

GE 13186, Fall 2012 – First Paper Topics

Due date: Rough draft: Friday, September 14, by 5 pm. Final version: Wednesday, September 26, by 5 pm (note change from original schedule). Please submit both as an electronic version (MS-Word compatible) to tboes@nd.edu.

Length: 4-5 pages, double spaced, standard fonts and margins. Please number your pages and include both your name and mine on the front page or cover sheet. Don't forget to find a descriptive title!

For this paper, you will write a brief analysis of the encounter with the Sirens in Book XII, lines 220-45. Somewhat surprisingly (given that their song is supposed to be deadly), Homer reproduces what Odysseus hears. What is the significance of these lyrics? Why are they so tempting, and what does that tell us about the *Odyssey*? Are there other passages in the text that have a similar focus and if so, are they dangerous as well?

You are encouraged to draw upon your knowledge of the entire *Odyssey* and make comparisons to other episodes, but the lines in the assignment should serve as the backbone of your paper. Remember that works of literature express meaning not only through content, but also through form!

Since this is your first paper, you are not allowed to consult any outside sources (this includes the introduction to our text). Stick to the *Odyssey* itself and write an argument about the poem, not about something that is extrinsic to it, such as your perception of Mycenaean civilization or the possible lessons that Odysseus' travels hold for the modern reader.

Remember that an analytical paper ultimately rises and falls on the strengths of *your* ideas; mere summary alone does not create an academic essay!

Although you are only submitting a "rough draft" by September 14, you should still try to make this the best paper you possibly can. 2/3 of the grade for this assignment will be determined by the draft; the final 1/3 will depend on how well you implement my suggestions to make your writing even better.

If you need help, I have office hours on Mondays from 4 to 5 and on Tuesdays from 5 to 6. You can also schedule appointments via email, if those times don't work for you. Finally, remember that the Writing Center (see the hyperlink on our blog) is there to help you!