

Humanities 2
Professor Nancy Caciola
Spring 2015

Writing Assignment #3

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

1. Issues about the status of women and about gender differences figure heavily in Gregory of Tours' The History of the Franks and Marie de France's Lais. How do women function in these authors' texts? How are they viewed by male characters and by the authors? Has women's status changed in the period of time between the 7th and the 12th centuries? Write a thesis-based essay that compares or contrasts the authors' views on the role of women.

2. Is Marie de France's portrayal of men similar to the warrior men in Gregory's The History of the Franks? How do men function in these authors' texts? How is ideal masculinity viewed by female characters and by the authors? What about men's status? Using Marie and Gregory, write a thesis-based essay in which you compare or contrast the authors' views on the role of men.

3. Both Gregory of Tours' The History of the Franks and Marie de France's Lais are products of Christian Europe. Yet, do these works conform to Christian notions of gender relations, and of love and marriage? How much, if any, are Christian ethics prevalent in these texts regarding gender roles? Using Gregory and Marie, write a thesis-based essay that compares or contrasts the role of Christianity in gender relations as depicted in The History of the Franks and Lais.

Required:

As usual in Humanities, your paper should provide evidence and argument for a clear thesis. One test of an argument is its ability to withstand a plausible counter-argument. Your essay **must** take account of the most plausible counter-argument to **your thesis** and **must** respond adequately to it.

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.

Length: 5 pages.

Due: In lecture, Friday 29 May. Please hand your essay to your section teacher after lecture. You will also need to turn in an electronic copy to Turnitin.com.