

Writing Assignment #1: Virgil and Mark

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

1. After studying Greek and Biblical leaders in Humanities 1 (Odysseus, Achilles, Moses, David, etc.), we are confronted with 2 figures - Jesus and Aeneas -- who do not seem to behave according to those models of leadership. A first-century Roman or Jew would probably have seen Jesus as a complete failure, having been executed like a common criminal. The same may be argued for Aeneas who often seems to lose his commitment to his destiny and to act like a puppet of the gods. What do the Aeneid and The Gospel According to Mark define as the values and actions of a leader? Using Mark and Vergil, write a thesis-based essay in which you compare or contrast Aeneas and Jesus as leaders.

2. Both Vergil and Mark seek to define what makes for a virtuous or pious (*pietas*) life. How do their definitions compare? Would Vergil consider Mark's Jesus to be pious? Would Jesus agree with Vergil's ideas concerning virtue? Write a thesis-based essay in which you compare or contrast Vergil's and Mark's perceptions of what makes a person pious or virtuous.

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, 24 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.