

WRITING ASSIGNMENT: ONLINE MUSEUM DATABASES  
A "Take-Home Do-it-yourself Slide Comparison"

**Compare and contrast two works of art from the time period covered in our class (prehistoric through ca. 1450) in order to illustrate important trends or developments in art. At least one of these works should be from the Luna AMICA database and the second either from AMICA or from your text, Stokstad *Art History*.**

Date due: Monday, November 19, 8 am, in class

This **short** essay should be similar in format to a "slide comparison and discussion" on a test. Please think of your answer in terms of a short essay (10 intensely packed minutes of writing, 2-3 blue-book pages, or 1½ -2 typed pages). But do not limit yourself to 10 minutes of writing. Instead, take time to think through all the important points, so that you address all of the questions that occur to you. The point here is not description of the works, but thoughtful analysis. Please spend time editing to make your writing concise and to the point.

#### SELECTION OF WORKS

1. Use Luna/Insight software to search the AMICA database of works of art in North American museums. You will receive instruction in how to use this database from Helen McCullough, an Instructional Technologist from the Learning Commons.

The class login will be the same as for the website:

Username: art110

Password: Stonehenge

For more information, see the help pages at: <http://dam.allegheny.edu/>

[DAM stands for Digital Asset Management]

Or consult Amelia Carr or Helen McCullough

2. You can compare any two works, but a good essay will involve comparing two works that illustrate some sort of point.

Start by choosing two works that have something in common.

- a similar subject (portrait, landscape, religious scene)
- use of the same material.
- a similar artistic problem (depicting space, honoring a ruler)

BUT ALSO choose works that show contrasts.

- from different time periods,
- different materials
- different artists
- different cultures

In your comparison, account for the similarities and differences. What cultural values, differences in personalities, artistic training, etc. come into play?

## RESEARCH

This is not a research paper, but you should acquire some information about the works and periods you choose. Start with the museum label and then consult your textbook. Basic reference tools might help you identify historic factors (see the Encyclopedia Britannica in the Library resources or the Wikipedia online). Look at the museum websites online. The NY Metropolitan has superb educational materials online, particularly their Timeline of Art History (<http://www.metmuseum.org/>) Please feel free to discuss with me any questions you have.

This assignment is designed to help you with the Slide Comparison questions on the test. For more information, see my webpage on Slide Test Format:

**<http://merlin.alleg.edu/employee/a/acarr/slideformat.html>**

## FORMAT

Identify each work fully, including the same information required in a slide exam (if known, Artist, Title, Date, Period, Material, Dimensions). Because you will be describing works in collections, include museum information: museum name, city where located, and accession number. In addition, for each work include a reference to the illustration, either a figure number from Stokstad, or the reference number in the Luna/AMICA database. Essays should be 1½ -2 typed pages typed, single-spaced and stapled pages. If you consulted references in addition to your textbook, be sure to include them in a Works Consulted page.

## EXAMPLES

Here are some combinations selected from the Cleveland Museum of Art. Feel free to use these, but you will have to look them up in Luna to identify the database number. Nos 3 and 4 are related to the last part of the class and deal with ideas that might appear on the final exam.

### EXAMPLE ONE:

Marcus Aurelius. 2nd c. ad. Life-size bronze, CMA.

Gudea. Dolorite. 22nd c. bd. diorite. CMA.

Illustrate the differences between the Roman ideal philosopher-king ruler and the Neo-Sumerian shepherd king. A development in naturalism. Bronze and dolorite are handled differently and allow different body poses.

### EXAMPLE TWO:

Standing Buddha. 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> c. ce. Gray schist, India (Gandhara) CMA

Standing Buddha. 591 ce. Bronze. India (Gupta) CMA

Both show Buddhas, but different styles: hellenizing Gandharan style vs. traditional Indian Gupta style.

### EXAMPLE THREE:

Arm Reliquary. Guelph Treasury. Gilt silver over oak. Germany, ca. 1175.

Monstrance with Relic of St. Sebastian. Guelph Treasury. Silver gilt and crystal. Germany, ca. 1475.

Reliquaries from church altars. Can be compared to your textbook's discussion of reliquaries on p. 509, illustrating St. Foy of Conques. Illustrate development in types of reliquaries from Romanesque to Gothic.

### EXAMPLE FOUR:

Marcus Aurelius. 2nd c. ad. Life-size bronze, CMA.

St. John from Crucifixion Group. Painted and gilded wood. Spain, ca. 1275.

Both show standing human figures, with differences in function. Illustrate the differences between classical realistic style and more stylized medieval forms. Bronze and wood show differences in wealth and technique.

