

NON-ASSESSED TOPICS FOR THE 1,500 WORD ASSIGNMENT

Distance students (residential students – you will be presenting each week as a comparative activity)

Unit 1: Myth, Singers and Song

- a. Critically discuss how 'oral tradition' affects our analysis of the Homeric epics.
- b. Analyse the role of bards in the Homeric epics.
- c. Focusing on either the myth of Meleager or Niobe, analyse the use of mythology in the *Iliad*.

Unit 2: Odysseus at Phaeacia

- a. What is the function of the Phaeacian episode?
- b. Choosing one mythological episode from the *Apologoi*, analyse its mythological and literary role in the *Odyssey*.
- c. Analyse the importance and function of the *Nekyia* for the *Odyssey*, approaching this question from various angles including a mythological one.

Unit 3: Medea: Love and the Female in Epic

- a. Write a detailed analysis comparing the Apollonius' Medea with that of either Pindar or Euripides.
- b. Write a detailed analysis of the Homeric influences on Apollonius' Medea.
- c. In what ways does Apollonius subvert epic conventions in books 3 and 4 of the *Argonautica*?

Unit 4: Revisiting the Ancient Heroes: Heracles and an Argonautic Odyssey

- a. Focusing on either the Hylas, Lemnian or Hesperides episodes, analyse the role of Heracles and portrayal of heroism in the *Argonautica*.
- b. Analyse the ways in which Apollonius recasts his Homeric influences in the Argonauts' returns.
- c. Write an analysis of the role of the Circe episode in Apollonius Rhodius' *Argonautica* both in relation to the epic and in relation to its Homeric predecessor.

Unit 5: Condensed Epic: Hellenistic Epyllia

- a. Discuss Moschus' use of familiar mythological motifs by comparing Europa with other famous heroines who were abducted and raped (parallels and contrasts): Nausicaa (*Odyssey*), Medea (*Argonautica*), Persephone (*Homeric Hymn to Demeter*).
- b. Discuss *either* Theocritus' use of the Heracles myth (either in relation to Pindar, the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* or to Idylls 13 and 17) *or* his use of mythology surrounding children.

- c. Discuss the concepts of heroism in these three Epyllia.
- d. Evaluate whether the term 'epyllion' is useful for analysing these poems.

Unit 6: Catullus 54: Grand Myth on a Small Scale

- a. To what extent can we classify Catullus 64 as neoteric?
- b. Analyse Catullus' treatment of ecphrasis in the poem.
- c. Focusing on either the myth of Peleus and Thetis or that of Ariadne and Theseus or that of Jason and Medea or that of Achilles, explore how and why Catullus uses and recasts his mythological predecessors in this poem.

Unit 7: The Renewal of Epic: Vergil's *Aeneid*

- a. Why do you think Vergil chose the Aeneas legend for his epic?
- b. What is the significance of the Hercules-Cacus episode to Vergil's epic?
- c. In what ways does Vergil play with and utilise epic genre conventions?
- d. What role does the ecphrasis of Dido's temple play in the *Aeneid*?
- e. Analyse the purpose and role of the Shield of Aeneas in the *Aeneid*.

Unit 8: Vergilian Women and Underworlds

- a. Analyse how and why Vergil use Medea as a model for his Dido.
- b. Discuss the role of Dido in book 4 of the *Aeneid*.
- c. Analyse Vergil's uses and recasting of his mythological predecessors in his description of the descent to the Underworld in book 6.
- d. Analyse Vergil's interweaving of myth and history in either book 4 or book 6 of the *Aeneid*.

Unit 9: Flavian Treatment of the Argo Myth

- a. Analyse the how Valerius Flaccus' uses and recasts his mythological predecessors in his presentation of the Hylas episode. What can this tell us about VF's poetic style?
- b. Analyse VF's use of epic conventions in either the Hylas episode or his presentation of Medea. What can this tell us about VF as an epic author?
- c. Focusing on select scenes (or even scene) analyse VF's Medea in light of Apollonius'. What can this tell us about VF's poetic style?
- d. Focusing on select scenes (or even scene) analyse VF's Medea in light of non-Apollonius mythological predecessors (e.g. Nausicaa/Helen etc). What can this tell us about VF's poetic style?

Unit 10: The Fall of Troy in Later Greek Epic

- a. Select a motif from the Fall of Troy (e.g. the role of Helen, the role of Sinon, the description of the Wooden Horse, the sack itself, the portrayal of Laocoon etc) and analyse the differing uses of this mythological motif.
- b. Analyse how and why either Quintus Smyrnaeus or Tryphiodorus used their mythological predecessors in their portrayal of the Fall of Troy.
- c. How innovative was either Quintus Smyrnaeus or Tryphiodorus in his portrayal of the Fall of Troy?