

MONT 101N – Analyzing Environmental Data
Paper Assignment – Views of Nature in Art
due: February 23, 2018

This assignment is based on your viewing of four works at the Worcester Art Museum that we will discuss in our visit on Thursday, February 15:

1. *Crossbow and Dead Game*, by Jan Fyt (Flemish, mid-17th century)
2. *Shipwreck*, by Hubert Robert (French, about 1800)
3. *Looking East from Denny Hill*, by Ralph Earl (American, 1800)
4. *The Peaceable Kingdom*, by Edward Hicks (American, about 1833)

(Note: You can find electronic image files of all of these online if you want to refresh your memories about them and/or check details. But seeing a small electronically-rendered photograph is no substitute for the actual experience of seeing the work in its true scale with your own eyes. If you do view them online, please include the URL and the date you downloaded the image in your list of sources consulted.)

Assignment

You should compose an essay addressing all of the following questions.

1. Is any of these a portrayal of the natural world *as it actually is*? Is there some aspect of human (or other) influence on the natural world that we see in each of them?
2. (“Compare and contrast”) Can you identify a specific view of the relationship between humans and the natural world *in each of these works*? Are some different from others? Are some similar to others? In what ways? What choices (both in the subjects the artists chose to paint, and in how those subjects are portrayed, the painting techniques used, etc.) have the artists made to highlight those views? Discuss any external (e.g. historical, literary, scriptural) sources for the images that you can identify.
3. Which of these paintings made the biggest impression on you and why? Taken purely as an example of painting, I think many (or even most) art critics and art historians would probably say that *Shipwreck* by Hubert Robert is superior to any of the others. Would you agree? Why or why not?

Most of these questions are *not* asking solely for a personal opinion. So you should try as much as possible to justify what you are saying by citing details from or about the paintings as evidence.

Important Note: It is perfectly OK with me if you want to share a rough draft of your essay with other students in the class, or with me, to get comments and suggestions. “Testing out” your ideas that way is often an important part of getting them down on paper in an effective form.

Prepare your essay using Microsoft Word or similar software and submit as a .doc file attachment to this email address:

jlittle@holycross.edu

Your assignment should arrive in my inbox no later than 5:00pm on Friday, February 23. Aim for around 3 double-spaced pages. (Going a bit short or long is OK, though, as long as you have addressed the questions above adequately and succinctly.)

For this assignment, you are not expected or required to refer to any sources. But if you do, please include a complete listing of all sources you consulted in a numbered References section at the end. If you take a direct quotation from one of them, identify it with an in-line reference of the form “(number, page)” where the number refers to the list of references at the end. Include a page number for printed sources; if you use online sources, that part can be omitted since there is usually not anything corresponding to a physical page number anyway(!)