

NEH Hudson River Workshop Lesson Plan 2011

Teacher: Patricia Franklin

Subject: AP Art History

Grade Level: 11th -12th Grade

Summary:

This lesson allows students to understand the history and importance of both the Hudson River School Painters and the Florida Highwaymen. Students will be able to compare and contrast the two schools.

Lesson Plan

Patricia Franklin, Timber Creek High School, Orlando, FL

Course: AP Art History

Intended Grade Levels: 11 and 12

Time Frame: Three 45 minute periods.

Rationale: Part of AP Art History is the introduction of American artists, the discussion of the elements of their art and the understanding of how their art impacted America. The Hudson River School originated a new way to paint landscapes. They used local landscapes as subjects for their paintings. The paintings of both the Hudson River School and the Florida Highwaymen depicted the untouched, unspoiled landscape at a time when development was on the rise.

Learning Goals:

- Students will understand the concept and the impact of the Hudson River School of Artists.
- Students will understand the history of the Florida Highwaymen.
- Students will be able to compare and contrast the artistic methods and impact of the Hudson River School of Artists with those of the Florida Highwaymen Artists.

Standards:

Florida Sunshine State Standards:

Writing 1.5: Synthesize information from multiple sources and identify complexities and discrepancies in the information and the different perspective found in each medium.

Writing 2.4: Write persuasive compositions.

Visual Arts. C 1.4: The student understands the visual arts in relation to history and culture.

Visual Arts. C 1.4.1: The student understands how social, cultural, ecological, economic, religious, and political conditions influence the function, meaning, and execution of works of art.

Background Information:

The Hudson River School of artists were a group of painters in the early 19th century who were the first artists to paint landscapes by actually going to sites and painting nature as opposed to working in a studio. These representations of pastoral life were sold to wealthy New Yorkers who viewed the Hudson River Valley as a refuge from the industrialized city. Often the paintings would be accompanied by a narrative that was not only patriotic but also enticed Americans to visit the Hudson. Their view was that

the unblemished Catskill Mountains are the history of America just as the Roman, Medieval, and Renaissance buildings are the history of Europe.

The Florida Highwaymen were a group of 26 African American artists who painted from the 1950s to the 1980s. They sold their landscapes of unblemished Florida along the Interstate 95 and State Road A1A. Their view of old Florida enticed northerners to visit Florida and, in the same way as the Hudson River School artists, ignored the rampant development of the areas they painted. They remained relatively unknown until an article by Jim Fitch in the 1990s brought attention to their art.

Materials:

4 X 6 Index cards

Hudson River School Paintings: A Book of Postcards. Wadsworth Atheneum.

Hudson River School Pairings: 24 Art Cards. Dover Publications.

Fitch, Jim, The "Highwaymen" *Antiques & Art Around Florida, Winter/Spring 1995.*

Fitch, Jim, The "Highwaymen Revisited" *Antiques & Art Around Florida, Winter/Spring 1997.*

Thomas Cole, "Essay on American Scenery" (1836), in *American Art to 1900: A Documentary History* (UC Press, 2009)

Procedure:

Day One:

- Assess Prior Knowledge: Give students 6 X 8 index cards. Students write on front of index card all they know about Hudson River School artists from personal knowledge.
 - Have they ever heard of the Hudson River School? What do they know?
 - Have they heard of the Hudson River? What do they know?
- Give students postcards of the Hudson River School artists. Students sit in groups to write more information they have gained from observation of postcards.
 - What is the subject of most of the paintings?
 - What is the medium?
 - How do the artists relate to nature and to people?
- Talk to students giving them more information about these artists, their philosophy and their impact on the art world, tourism and economic development of the Hudson River Valley.
- At the end of the period have students write 10 facts they now know about Hudson River School artists on the opposite side of the index card.

Day Two:

- Students will read and annotate the article by Jim Fitch <http://aarf.com/fews9501.htm> and follow up articles <http://aarf.com/fews9701.htm> which brought attention and prestige to the Highwaymen.
- Students will discuss the similarities and differences between the Hudson River School artists with the Florida Highwaymen.
 - Are the subjects of the paintings similar?
 - Are the reasons for painting landscapes similar?
 - Are their customers similar?
 - Were the artists received in the art world in the same manner?
 - Was the effect of the artworks on the environment similar?

Day Three:

- Take students to the library to research Florida Highwaymen artists.
 - Using websites such as these for research:
 - http://www.floridahighwaymenpaintings.com/highwaymen_artists
 - <http://floridahighwaymen.com/>
 - <http://www.highwaymen-paintings.com/>
- Have students write a narrative to go with one of the Highwaymen paintings in the same way the Hudson River School artists wrote narratives to sell with their artwork.

Assessment:

- Day One Assessment: Ten valid facts about Hudson River Artists.
- Day Two Assessment: Annotations and Discussion that shows higher level understanding.
- Day Three Assessment: Written narrative which shows analysis of material and creation of a similar but unique narrative.