

Anne Thorpe

Humanities 102: Greek Mythology
Creation Myth Assignment
20% of final grade
1000-1250 words

Winter 2011

Assignment:

This assignment asks you to compare and contrast the Ancient Greek creation story (as described in Hesiod's *Theogony* and Jean-Pierre Vernant's "The Origin of the Universe") with the Judeo-Christian creation story (as expressed in the Book of Genesis) and to draw a conclusion about what these stories reveal about the two cultures' world views.

Since this is a broad topic, you should narrow the scope of your comparison by selecting a particular focus. Some suggestions are:

- how is God/how are gods imagined?
- how and why are men and women created?
- how do men and women come to live apart from the gods?
- how does human suffering come to be?
- what evil or disruptive elements exist in the world and what role do they play?
- how are order and hierarchy established?
- how do gender and/or power dynamics operate in these creation stories?
- what roles do deception and trickery play in the stories?

While some of these topics do overlap, your essay will be stronger if you focus on one or at most two topics. If you have another idea of what you'd like to focus your essay on, great! Just run it by me first.

Writing Task: *Write an essay in which you make an argument about how the two creation stories respond to your chosen question similarly/differently and then explain what you think this similarity/difference reveals about the two cultures' world views.*

Helpful Hints:

- Be sure the focus of your essay is clear from the beginning. Your reader should be able to deduce what topic you've chosen once they have read your introduction, or even from your essay's title.
- Your essay should include an introduction, at least three body paragraphs and a conclusion.
- Be sure to include a thesis statement in your introduction. The thesis statement should be a clear and assertive expression of the specific similarity/difference you have noted between the two creation myths.
- Avoid plot summary. You do not need to summarize the events that occur in the two stories. You may want to refresh your readers' memories about the important events that are relevant to your discussion, but your main job is to make an argument about how the two creation stories engage with your chosen question
- Be sure to back up and support your points with evidence (specific examples, quotations and analysis) from the texts you have been assigned for this class.

- Don't overlook interesting ambiguities. Exploring the contradictions and discrepancies between the different versions of the myths (e.g. between Chap. 1 and 2 in the Book of Genesis) can yield greater insights about the cultures' world views.

NB: You are not required to use any outside sources, and in fact I would prefer that you base your conclusions on your own close reading of the texts I have assigned. However, if you do consult any outside sources, you should be sure to cite them. Please use MLA style—i.e., in-text parenthetical citations and a “Works Cited” page.

Please consult the course outline for formatting guidelines, as well as the policies on late papers and plagiarism.