

PAPER ASSIGNMENT: PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSIS

HISTORY 150: SPRING 2008

This essay is a TEXTUAL ANALYSIS not an OPINION piece or simple “story.” As such, you will be expected to select quotes from multiple texts that illustrate the theme of your paper and then ANALYZE those quotes.

Your essay will be graded out of 100 points and will be worth 30% of your final grade

You will be graded on the selection of quotes/evidence; quality of analysis; use of context and other overall quality considerations (read page 2 of instructions and follow carefully!)

A 10 bonus point will be available for the use of extra sources (see below)

In your essay, you must discuss evidence from at least **THREE** sources

For each source used, you must select at least **TWO** quotes

Therefore, your essay will include a minimum of **SIX** quotes

At least one source must be selected from:

The Deeds of the Divine Augustus

The Art of Love, Ovid

Confessions, Augustine

The remaining two required sources may be

Any of the set readings

Any relevant text from the source book

Tacitus, *The Annals* or *The Histories*

Suetonius, *The Lives of the Twelve Caesars*

Plutarch, *Parallel Lives*

Extra Credit:

If you discuss at least one quote from a FOURTH source, we will give up to an additional 10 bonus points. This source must NOT be from the set reading list but must be an additional text listed up in the right-hand column.

e.g.

For regular credit, you could select:

Ovid, *Lysistrata* and *The Life of Alexander* or perhaps Suetonius’ *Life of Augustus Caesar*

(2 quotes from each for 6 total quotes)

For possible bonus credit, you could select:

Ovid, *Lysistrata* and *The Life of Alexander* (6 total quotes) + 1 quote from Tacitus

“*Divine Augustus*”, Plutarch’s *The Life of Alexander* and Suetonius’ *Life of Augustus* + 1 quote from Tacitus

Topics

Write ONE essay on ONE of the following topics

For your essay, you MUST include discussion of ROME

You may focus entirely upon Rome

Or you may consider Rome as part of all of the ancient cultures studied

1. LEADERSHIP

According to the people of the Ancient World, what were the most important characteristics of a good leader? Was it necessary to be a good soldier? Did you have to be “good” or was strength more important? How were leaders selected?

2. WOMEN

What was the status of women in the ancient world? In the absence of political power, were women powerless? If not, how did women influence their world? How did they relate to others? Did everyone agree on the treatment of women? If not, why not?

3. POWER

How was power acquired, kept (and lost) in the ancient world? What was the most important source of power: blood, money, military strength, “people power” or political influence; or perhaps a mix of more than one? Was there a difference between the ideals of the philosophers and the realities of the every-day?

4. MORALITY AND IMMORALITY

Was there a strong sense of morality in the ancient world? From where did these ideas of morality come? Who should (and who does) guide morality? Does the Roman world seem a highly moral place to its authors?

QUALITY CONSIDERATIONS FOR EACH ESSAY:

Consider the **CONTEXT** of your topic. What influenced the course of events and any changes in attitudes? Who was important? Include **brief** details to help explain, such as dates, events, people.

Consider how things **VARIED OVER TIME** and by **PLACE/CULTURE**. The Ancient World lasted a very long time and is a large place. How did things vary and why? Was the change linear? Or irregular?

Identify **CONTINUITIES** across time and space. If something didn't vary, why not?

Write a **COHESIVE** essay. The questions beneath each topic are intended **ONLY** as spurs to get you thinking. I do not want to see an "essay" consisting of a sequence of answers to those questions. It may help to **OUTLINE** your essay in advance.

Back up any and all statements with **EVIDENCE**, even if you believe the statement is true.

BAD: "Alexander was driven by a need for fame and glory."

GOOD: "According to Plutarch, Alexander lamented all he inherited from his father as he was "more bent upon action and glory than either upon pleasure or riches..."

I am not interested in an opinion piece or in what you think about a topic. I want to know what the people of the past thought and believed and wrote about.

BAD: "I believe that fame is worth dying for."

GOOD: "According to Homer's Iliad, Achilles thought fame worth dying for."

Be specific. Avoid sweeping statements, generalizations or oversimplifications about the past. Such statements are silly. The past is wonderfully complex. If it helps, do not attempt to write a "thesis statement" until you have written the body of your essay.

BAD: "Fame and glory were extremely important to all Greeks."

GOOD: "While some Greeks sought fame, it was not a universal goal."

Please avoid resorting to modern analogies in your essay. In other words, do not compare the past to "today." This is also silly.

Be **COHERENT**. I will not grade your essay for poor grammar, but if it is not coherent, the strength of your argument may be lost. In particular, I strongly suggest that:

You outline your essay before beginning

You read your essay out loud before submitting it. This helps to identify where you become incoherent or incomprehensible

Be careful not to over-use pronouns, especially if the referent noun is not clear.

Avoid passive sentences. These often lead to a lack of precision, e.g.

BAD: "Caligula was assassinated in..." (Passive, imprecise)

GOOD: "Members of his guard assassinated Caligula in ..." (Active, more precise)

BAD: It is said that / It is believed that... (Passive, imprecise)

GOOD: Historians such as Plutarch claim that ... / Later historians believed... (Active, more precise)

Format

Your essay should be:

4–5 pages long (ca. 1300–1600 words)

12 point Times New Roman or equivalent

Double-spaced

1" margins

Include references when you cite a source. This can be footnotes, endnotes or page-numbers in parentheses as long as they are clear and consistent.

Papers should be printed out on plain white, regular size paper and stapled. Please do not bind or do anything fancy.

Please ensure you put your full name and "History 150" either on the top right of the front page or on a plain cover sheet

DEADLINE

I encourage all students to submit a draft of their paper. This can be as brief as an outline, as complete as the entire essay. I will read any drafts and return comments that will allow you to revise and improve both your essay and your grade. I will accept drafts or outlines by **EMAIL** to helen.steele@csun.edu at any time before **8th APRIL**.

The **FINAL PAPER** will be due by **12.15PM** (the end of class) on **THURSDAY, 17TH APRIL**. I will accept them in class or in my mailbox in the History Department Office (Sierra Tower 610).