Writing Assignment #3: Greek Tragedies

Choose one of the two following essay topics:
1. Zeus, who guided men to think, who has laid it down that wisdom comes alone through suffering
   \[\text{(Agamemnon, Ln. 176-178)}\]

   What does Aeschylus mean by this? Considering \text{Oedipus the King} and \text{Antigone}, would Sophocles agree with this statement? Characters in the tragic plays seem to suffer, yet how are their sufferings connected to human knowledge? Using Sophocles (choose either \text{Antigone} or \text{Oedipus}) and Aeschylus (\text{Agamemnon} or \text{The Libation Bearers} or \text{The Eumenides}), write a thesis-based essay in which you compare or contrast the interplay between human knowledge and suffering in your two plays.

2. The assigned Greek tragedies (\text{Antigone}, \text{Oedipus the King}, and \text{Oresteia}) are filled with violence: murder, executions, and self-mutilation. Why must Oedipus suffer through such violent act? Are Clytaemnestra and Orestes justified in their use of violence? Are the deaths of Antigone, Clytaemnestra, and Agamemnon unjust? Are these senseless acts of violence or can it be argued that the violence in these works is not always senseless? Using Sophocles (choose either \text{Antigone} or \text{Oedipus}) and Aeschylus (\text{Agamemnon} or \text{The Libation Bearers} or \text{The Eumenides}), write a thesis-based essay in which you compare or contrast the two works on the use of violence.

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: After lecture, Tuesday 10 March. Late papers will be penalized by the subtraction of one-third letter grade per day. Finally, don’t forget turnitin.com!