

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY—WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

HIST 111: Intro to ‘Western Civilization’ to 476 CE

Reading Responses

Reading Response 1

How are the descriptions of Gilgamesh, Enkidu, and Martu used to contrast the notions of ‘wild’ and ‘civilized’ society? By what means is Enkidu transformed from ‘beast’ to ‘man’? After this transformation what alterations are noted in his behaviour and appearance? How do these ideas align with the description of Martu? What do we learn from these texts about early Mesopotamian ideology about community and subsistence strategies?

Reading Response 2

What are some of the common sentiments expressed in the Old Kingdom biographies provided (e.g., what common topics do they raise; how do they describe their lives / careers)? What types of information/details are included? How do these autobiographies reflect the prevailing sense of Egyptian identity and duty among the elite men of their respective periods? How do the First Intermediate Period Biographies differ (what do they focus on), and what might these changes tell us about the shifting political landscape?

Reading Response 3

What do texts like the texts assigned in this module teach us about the Greek view of war? What social costs do they lament? Who is shown to suffer the most in war? How do these texts from Classical Greece compare to military literature from other Greek periods/cultures (like the Spartan Creed and The Iliad)?

Reading Response 4

Many Greek and Roman writers and philosophers reflect upon and discuss the nature of goodness and responsibility among everyday citizens and ancient leaders. Discuss the views of Socrates, Cicero, and Marcus Aurelius on morality, justice, and leadership, the conflict between good and evil, and “the necessary.” Provide examples of good and bad leadership in Greece or Rome that we have talked about this quarter (at least one good and one bad) and describe how each ruler’s strengths or weaknesses align with Socrates, Cicero, and/or Marcus Aurelius’ depiction. The leaders could include politicians, generals, emperors, or mythological leaders.

Format

These focused responses will require that you think critically about some aspect of the course reading for the week. The responses will be short (600–750 words). Each assignment is graded out of 12 points.

The response must include specific examples in your discussion drawn from the relevant readings, media, and course discussion / slides—these examples must include citations (you can use any citation style that you like). The assignment focuses on the critical analysis of the assigned material, and therefore should not need additional sources.