

Activity: Art and Architecture in the Early Republic

1. American Art and Material Culture: Values from the Old World

Students will examine the ideas and values represented by selected works of art and architecture from Europe and their influence on the culture of the Early American Republic.

2. Objective:

(Global Learning Objective) Demonstrate an appreciation of the contributions of European, African, and Middle Eastern populations to American cultural development including but not limited to music, language, food, and religion.

Upon successful completion of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Define the cultural values of both European and Early American artists
- Compare the work of Andrea Palladio, Thomas Jefferson, and Antonio Canova
- Examine the works of these artists in comparison with the values of the time period
- Discuss their views and opinions on the artwork
- Create an essay that shows careful research and reflection on cultural values seen in European and early American architecture

3. Time:

3-4 weeks

4. Materials:

Access to course LMS (Moodle, Blackboard, etc.) and to the college's online library. Additional resources are listed in section # 7 below.

5. Procedure:

(For the teacher: In lectures/discussions in class, you may want to draw students' attention to the ways in which the "Founders" envisioned the ancient Roman Republic as a template, of sorts, for the American Republic. You could, for example, have the students research the Roman hero Cincinnatus; then the students could address the questions below in the context of early American understanding of "civic virtue.")

Write a short paper (3-4 pages) addressing the following questions:

1. Who was Andrea Palladio? Write a brief biography of him, citing his accomplishments and influences. (Resources #1, #2, #3)
2. How did Thomas Jefferson learn architecture? Briefly explain. (Resource #2, #7)
3. List a few of the buildings designed by Thomas Jefferson. What other buildings in America reflect the "Palladian" style? (Resources # 5, #6, #7)
4. Who was Antonio Canova? Write a brief biography of him, citing his accomplishments, and explain why the North Carolina state legislature decided to commission him to create a statue of George Washington. What happened to the original statue? (Resource #4)
5. How did Canova portray George Washington in his statue? Why? What "virtues" might Americans of the time have admired, as reflected in this statue? (Resource #4)
6. Reflection: The work of Jefferson and Canova is often labelled "neoclassical." What are some reasons why the leaders of the early American Republic might

have been attracted to this style? What does this attraction say about the civic virtues that they believed America would (or should) embody?

6. Assessment:

Project will be graded on the following criteria:

- All references and sources are properly cited, both in-text, and in bibliography; any outside sources cited by the student are appropriate (15%)
- Essay observes appropriate rules of writing mechanics (grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc.) (15%)
- Essay maintains appropriate style of academic writing (15%)
- Essay is coherent, organized, and proper length (3-4 pages) (15%)
- Essay appropriately addresses all components of the prompts presented in #5 above (20%)
- All assertions made by the student are properly supported through use of cited evidence and/or properly reasoned arguments (20%)

7. Resources:

1. Center for Palladian Studies in America: <http://www.palladiancenter.org/>
2. Palladio: America's Architectural Grandfather (five-minute video, National Building Museum):
<http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=thomas+jefferson+and+andrea+palladio&&view=detail&mid=C9700BC0BC448D716C0FC9700BC0BC448D716C0F&FORM=VRDGAR>
3. Paul Goldberger, "All He Surveyed" (*The New Yorker*, 30 March 2009)
<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2009/03/30/all-he-surveyed>
4. "Canova's Statue of Washington" by R. D. W. Connor:
<http://cdm16062.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p249901coll22/id/399027>
5. Monticello Explorer (virtual tour of Jefferson's Monticello):
<http://explorer.monticello.org/text/index.php?sect=house>
6. Encyclopedia Britannica article on Palladian Architecture:
<http://www.britannica.com/art/Palladianism>
7. Joshua Johns, "The Architectural Politics of Thomas Jefferson."
<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~cap/jeff/jeffarch.html>