

Writing Assignment #1: Vergil and Mark

Note: Evidence for your essay must be based only on the assigned texts.

1. In both the Roman and Christian foundation stories, central figures, Aeneas and Jesus, are involved in violent acts that lead to death. The Aeneid ends with a murder: Aeneas "founds" Rome by plunging his sword into the body of Turnus. The Gospel of Mark also ends with a death: the new religion is "founded" upon the death of Jesus. Using The Aeneid and the Gospel According to Mark, write a thesis based essay in which you compare or contrast the ways in which deadly violence becomes the basis for new beginnings in these two foundation stories.

2. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Both Aeneas, in the Aeneid, and Jesus, in the Gospel According to Mark, are portrayed as very controlled in their emotions.

3. There are notable episodes of temptation for both Aeneas and Jesus during their journeys toward their destinies. What roles does temptation play for Aeneas and Jesus? Are Aeneas and Jesus similar in the way they view, confront, and overcome temptations? Using Vergil and Mark, write a thesis-based essay in which you compare or contrast the role of temptation in Aeneas and Jesus.

Thesis: Make sure that your claim meets the standards outlined in the "Thesis" handout.

4 tests for a good thesis:

1. Is it an explanation, not a fact?
2. Can someone argue against it?
3. Is it too obvious to be worth defending?
4. Is it precise?

Evidence: Make sure your argument shows just how the textual evidence supports the thesis.

Note: In a compare OR contrast essay, you must do the following in the introductory paragraph:

- A. Introduce the theme
- B. Establish the authors' views on the given theme.
- C. Assert your own argument about the differences OR the similarities between the two texts/ authors on the given theme.

Length: 4-5 pages.

Due: In lecture, 20 April Monday. Please hand your essay to your section teacher after lecture. You will also need to turn in an electronic copy to Turnitin.com.