

Art History 271: Online Discussion

Online Discussion Assignment Example - Spring 2008 Julia Sapin

China OLC Scenario: "Saving Confucius"

(Written in conjunction with Roberta Kjesrud, Coordinator of the Writing Center, and her staff)

Set-up

Your group forms the committee of registrars at the National Palace Museum located in Taiwan. Your collection includes, luckily, all the originals of the images used in WWU's AH 271 course. Tragically, however, you have just learned that you and the museum lie directly in the path of a monster typhoon that is three days away from destroying the world's main collection of Chinese art. Don't worry—you will be airlifted to safety. And the director of the museum has negotiated space for two masterpieces on the evacuation chopper.

Given that registrars are charged with preserving art, the director has instructed your committee to choose two pieces that best represent the complex Daoist and Confucian elements of Chinese art. You'd like to meet face-to-face as a committee, but city managers have declared that roads and phones can only be used for emergency purposes. You'll have to meet online. To expedite your decision, the director suggests that you each begin by explaining to the committee your sense of the essential characteristics of Daoism and Confucianism. By the end of the meeting, you'll have to agree not only on these core characteristics but on the two art objects that best embody them. To get your meeting started, your director poses these questions:

First prompt: Based on your reading of The Analects of Confucius and the Dao De Jing, how would you describe the primary characteristics of Confucianism and Daoism?

Second prompt: Propose two images best representing Tao and Confucian ideals that simply must be saved from the oncoming typhoon. Feel free to post your images and use quotes from The Analects and the Dao De Jing to explain why these two are your nominations.

Exam question:

Dear Registrar,

Please let me know your final decision about which two objects you have selected for evacuation, based on your understanding of how each object represents Daoist and Confucian philosophy, respectively. Please explain precisely the ways in which each object exhibits aspects of the philosophical system in question (i.e., either Daoism or Confucianism) to support your decision.

Sincerely Yours,
The Museum Director