

Armies and Navies

The problems with the modern debates on ancient warfare and how to critically approach them

Course Work:

- Write a 2,500-word reply to one of the following scholarly articles. Consider the scholar's position, argument, use of evidence, position in debates and use of modern scholarship. You should try to either counter or support both the scholar's overall position and specific arguments. Remember that while you might agree with the overall position, you might disagree with some of the specific arguments made; that is acceptable and you should make it clear in your reply. You should always be careful to base your arguments on the ancient sources and evidence, as well as consult and engage with other modern scholarly views and arguments on the subject.

The Articles

- Ian Whitehead, 'The Periplous', *Greece & Rome*, Second Series, Vol. 34, No. 2 (Oct., 1987), pp. 178-185
- J. F. Lazenby, 'The Diekplous', *Greece & Rome*, Second Series, Vol. 34, No. 2 (Oct., 1987), pp. 169-177
- J. Graham, 'Thucydides 7.13.2 and the Crews of Athenian Triremes', *Transactions of the American Philological Association* (1974-) Vol. 122, (1992), pp. 257-270

What are the main problems with a debate?

1. Recognising that something is debated
2. Accessing the different viewpoints
3. Assessing the different viewpoints
 1. Need to check ancient sources and evidence used by the various sides of the debate
 2. Need to check the main debated points and whether they should really be debated
4. Arriving to your own conclusion

Traps to look out for

1. Can you access all the ancient sources and evidence?
2. Can you access all the scholarly opinions and arguments on the debate?
3. Is the debate really relevant?
4. Are sources / evidence being misrepresented?

Understanding the marking criteria

- The marking criteria is specific to this type of assessment.
- They are not the same criteria as for your essays.

How to fail

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- **Bad Fail (10-19%)** Work which fails on all criteria. It could also be the mark for a very short answer with little relevant material.
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- **Outright Fail (0-9%)** Incomplete work, or work with absolutely no relevance to the article and its subject. A mark of 0 will be awarded for plagiarism or failure to submit.
- **Fail (30-39%)** Work which is **poorly structured** and of very **limited relevance to the article**. It may be distinguished by a **lack of supporting evidence**, misunderstandings, a failure to address the **issues raised in the article**, substantial generalisation and the **lack of any argument**.
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- **Clear Fail (20-29%)** Work which shows little or **no real understanding of the article** and which displays little or no evidence of learning.

The problem of descriptiveness

- **Pass (40-49%)** Work which is adequate but limited. It may include **irrelevant material** and be too **descriptive and narrative**. **Some parts** of, or specific arguments in, the article may be considered and replied adequately, **but others will be ignored** because of omissions in the reading, factual inaccuracy, **difficulty in identifying the key issues** and arguments raised by the author, or poor style, structure and presentation.

Attempt to reply

- **Good (50-59%)** Sound and competent work which **covers the subject matter** and is **appropriately organised** and presented. May tend to **some narrative** and description rather than analysis but **does attempt to present a coherent reply** to the article's argument(s). Work in the 54-50 band is likely to be factually sound but to show only a **general grasp of the issues** which the article is raising, and to be **weak in critical awareness** and analytical qualities. There may be some evidence of the inclusion of **irrelevant material**, a certain lack of focus in the discussion or **deficiencies in the evidence** used to support the argument(s) made in reply to the article.

60-69

- **Very Good (60-69%)** Clearly structured work displaying an ability to deal with the concepts, sources and arguments relevant to the topic under discussion and critical judgement in selecting, evaluating and organising material. The work engages clearly and critically with all of the arguments presented in the article using both ancient sources and modern scholarship. In the 64-60 range the work will display some of the qualities of excellence outlined above, although some aspects will be less fully realised. The 69-65 range represents a degree of achievement in all or most respects.

1st class

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- **Excellent (70-79%) FIRST CLASS.** A sharply-focused answer of high intellectual quality, which adopts a **comprehensive approach** to the issues raised in the article and maintains a **sophisticated level of analysis throughout**. It should show a willingness **to engage critically with the scholarship on the subject beyond the article itself** and use sources creatively to arrive at its own **independent conclusions**.
- **Exceptional (90-100%) EXCEPTIONAL FIRST CLASS.** An answer that fulfils all of the criteria for Outstanding and in addition shows an **exceptional degree of insight and independent thought**, together with flair in tackling issues. Work displaying the highest level of scholarship and originality attainable at level 6.
- **Outstanding (80-89%) HIGH FIRST CLASS.** An **authoritative answer** that provides a **fully effective response** to the article. It should show **a firm command of the scholarship** on and around the subject of the article and **an ability to integrate that scholarship and go beyond it**. The analysis must achieve a high level of quality early on **and sustain** it through to the conclusion. Sources should be used accurately and concisely to inform the answer and support the answer. **There should be a sense of a critical and committed argument**, mindful of other interpretations but not afraid to question them. Presentation and the use of English should be commensurate with the quality of the content.

Tips and tricks

- This is about content and argument – do not write a reply simply on the scholar's style.
- Read as widely as you can to put the article and the issue it is covering into adequate context (historical and scholarly).
- Agreement can be as valuable as disagreement.