

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY—WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

HIST 312: History of Ancient Greece

Reading Responses

RR1 – Spartan Society:

How does the description of Spartan society in Tyrtaeus' *Spartan Creed* compare with the description of Spartan society in Xenophon's *Spartan State*? Are there differences in the characterizations of the values and ethics of the Sparta or the presentation of governance and decision making? How might the genre (Tyrtaeus writes patriotic poetry) and authorship (Xenophon is not a Spartan) impact our interpretation of these texts?

RR2 – Herodotus the Historian:

Describe Herodotus's character as a historian. In the sections you have read for class, how does Herodotus organize and present events? What interests and biases are reflected in his authorship (particularly in the presentation of the Spartans and the Persians)? How are characters like Leonidas and Xerxes used as didactic figures? How reliable is he as a source?

RR3 – Democracy and Governance:

Discuss the depiction of political leadership and democratic institutions in the readings from Modules 6 and 7. What characteristics of leadership are highlighted? How are decisions made in democratic institutions? What concerns or threats to Athenian democracy are evident?

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 (800–1000 words). Each assignment is graded out of 10 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.