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ENGL 210: Ancient and Modern Superpowers

Sec. 007

29 March 2022

Roman Extra Credit Essay (RECE)

**Your task is to write a three (3) page essay that provides a review of a modern work of fiction about Ancient Rome that places the modern work in conversation with at least one (1) of the main assigned course readings (*De Rerum Natura*, *The Aeneid*, *Pharsalia*). This assignment is optional. If successful, completion of the ECE will boost a student’s final course grade by five (5) percentage points.**

Modern Work

This can encompass genres like film, television series, short story collection, or graphic novel. The work must be fictional in that it must be about a made-up story even if it draws on historical evidence (as indeed, any modern work of Ancient Rome must do). Nonfiction books or documentary films are not allowed for this assignment. Your chosen modern text does not have to be an adaptation of the works of Lucretius, Virgil, or Lucan which we studied in class this semester.

Resources for finding films include the Dupré Library on campus (@ <library.louisiana.edu>), the Lafayette Public Library (@ <http://lafayettepubliclibrary.org/> or equivalent if you reside in another parish) or online streaming services. Wikipedia has curated an extensive list of films about Ancient Rome @ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_films_set_in_ancient_Rome>.

Essay content

Your essay should provide a broad review of the text, touching on the plot, acting, direction, script, dialogue, cinematography, special effects (if applicable), and especially costumes. Your essay should briefly summarize the plot of the text for the reader, and you should assume that the reader has not yet read the modern text you are writing about. Clearly the choice of whether you will write about a film or book or other medium will determine the content of your essay.

Your essay should include a critique of what parts of the text failed to deliver as a fictional work; what parts failed to provide what you expected as a viewer or reader. On the other hand, you should also highlight the strengths of the modern work. As a reviewer one of your goals is to discuss whether the text is worth the reader’s time. This assignment does not require that you advocate for others to see the film or read the book; it is possible to write a negative review that engages with what the film gets wrong about Ancient Rome, through interacting with the scholarly sources.

If you are unfamiliar with the genre of a review essay, take some time to read some online (or in print) but make sure you choose a different text than the one you are reviewing. In other words, if you choose to study *Gladiator* (2000, dir. Ridley Scott) do not read reviews of *Gladiator* to help structure your review.

Engaging with the sources

In addition to a review of the modern text, your essay must engage with (that is, quote or paraphrase from) at least one (1) of the main assigned readings. The goal is to discuss how the modern text reflects the Ancient Roman world of the authors we have studied this semester even though the modern text itself is a work of fiction. You may want to discuss how the modern text reflects conversations we have had in class regarding how Ancient Rome is both similar to and different from contemporary reality.

You will need to quote or paraphrase from at least one (1) of the main assigned texts to receive credit. You may choose to engage more than 1 of the main assigned texts if you wish.

Formatting

Your essays should be in 12 pt. type and double spaced and should be in MLA format. Your final draft should be at least three (3) full pages double spaced, not including the works cited. Your name should appear on the first page and in the header of every page along with the page number. Please include a Works Cited section at the end of your essay that includes both the film(s) and the scholarly sources mentioned in your essay.

Remember to consult the Purdue OWL website for how to cite scholarly sources in MLA format @ <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>. This assignment requires the quoting and or paraphrasing of scholarly sources in text, as well as in the works cited section. This page from Purdue OWL covers how to cite films in MLA format @ <https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_works_cited_other_common_sources.html>.

Due Dates

As this is an optional extra credit assignment, there is no first draft or peer review required to get credit.

Final draft – 5 May 2022

Please submit your drafts digitally via Moodle.