

WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY

CL 212 (2009)

TOPICS FOR MAJOR ESSAY

General Guidelines (copied from course outline):

You will be expected to produce a research essay of at least 1250 to 1500 words on a topic covered by the course. (There is no penalty for an essay which is too long, but points will be deducted for one which is too short at the discretion of the instructor.) You will need to include at least four sources from academic articles or books, one of which may be the article used for your presentation. Although you are encouraged to use online resources, least one of these must be a source not available on line (e.g., JSTOR, MUSE, Ingentia, or an online journal available through the library). You must go to the library at least once to access material. I encourage you to go as early as possible; while I will try to anticipate the demand for the most popular resources and put them on reserve, I cannot hope to cover all of the bases. **I will deduct five points for references to encyclopedias, Wikipedia, or any unreferenced source.**

Although it is easiest if the presentation and essay are linked, this is not required. Sometimes people will pick an article for presentation, only to learn that this is not a topic they wish to pursue further. You will be required to tell me your choice of topic no later than Friday, February 13. Alternatively, you may develop your own topic from a précis (half page summary), provided that the précis is handed in by February 10, along with three bibliographical sources.

I strongly encourage each of you to bring in a draft version of your essay for consultation during my office hours, or by appointment. In fact, I believe that these consultations are sufficiently beneficial that I will give participants a weekend's extension on the due date. I will be setting aside extra time for appointments in the week leading up to the deadline.

Your paper must include proper footnotes and bibliography. I am flexible as to the style of documentation, but please be consistent. If in doubt, consult the MLA manual or website or *The Chicago Manual of Style* (both available in the reference section of the library) for acceptable citation format.

Evaluation includes sentence and paragraph structure, grammar, punctuation, and word usage, as well as your ability to organize and articulate ideas.

You will be required to hand in all notes and drafts used to write this essay. I reserve the right to require electronic submission of any essays in the class on the anti-plagiarism software licensed by the University.

Exceptions to General Guidelines (written for this summary; not in syllabus):

There are several topics which have somewhat different overall requirements.

A. The papers on torture and punishment in Roman comedy and comparisons between ancient Roman poets and modern opera are interdisciplinary. I will need at least three bibliographical sources on the Latin writer and at least two on the more modern topic. At least one of the total will require a physical trip to the library.

B. I am also including two topics with a creative component (the gates of horn/ivory and Wilfrid Owen invites the ghost of Horace to dinner). The specific requirements for each are outlined under the description of the topic.

Limit of students working on a given topic:

Although I encourage students to spread themselves out over the list of topics, in general I will allow up to **five** people to write on each subject. The main exceptions are categories with sub-topics. I will put on reserve books which are likely to see heavy use.

Topics:

1. Our understanding of the works of Ennius is limited due to the extremely fragmentary nature of the evidence. With that having been said, in what respects do the extant portions depict an accurate representation of Roman history, and in what ways does artistic license either emphasize Rome's achievements or stress the difficulties of its early years?
2. Compare and contrast the economic and social relations in Menander's *Dyscolos* (*The Grouch*) with those in any play of Plautus or Terence which you have read.
3. Although it has been said that Plautus is not fond of twinning, he portrays real or imaginary twins to comic effect in *Miles Gloriosus* (*The Braggart Soldier*) and *Menaechmi*. Compare and contrast his use of twinning in these two plays.
4. Discuss the importance of Plautus for Verdi's opera *Falstaff*.
5. Compare the portrayal of slaves with that of women in any one or two plays of Plautus you have read.
6. Analyze and discuss the various ways in which Plautus uses references to food for comic effect. While *Mostellaria* (*The Haunted House*) has plenty of source material, you should also bring in evidence from at least one other play. Looking at a play other than those read in class is fine.
7. In what ways, if at all, are references to torture and punishment in Roman comedy humorous? (N.B.: For this topic you will need at least one scholarly source on torture and/or human rights. The instructor recommends works by Page DuBois and/or Michel Foucault as a starting point.)

8. Discuss the relationship between Terence's *Adelphoe* (*The Brothers*) and the concepts of nature (*physis*) and environment/custom (custom = *nomos*) in Greek philosophy. The instructor can help you with the basics here.
9. In what ways does Terence's play *Adelphoe* (*The Brothers*) succeed (or not) as a comedy? You should make use of at least one theorist on comedy, whether ancient (e.g., Aristotle) or modern (e.g., Bakhtin) in your discussion.
10. Discuss the organization of Catullus' Juventius poems and/or treatment of same-sex eroticism in these works.
11. Analyze how Catullus uses the imagery of business and the law to show the deterioration of his relationship with Lesbia.
12. Compare Catullus' portrayal of Theseus and Ariadne in poem 64 with that of Richard Strauss in his opera *Ariadne auf Naxos*. You should also consider whether the structure of 64 is relevant to that of the *Vorspiel* in the opera.
13. Compare Catullus' portrayal of Theseus and Ariadne with that of Peleus and Thetis.
14. Compare Catullus' portrayal of Theseus and Ariadne with that of Jason and Medea in any Greek author of your choice.
15. Compare and contrast the imagery of death in Catullus' poems 68b and 101.
16. In what ways, if at all, are the differences in social status and expectations between Catullus and Lesbia/Clodia portrayed in his poems?
17. Discuss literary competition as a theme in Vergil's *Eclogues*.
18. In what ways, if at all, does Vergil show pessimism in his treatment of Augustus in his fourth *Eclogue*?
19. In what ways do Vergil's *Laudes Italiae* ("Praises of Italy") at *Georgics* 2.136-175 show verisimilitude (the quality of being true to life)?
20. Discuss the use of nature imagery (plants, animals) as a metaphor for civil strife and peace in Vergil's *Georgics*.
21. In what ways do Epicurean and Stoic philosophy enrich Vergil's understanding of the pastoral in Book II of his *Georgics*?
22. Compare and contrast the speeches of Dido and Aeneas in Book IV of Vergil's *Aeneid*.

23. Compare Vergil's use of similes with that of Homer.
24. Does Book VI of Vergil's *Aeneid* display optimism or pessimism about Augustus and his program? Why or why not?
25. Compare and contrast the use of prophecy in Books I and VI of the *Aeneid*.
26. Discuss the Nisus and Euryalos episode in Vergil's *Aeneid* as a metaphor for devotion.
27. Compare and contrast Vergil's depiction of women, children, and/or animals in the *Aeneid* with contemporary developments in Roman art.
28. In what ways does Henry Purcell's portrayal of either Dido or Aeneas in his opera *Dido and Aeneas* reflect the concerns of his day?
29. Can you picture the gates of horn or ivory (Vergil, *Aeneid* VI) in your mind, in a way relevant to the prophecies of the Cumaean Sybil? If so, why not create what you see? A variety of artistic materials can be used, together or separately. I will consider paint media, such as watercolor, acrylics, or egg tempera, mixed media, or any one of several techniques available for bas-relief. Since I am interested in artistry, not engineering, I am not concerned with the underlying physical structure of the gates. As long as your work can be stood upright (as a piece of cardboard, for example), I will leave the specific backing up to you. Regrettably, however, I cannot consider strictly computer-generated art.

Written requirements: a 600-word description of what you did and why you did it, and the usual bibliography. Note: the bibliography on this topic is extensive, and you need to make full use of it.

I will accept up to 7 students on this topic!

30. Much modern scholarship talks about Aeneas' failures in leadership. In what way, if at all, is the fate of Turnus the main example of such a failure?
31. The twentieth-century English poet Wilfred Owen had a complicated relationship with the poetry of Horace and the interpretations of Horace current in his day. Write either a short one-act play or opera in which Owen invites the ghost of Horace to dine with him in either the trenches in France or the Craiglockhart Military Hospital in England. If you would like other dinner guests, you may include the ghosts of Vergil and/or Rupert Brooke (who died before Owen), and/or any one of Owen's military friends alive at that time.
32. In what ways, if at all, might the portrayal of women in any TWO myths in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* be considered a reflection of social roles of women in the Augustan Age?

33. In what ways does Bernini reinterpret Ovid's tale of Apollo and Daphne for his own use and in his own day?
34. Discuss what (if any) concepts of unity are relevant to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Book I.
35. Compare and contrast the theme of seduction in Ovid, *Amores* I.5 and Archilochus' long fragment, *P. Colon. 7511* (Cologne papyrus 7511, possibly about Neobule's sister).
36. Compare and contrast the imagery of military success in Ovid, *Amores* I.2 with the same ideas as portrayed in Augustan sculpture, while bearing in mind the influence of love poetry on the seriousness of the proceedings in Ovid.
37. In what ways is the portrayal of Trimalchio OR Fortunata in Petronius' *Satyricon* related to the real lives of prosperous freedmen of the day?
38. Relate the poetic excerpts in Petronius' *Satyricon* EITHER to each other OR to the surrounding passages.
39. If you have time to read extended passages on Encolpius and Giton in the *Satyricon* which we are unlikely to have the time to read in class, you might enjoy discussing how the relationship between these two characters both reflects and inverts the understanding of marriage of Petronius' day.
40. "Petronius' *Satyricon* is a reflection of a moral universe which is almost entirely bleak and corrupt." Discuss. (quotation made up by the instructor for the purpose of argument)
41. Discuss the theme of redemption in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* as it applies to any ONE character. (Note: there is more than enough scholarship on this topic to keep you busy.)
42. Discuss the portrayal of any ONE female character in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*.
43. Discuss the literal, metaphorical, and allegorical uses of failure of communication in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*.