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Short Paper Topics

Due: March 23, 2023 at 11:59 PM

Weight: 20%

Topics

You may choose from one of four possible topics for this assignment.

1. Film Adaptation of a Myth

- a. Choose a modern English film that re-tells a myth from Ancient Greece or Rome. Compare this film to at least one ancient version of the myth, making note of significant differences between the ancient myth and the film. You do not need to make note of every minor difference (as this would be impossible); focus on a few of the most prominent ones, or a few that seem to follow the same theme or idea. Your essay will both identify these differences (citing sources throughout), and speculate as to the reason behind these differences. That is, you may speculate why the screenwriter/director may have chosen to deviate from the ancient myth, and what the effect of these changes is on the overall film. The essay will be graded on the description of key differences, the plausibility of the reasons behind these differences, and general composition.

2. Book Adaptation of a Myth

- a. Choose a modern English book (or book series) that re-tells a myth from Ancient Greece or Rome. Compare this book to at least one ancient version of the myth, making note of significant differences between the ancient myth and the book. You do not need to make note of every minor difference (as this would be impossible); focus on a few of the most prominent ones, or a few that seem to follow the same theme or idea. Your essay will both identify these differences (citing sources throughout), and speculate as to the reason behind these differences. That is, you may speculate why the author may have chosen to deviate from the ancient myth, and what the effect of these changes is on the overall book/series. The essay will be graded on the description of key differences, the plausibility of the reasons behind these differences, and general composition.

3. Cross-Cultural Comparison

- a. Identify a pair of similar myths; one must be Greek or Roman, the other must be from another ancient culture (ex., Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Hebrew, Celtic, Scandinavian, etc.). Write a paper comparing these myths, including similarities and differences, as well as the cultural implications of these differences. You must cite your sources (including the myths and any secondary sources you consult) throughout your paper. The paper will be evaluated on your description of similarities and differences, your analysis of cultural implications, and general composition.

4. Heroic Family Tree

- a. Choose a major hero from Greek or Roman myth. Create a family tree for that hero, identifying important relatives (including, ex., parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings, cousins, nieces, nephews, other descendants). You must show their genetic/family relationships with each other, which can be challenging (given the incest, adoption, multiple paternities, etc.). As well, different myths might have discrepancies regarding these familial relations; if you encounter a discrepancy, you should note it, and also justify why you chose to follow one tradition over the other. Your family tree may be hand drawn, or created electronically.
- b. Along with your family tree, you must submit a series of short biographical statements on the most prominent members of the family tree. You should focus especially on the details that seem most relevant to the life and character of the hero you are examining. You may also find common themes emerging across generations; you can highlight these within each biography, or have a separate “Themes of the Family” section at the end. Each mini-biography should be about a paragraph in length, for a total of approximately 500 words. Be sure to cite your sources throughout. The assignment will be evaluated on the accuracy, extent, and clarity of the family tree, and on the content, insight, and composition of the mini-biographies, as well as general composition.

General Guidelines for All Topics

- For Topics 1, 2, and 3, the word count requirement is 750-1000 words, plus bibliography
 - For Topic 4, the word count is 500-750 words, plus bibliography and the family tree
- Double-spaced, 12-pt font. 1-inch margins
- Name and student number on the top of each page
- Citations and bibliography following proper citation style (APA or Chicago)
- Short introduction and conclusion
- Proper grammar and sentence structure

Tips on how to be successful

- Pick something that interests you—you're much more likely to do a good job if you're genuinely interested in learning more about what you're writing about
- Once you've chosen a prompt, do a preliminary search for sources (you may go to the textbook to start)
- Now that you've narrowed down your focus, try to search for more specific sources using these key words, and by mining the footnotes of the sources you've already found
- Take notes as you read through your sources so that you can identify the most important information and return to it easily when you go to write the final paper

Some Places to Look for Sources

- University of Manitoba Library main catalogue
- Journal databases such as JSTOR or Project Muse
 - On the U of M Library page, click "Databases A-Z" and then find JSTOR
- Google Scholar
- Bagnall, Roger S. (Ed.). *Encyclopedia of Ancient History*. Wiley Blackwell, 2012.
 - Excellent entries with up-to-date bibliography. Check the "References and Suggested Readings" for other sources that might be of use. Available through U of M Libraries
- Once you find one source that seems good/reliable, go through the footnotes/bibliography and make a note of any sources that seem like they might be helpful, then search for that source in the library database

A Note on Online Sources

- You may use one online source from a reliable, standalone website
- Sources that you access online (through the library website, such as journal articles found on databases, etc.) don't count as "online sources" because they are part of a print journal or book
- What is a reliable website?
 - Check the host – universities, museums, government institutions, reputable publications (newspapers, magazines like National Geographic, etc.) are generally reliable

- Wikipedia may provide you with some suggestions of where to find reliable information (check the footnotes!) but a Wikipedia article should not be cited in an academic paper
- Sources with unclear/missing hosts or authors, or that are aimed at children (such as Khan Academy) are not reliable sources for academic papers

Citing Secondary Sources

Be sure to cite all sources properly according to Chicago or APA style. See examples here:

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa6_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/general_format.html

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/chicago_manual_17th_edition/cmos_formatting_and_style_guide/general_format.html

Citing Ancient Sources

Ancient sources should be cited in the body of the paper using author, title, and book and line number. For example:

Homer, *Odyssey* 1.1.

In the bibliography, you should include the translator and publisher information:

Homer, *Odyssey*. Translated by Robert Fagels. Penguin Classics, 1996.



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