

## CLAS 102 - Women and Men in Roman Literature and Society - Fall 2018

### Final Assignment Guidelines

For your final assignment, you have a choice of writing an argumentative essay along the lines of the mid-semester essay or completing a creative project. See pp. 1-3 for the essay guidelines; see pp. 3-4 for the creative project guidelines.

### Final Assignment - Essay

This exercise asks you to write an argumentative essay in response to the question posed by a prompt. Your argument should be an answer to the question posed, and you will need to provide textual evidence through citations to support your answer and explain your reasoning.

**Due date:** Tuesday, December 11, 5pm, via e-mail or hard copy in my office box door.

**Length:** 5-6 pages, double-spaced.

**Grading criteria:** When grading this assignment, I will be looking for:

- a clear and specific **argument**, supported by **textual evidence** drawn from our readings;
- a logical and coherent **structure** to your paper;
- accurate **citations** of primary texts in the proper format;
- careful writing, within the required length, in grammatically correct English, with very few or no spelling errors; and,
- for a higher grade, evidence of individual thought, and creative or sensitive insights into your chosen topic.

**Citations:** Citations of **primary** source material (meaning the actual text of the author, and **not** introductions by an editor, footnotes, etc.) are necessary to support the claim that you are making in your argument. You should not cite material that is self-evident or that doesn't bear on your argument. You must **not** use secondary scholarship or commentaries or works not specified in the essay prompt.

You are required to cite primary source material **at least three (3) times** for prompts 2, 3, and 4; for prompt 1, you must cite at least **five (5) inscriptions or graffiti**. This may involve either a direct quotation or simply a paraphrase. You may cite more if your argument requires it, but keep in mind that I'm looking to see that you're **analyzing and engaging** with the primary source in your citation, not simply regurgitating the information.

For prompt 1, cite by the inscription or graffiti number in Hackett with subsection number, if applicable. For example,

In the *Praise of Turia*, the husband praises Turia's many good qualities with an instance of *praeteritio*: "Your domestic virtues — modesty, obedience, kindness, even temper, eagerness for working wool, religious reverence free from superstition, humbleness in your use of adornment, modesty in your style of dress — why should I mention them?" (1.1)

Inscription 45 laments a young baby who died after only 9 months of life: "Here lies a pitiable infant stolen from her mother's arms before she had lived nine full circuits of the moon. Her grieving mother and father weep for her as she lies, little body enclosed in a marble tomb."

For prompt 2, cite by work name, book number, and line number for Ovid's works in Hackett; cite by work name and page number for citations from the *Metamorphoses*. Examples:

Ovid advocates for adultery by means of a metaphor: "The crop is always richer in someone else's field, his cow's udder seem a bit more swollen with milk" (*The Art of Love* 1.349-350).

Pygmalion sculpts a perfect woman, literally objectified as a statue: "Meanwhile, Pygmalion began to carve in snow-white ivory, with wondrous art, a female figure more exquisite than a woman who was born could ever match. That done, he falls in love with his own work" (*Metamorphoses*, p. 336).

For prompt 3, cite by book number and chapter number. For example:

Lucius begs Isis to restore his human form: "Let my sufferings, my dangers so far suffice. Drive off from me this hateful four-footed configuration, return me to the sight of my people, give me back myself, Lucius" (11.2).

For prompt 4, cite by chapter number and sentence number. For example:

Tacitus ends the *Agricola* with a promise of immortality for Agricola: "Agricola, whose story here is told, will outlive death, to be our children's heritage" (46.4).

**Resources:** You are free to come to my office hours or set up an appointment to discuss your chosen prompt or how to structure your paper. I am willing to read and offer suggestions on paper drafts, but you are not required to run a draft by me before the paper's due date.

You can also make an appointment with the **Writer's Workshop** (<https://www.holycross.edu/academics/support-and-resources/center-for-writing/writers-workshop>); there, they can help you with organizing your thoughts and structuring your argument.

### Essay Prompts

**Choose one of the following:**

1. 'Graffiti and grave inscriptions allow us to hear the voice of people who are typically silent in literary texts.' Is this statement true or false? Use the inscriptions and graffiti in Hackett as evidence for your argument.
2. Katharina Volk suggests two possibilities for how we view Ovid and his poetry: "One possibility is to view Ovid as a proto-feminist. He's trying to give women a voice. The other way to think about it is that he's an extreme sexist." Which of these options is closer to the truth? Use evidence from *The Art of Love* and the *Metamorphoses* to support your argument.
3. Is Lucius' conversion to the cult of Isis at the end of Apuleius' *The Golden Ass* serious or satiric?
4. Is Tacitus' *Agricola* more a biography or a work of historiography, according to our modern definitions?

### Final Assignment - Creative Project

Choose one of the following creative projects and follow the guidelines contained within the description. You must e-mail me by **5pm on Tuesday, 11/27**, if you decide to complete a creative project to tell me which option you have chosen.

1. Go to the Worcester Art Museum (55 Salisbury St, Worcester, MA 01609; you get free admission with your Holy Cross ID). Once you enter and see the famous Worcester Hunt mosaic, turn left and enter the Roman room in the back left corner.

Choose an object in the Roman room, **take a selfie** with it, and **write a 3-4pp. essay (double-spaced)** that answers the following questions:

- What is your object?
- When was it made?
- What material is it made out of?
- Where was it originally displayed?
- How does the object tie into the themes of Roman literature and society which we've been discussing throughout the semester?

Submit both the selfie and the essay to me via e-mail.

2. **Write a verse poem** of 50-75 lines on any modern-day topic, either from your own life or from the world at large, in the style of **Catullus, Vergil, or Ovid**. The verse type is your choice (including free verse!), but you must capture the style and diction of your chosen

author. For example, Ovid's poems range from witty, suggestive elegy to epic narrative; which side of that spectrum will you gravitate towards, and how can you capture Ovid's essence in your poem? I will be grading creativity and your demonstrated understanding of the author's style and content, not on poetic merit.

3. **Illustrate a scene or object** from any of the works we read this semester, and **write a 5-6 sentence paragraph describing it**, as if it were on display in a museum and the paragraph is its blurb on the wall next to it. Any medium (electronic or physical: paint, pencil, sculpture, etc.) is acceptable. Some suggestions include Lucius' transformation into the donkey in Apuleius' *The Golden Ass*, any of the metamorphoses in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, or one of Perpetua's dreams from the *Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas*. I will be looking to see how (and how creatively) you render details of the text into a visual form, rather than evaluating how good of an artist you are.
4. Choose a current event (either a well-known one or one from your personal life) and **write a literary letter of about 3-4pp. (double-spaced)** about it to a friend in the style of **Cicero, Seneca, or Pliny**. Make sure to name your addressee and capture the tone and general content of your chosen author; for example, Seneca's letters have a more philosophical bent, while Cicero's are more concerned with pedestrian or day-to-day events. I will be evaluating how you capture the essence of your chosen author's style and content and how creatively you use their style and content to talk about a modern-day topic.
5. **(Group project)** Choose either **two continuous scenes from Plautus' *Casina*** OR **one act or choral ode from Seneca's *Thyestes*** and **prepare a performance** of it for the final day of class (Thursday 12/6). Make it as lavish or sparse as you'd like in terms of props and costumes; the only requirement is that each actor be off-book (i.e., memorize lines!).
6. Another project of your design, but you must meet with me in office hours by Tuesday, November 27, to clear the project with me first.