph AP. Be sure you have properly cited any direct quotes you use in support of your own writing. For help with MLA Style citations, visit the suggested links in the ART 110 Research Guide or in our course home page's Links area.

STEP 3: SUBMIT

Before you submit your assignment to the Dropbox, review the instructions once again to make sure you have answered the required questions and provide relevant support. As always, the title of your saved file must include the module number and your last name (M1_LastName). Your work should be saved and submitted as a .doc, .docx, or .rtf file. The Essay instructions and rubric in the Syllabus can help guide your participation.