History 111, Spring 2020

Dr. Madsen

Comparing/synthesizing artworks

1. These paintings were all created within two decades of one another. Are there similarities in theme among the paintings?

2. You may have noticed similarities in technique, color, composition, and other elements. What do these elements suggest, and what might be significant about the similarities?

3. These paintings may not capture events from the years they were created. Often, art reveals more about the concerns of the era in which it was created than the actual events or people it attempts to depict. What, taken collectively, do these paintings tell us about the values and beliefs of Americans living in the middle of the nineteenth century?

4. What do these paintings reveal about the attitudes of the artists (and, by extension, the people the artists hoped might buy this artwork or reproductions of it) about the landscape of the U.S. west and the people—indigenous or settlers—residing there?

5. What questions do you still have about these paintings or the places/events/people they depict? Where would you go for the answers?