

Essay #1: *The Epic of Gilgamesh*

DUE: MONDAY, MARCH 5

May be handed in in class or submitted by email in a DOCX, DOC, PDF, or RTF format. Note: Your email submission only “counts” if you receive a reply back from me saying I got it. As stated in the syllabus, any late submissions are marked down 10 points per class meeting.

Please format your essay as follows. Your essay should

- ▶ Be typed, double-spaced, in 12 pt. Times or Arial, with one-inch margins. Please spellcheck and, if you’re not sure about your writing, have a friend read it. I will not mark down for grammar, but clarity is vital.
- ▶ Have a cover page with the title, your name, my name, and the date; and have page numbers on each page after the cover.
- ▶ Run 3–4 full pages, plus the cover page. Start with an introduction stating your opinion; then give your evidence in the main body; followed by a conclusion summarizing how the evidence supports your opinion.
- ▶ Have all direct quotations, indirect quotations, and ideas from other sources footnoted according to a standard citation style. This is extremely important and failure to do this will seriously affect your grade.
 - In this case your source will be the epic itself. For this assignment you may — but are not required to — use secondary sources that discuss this story. Whether you use additional sources will have no effect on your grade, since I am interested in your interpretations and how well you support them with evidence.
 - You may NOT use tertiary sources for *any* assignment you hand in to me. Tertiary sources include textbooks, encyclopedias, and almost everything on the internet.
- ▶ **Optional draft due: Monday, Feb. 27.** I will not grade it, but I will provide feedback.

ASSIGNMENT

Choose one of the following topics:

1. Choose any of the mortal characters from *Gilgamesh* and discuss his or her relationship with the gods. Give three examples and discuss what these episodes reveal about the character and about attitudes toward *religion and mortality* in the society in which he or she lives. Consider physical, emotional, economic, religious, or any other factors that these incidents speak to.
2. Choose any of the female characters from *Gilgamesh* and discuss her relationship with the other characters and their society. Give three examples and examine what these episodes reveal about the character and her femininity as conceived by the creators of the epic. Consider physical, emotional, economic, religious, or any other factors that these incidents speak to.

Your conclusion should be the last one-third or so of your essay and relate to the following: How, specifically, does this character reflect what the creators of the story are trying to say about their society?

- ▶ Remember to think of the epic as a kind of primary source, in which the creators are giving evidence of idea they want to communicate. What their main points in this document, and how is your character being used to communicate them?

Remember that, as always, I am looking for your opinion and how well you support it with evidence; this essay is less about “right answers” than it is about well-supported ideas. Feel free to praise or complain about the author’s style, techniques, or attitude, as long as you cover the points of the assignment described above.