

Writing Assignment #1: Virgil and Mark

Note: Evidence for your essay must be based only on the assigned texts. Limit your evidence to specific passages or episodes in the text in order to analyze the text in detail.

1. There are notable episodes of temptation for both Aeneas and Jesus during their journeys toward their destinies. In what form(s) does this temptation appear? What role does it play? How do the authors use imagery and other devices to portray temptation and its best antidote? Are Aeneas and Jesus similar in the ways they view, confront, and overcome temptations? Using Virgil and Mark, write a thesis-based essay in which you compare or contrast the role of temptation in Aeneas and Jesus.

2. "An ever/uncertain and inconstant thing is woman" (The Aeneid IV. 786-87).

The protagonists of these two foundation stories are men—Aeneas and Jesus. What kinds of roles do women play in The Aeneid and the Gospel of Mark? Are women, as Mercury says, "uncertain and inconstant"? Are they obstacles to the missions of Aeneas and Jesus? How do these authors use female figures in order to characterize the male protagonists through opposition? Using Virgil and Mark, write a thesis-based essay in which you compare or contrast the authors' portrayals of women in the two texts.

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, 25 April Tuesday. Please hand your essay to your section teacher after lecture. You will also need to turn in an electronic copy to Turnitin.com.