

QUESTIONS ON WORLD ANCIENT LITERATURE TO AROUND 450 CE.

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This document combines questions from several CSU Fullerton CPLT 324 World Literature to 1660 surveys as well as several E240 World Ancient Literature surveys at Chapman U in Orange, CA.

Main Edition: Lawall, Sarah, ed. *The Norton Anthology of World Literature*. 2nd edition. Volumes 1ABC. New York: Norton, 2002. ISBN: A = 0-393-97755-2, B = 0-393-97756-0, C = 0-393-97757-9.

Achilles Tattius. *Leucippe and Clitophon*.

Aeschylus. *The Oresteia and Prometheus Bound*.

Apuleius. *The Golden Ass*.

Aristophanes. *The Clouds*.

Aristotle. *The Poetics*.

Augustine. *Confessions*. Selections and Complete version.

Bhartrhari. *Shataktrayam*.

Bhagavad-Gita. Selections and Complete version.

Bible. Hebrew Scriptures: Genesis, Job, Psalms, Song of Songs, Jonah; The New Testament: Matthew, Luke ; also older Oxford edition questions on *Genesis, Job, Matthew*.

Boethius. *The Consolation of Philosophy*.

Buddha. Three Sermons.

Catullus. Various poems.

Chuang Chou. From *Chuang Tzu*.

Classic of Poetry. Various poems.

Confucius. From *The Analects*. Selections and Complete version.

Egyptian Poetry. Various poems.

Euripides. *Medea*.

Gilgamesh, Epic of. Anonymous.

Homer. *The Odyssey*, Books 1-24. From *The Iliad*, Books 1-12.

Horace. "The Art of Poetry."

Jataka. Anonymous. Selected stories about Buddha's Incarnations.

Kalidasa. *Sakuntala and the Ring of Recollection*.

Livy. From *The Early History of Rome*.

Longus. *Daphnis and Chloe*.

Lucretius. *On the Nature of the Universe (De Rerum Natura)*

Mahabharata. Selections.

Ovid. From *The Metamorphoses*. Norton and Melville versions. From *The Art of Love*.

Pindar. Selected *Odes*.

Plato. *The Apology of Socrates, Gorgias, The Symposium*.

Plautus. *The Braggart Soldier*.

Sappho. *Lyrics*.

Seneca. *The Trojan Women, Thyestes*.

Sophocles. *Oedipus the King, Oedipus at Colonus, Antigone*.

T'ao Ch'ien. Selected Poetry and Prose.

Tibetan Book of the Dead. Anonymous.

Virgil. From *The Aeneid*. Norton selections and Mandelbaum edition.

ACHILLES TATIUS QUESTIONS

Assigned: Achilles Tatius. *Leucippe and Clitophon*. (Separate edition; see below.)

Leucippe and Clitophon

Book 1

1. The narrator meets Clitophon in the Phoenician city of Tyre while viewing a votive picture of Europa and the Bull (Zeus). What tone does this “framing device” establish for the story to come? What questions does the framing device or setting raise about the rest of the book’s subjects and events?
2. How does Clitophon account for his predicament--what does he think got him into the mess he is in (being promised to Calligone while preferring Leucippe)? What advice does Clitophon’s cousin, Clinias, offer him about how to make things break his way?

Book 2

3. How does the Byzantine Callisthenes exemplify the influence of “fortune” and error in this novel--how, that is, does his plotting work along with other events to take Calligone (Clitophon’s arranged marriage partner, though not his choice) out of the picture?
4. Once his entanglement with Leucippe is discovered (thanks to her mother Pantheia’s alarming dream), how does Clitophon extricate himself from the dangerous situation in which he finds himself? What roles do Clinias (his cousin) and Satyrus (his servant) play here?
5. While sailing to Alexandria, Clitophon and his party meet a young Egyptian named Menelaus. What story does he tell, what debate ensues, and what is the point of including such material at this point in the novel?

Book 3

6. Attacked by savage “Herdsmen” while on his way to Alexandria (after having lost his first ship to a storm that separated him from Menelaus and Satyrus as well as from Clinias), Clitophon loses Leucippe to these bandits. How do Menelaus and Satyrus rescue Leucippe? What makes this abduction/rescue episode comic rather than serious?

Book 4

7. In this book, Leucippe (following the advice of Artemis) becomes a devotee of chastity, and Clitophon tries to keep her from the clutches of Charmides (the general who had helped Clitophon in the previous book) and from a bout of madness. Discuss the relative importance of human contrivance and fortune in the fourth book--who or what seems to be in control of events?

Book 5

8. Chaereas of Pharos (who revealed the cause of Leucippe’s madness in Book 4) now contrives to steal away Leucippe, and once again, Clitophon is doomed to witness what seems to be the young woman’s violent demise. What irony is then revealed about the entire story so far, and what new possibility does Clinias, upon reuniting with Clitophon, suggest?

9. Melite, Clitophon’s wealthy and beautiful would-be lover, enters the story? How does Leucippe reenter the picture, and what difficulties ensue when these two women meet?

10. How does Melite justify her passion, and how much sympathy does the narrative generate for her plight? Does Clitophon’s behavior seem beyond reproach in his dealings with her? Why or why not?

Book 6

11. Melite’s unexpectedly still-alive husband Thersander, with the help of the servant Sosthenes, hatches a plot to fulfill his desire for Leucippe (i.e. the “slave” Lacaena). What insights does this book offer about the psychology of love--how does Thersander’s passion come about, and why does he suppose it will be reciprocated? What enables Leucippe/Lacaena to resist his advances?

Book 7

12. For yet a third time, Clitophon believes death has snatched Leucippe from him, and dejectedly confesses to the murder as it has been described to him. At the trial that follows, what arguments does Clinias advance to defend him from this charge? How do Sostratus (Leucippe’s father) and, more particularly, the goddess Artemis, turn up and rescue Clitophon from the death penalty?

Book 8

13. Thersander, not yet ready to give up his lawsuit against his enemies, rails at Melite and Leucippe. By what means do they prove their innocence, and in what way have the gods therefore been enlisted in the service of Eros (Love)?

14. Describe the double-marriage that concludes the novel--how did things turn out for Clitophon's sister Calligone, and why might it be significant that Callisthenes (the man who abducted her back in Book 1) is now reintroduced as a man transformed?

Edition: Achilles Tatius. *Leucippe and Clitophon*. Trans. Tim Whitmarsh. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2003. ISBN: 0-192-80427-8.

AESCHYLUS QUESTIONS

Assigned: Aeschylus. *The Oresteia* (533-611). *The Libation Bearers* is given only in summary, so I have omitted the questions for that middle play.

Agamemnon

1. Why does the Watchman speak to us first--what expectations and interests might his words arouse, as if to put us "on the lookout" for certain themes?
2. Before the welcoming scene when Agamemnon returns, the Chorus members speak or sing at some length. What function does their extended presence serve in the play? What expectations does it raise? How does it advance the plot? Explain prior events?
3. Would you say that the Chorus' perspective in *Agamemnon* is consistent, or otherwise? What view/s, for instance, does it advance concerning the status of women? of Agamemnon's rule and participation in the Trojan War? of the present situation at home?
4. What tensions become manifest when the Chorus and Clytemnestra interact? Do they respect her? Fear her? Who are the *Agamemnon* Chorus, anyway, and how does their presence make Aeschylus' play flow differently than, say, a Shakespearian tragedy?
5. In what manner does Clytemnestra welcome Agamemnon upon his arrival? Why does she make the gestures she does, and use the tone she does? How is the tapestry scene important to any understanding of the play's subsequent events?
6. What perspective on the Trojan War does the Herald offer? How would you connect his comments to the play's major themes?
7. Agamemnon is murdered offstage at line 1371. How would you characterize Clytemnestra's speech when she first recounts her deed from lines 1391-1604? How does she further defend her actions to the Chorus, and what do her description and self-defense reveal about her status as a tragic hero?
8. Following the murder of Agamemnon, what seems to be the specific cause of the Chorus' anger from 1432 onwards? How do they reproach Clytemnestra from 1432-1604?

9. From 1072-1354, the prophetess Cassandra exchanges words with the Chorus. How does Cassandra explain the events about to unfold in the palace? To what extent does the Chorus take the measure of the prophecies she utters?

10. Further questions on Cassandra: What is her relationship to Apollo, and what special sorrow does she bear as a prophetess? How might you compare/contrast her plight to that of Clytemnestra? What attitude does Cassandra take towards her own death?

11. Aegisthus enters the picture from lines 1605-end. What is his role in the murder? What future role does the play forecast for him? Who holds the power flowing from the killing of Agamemnon, as far as you can tell from the play's conclusion? Explain.

Eumenides

12. From 1-66, the Pythia (Priestess of Apollo at Delphi) prays and comments on her sighting of the Furies. How does this speech set the tone for our interpretation of the events to follow, and why might it be significant that the Pythia does not name the Furies?

13. From 97-139, Clytemnestra rouses the Furies. How does she describe her situation in Hades, and what is her complaint against the Furies?

14. From 144-202, The Furies and Apollo trade accusations. What is the main charge leveled by the Furies against Apollo? How does he respond--what does he argue is unjust about the Furies' judgment concerning Orestes?

15. From 253-73, and 304-407, how do the Furies view their own prerogatives and their relationship with humans and the gods? What is their concept of justice? What is ironic about their claims of power and permanence?

16. From 408-49, how does Athena place both Orestes and the Furies on the same level? What is her concept of justice? What pivotal statements do the Furies make as they listen to her?

17. From 456-65, how does Orestes describe his plight? What does he apparently want at this point, and why?

18. From 484-505, Athena announces her plan of action. How do her remarks reveal that she is in a "double bind" (a situation where trouble seems to lie on either side of one's decision) similar to the ones in which Agamemnon, Clytemnestra, and Orestes have already found themselves?

19. From 506-71, what do the Furies threaten will happen if Orestes wins his case? And what prescription for order do the Furies offer?

20. From 630-84, Apollo makes his case for Orestes' acquittal. How strong do you find his arguments? Is his tactic of using Athena as his main exhibit effective? How good are the Furies as "lawyers" in their counterarguments against Apollo? Explain.
21. From 692-725, to what extent do Athena's remarks accord with the assessment of the situation already offered by the Furies? How does Athena define the powers of the Court of the Areopagus?
22. Consider the gender implications of Athena's remarks from 692-725--why is the mention of the Amazons significant? From 750-56, Athena explains that she will "honour the male, in all things but marriage." Does her casting of a tie-breaking vote in Orestes' favor amount to the surrender of the female principle to the male principle in this trilogy?
23. From 791-913, the Furies at first complain that they have lost, and then come round to seeing things Athena's way. Follow this interchange between the Furies and Athena closely. How does she convince them? What does she offer, and how does she shape their continuing responses to suit her rhetorical needs?
24. The trilogy ends on a triumphal note, with a spectacle consisting in singing and dancing. Ultimately, how have Athena, the jurors, and the other interested parties in the play dealt with the Furies' demands? Have the Furies changed? What relationship between the City and the Furies (along with the violence they have long stood for) has been sanctioned?

Edition: Lawall, Sarah, ed. *The Norton Anthology of World Literature*. 2nd edition. Volumes 1ABC. New York: Norton, 2002. ISBN: A = 0-393-97755-2, B = 0-393-97756-0, C = 0-393-97757-9.

Assigned: Aeschylus. *The Libation Bearers* (Separate edition; not in Norton)

The Libation Bearers

1. What is the composition of the Chorus in this second play? Does this Chorus mark a shift in perspective from the first play? If so, how? For example, does their perspective alter your view of Clytemnestra, if it does?
2. What is the bond between Electra and Orestes, aside from the simple fact that they are brother and sister? How do their initial situations compare?
3. What is Orestes' relationship with Apollo? What has the Oracle of Apollo ordered him to do? What is Orestes' dilemma, and to what extent does he understand that his deeds will come at a great price? (see lines 270ff.)
4. As for the snake prophecy, what is its significance considering the history of the House of Atreus?
5. From 555ff, in what way is the strategy of Orestes, as you see it, comparable to that employed by his mother Clytemnestra in her killing of Agamemnon? How is his behavior not strictly "heroic," at least in the sense that a hero like Agamemnon might give to that term?

6. From line 600ff, how does the Chorus view Clytemnestra and women generally? Does this view mark a shift in perspective from the first play, or is it similar? Explain.
7. How does Orestes demonstrate the justice of his actions and explain them to the Chorus? What does he expect after he has killed Clytemnestra? Do you find his arguments convincing at this point in the play?

Edition: Aeschylus. *The Oresteia*. Trans. Robert Fagles. NY: Penguin, 1984. ISBN: 0140443339.

Assigned: Aeschylus. *Prometheus Bound*.

Prometheus Bound

1. Aristotle says that tragedians should arrange their plot's incidents logically to produce the proper tragic emotions--pity and fear--which in turn result in "catharsis," variously understood as purgation of the audience's emotions or as intellectual clarification concerning some vital tragic issue. Does Aeschylus' play seem to fit this pattern? If not, how would you describe the structure and emotional impact of *Prometheus Bound*?
2. What role do you ascribe to the Chorus, which in this case consist of the Daughters of Oceanus? Are their statements consistent? What views do they set forth, and what significance do they have for Prometheus?
3. What view of Zeus do you take away from this play? Do you accept it at face value? Why or why not? How, if at all, does Prometheus' relationship with Zeus affect your view of that god?
4. What sort of relationship did Prometheus have with Zeus prior to their estrangement? Why did Zeus take Prometheus' concern for humanity as a threat?
5. On what basis does Prometheus advance the hope that he will be liberated? And by the end of the play, do you think that the tone is one of despair or expectation? Explain.
6. Prometheus is a god (whose name, taken etymologically, means "foresight"), but in what sense might his predicament be a comment on the human condition, on humanity's relation to the gods?
7. Just before the play's middle, Io enters the scene. Why is her story significant in light of Prometheus' situation? What does she have in common with him, and what does her life have to do with his prospects for liberation?
8. Friedrich Nietzsche, the nineteenth century philosopher and classicist, wrote that *Prometheus Bound* deals with power confronting its own limitations, with an irruption of the Dionysian into Zeus' desire for absolute power and order on Olympus and on earth. Add your own comments to that view.

Edition: Aeschylus. *The Complete Greek Tragedies: Aeschylus II*. Eds. Richmond Lattimore and David Grene. 2nd Edition. Chicago: U of Chicago Press, 1992. ISBN: 0226307948.

APULEIUS QUESTIONS

Assigned. Apuleius of Madaurus. *The Golden Ass*. (Separate edition; see below.)

The Golden Ass

General Questions

1. Comment on the significance of desire--both in the physical and intellectual sense--as the driving force of the novel's events and the main reason for the complexity of the narrative: examine a few instances where desire clearly makes things happen and complicates the narrator's pattern of storytelling.
2. How might the story as a whole be described as a "spiritual quest"? What does Lucius' interest in magic have to do with it? How is his transformation into an ass related to the quest motif?
3. How do you understand the less serious side of Apuleius' text--the many comic, absurd, and even obscene incidents and characters its author seems to delight in serving up? How does all this silliness relate to the spiritual journey of Lucius?
4. In particular, what benefit does Apuleius derive from his device of making Lucius turn into an ass? What perspective does Lucius gain thereby? What does he lose? What does this trick of narrative have to offer us, the readers?
5. When, towards the end of the story, the goddess Isis grants Lucius his wish for transformation, why does she give him what he wants--what has he done to merit such good fortune?
6. How does the Mystery Cult of Isis and Osiris, as you find it in this book, compare to the doctrines of Christianity? What does Isis offer her worshipers? What does she not offer them? What does the narrator seem to think of Christianity, a religion of which Apuleius himself had some knowledge?
7. How does the world Apuleius represents compare to the tragic universe of the Greek playwrights we have studied? How does a typical character in Apuleius differ from the hero in our playwrights' work?

Book 1

8. On his way to Thessaly, Lucius meets Aristomenes, an Aeginetan wholesaler, and invites him to tell his story about meeting a friend, Socrates, and a witch named Meroë. How does Lucius' reception of the story prepare readers for whatever adventures Lucius himself is about to undergo?
9. What happens to Aristomenes and his friend Socrates? What does the story suggest about the inherent risks of interacting with the supernatural realm--that is, can you draw any lesson from what Aristomenes relates to Lucius? Explain.

Book 2

10. Reaching Hypata in Thessaly, Lucius finds Milo, to whom his friend Demeas has given him a letter of introduction. In the marketplace, Lucius' old nurse Byrrhaena warns him about Milo's wife

Pamphilë, a sorceress. What reason does Lucius give for failing to heed the nurse's warning, and what subsequently transpires in this book?

11. This book contains other references to magic and the gods--consider the handling of Lucius' seduction of the maid Fotis and his unsuccessful mention about the soothsayer Diophanes. What do such references suggest about the attitude we should adopt towards the supernatural and divine realm?

Book 3

12. At Byrrhaena's feast, Lucius and the guests hear Thelyphron's story. What happened to Thelyphron, and what significant connections between the ridiculous and the serious in Apuleius' text as a whole does this story reveal? What view of human suffering and striving are we being encouraged to take?

Book 4

13. Lucius winds up the main exhibit in the current Festival of Laughter. How does that happen--and how is Apuleius' technique here typical of his plot-construction method throughout *The Golden Ass*?

14. Does the outcome of this year's Festival distinguish Lucius from Thelyphron, who had been the target at a previous festival? Explain. Also, what penalty does he extract from Fotis for her role in the whole affair?

Book 5

15. Why and how does Lucius metamorphose into a jackass--what gets him into trouble? Why does Fotis at first hesitate to aid him in his plan?

16. Lucius' transformation is on one level a dreadful thing, but at another level, what value is there in such a change from human to animal, and why is it appropriate that Lucius be turned into an ass and not some other animal?

Book 6

17. Lucius describes what he saw and heard in the bandits' cave. How does the story of the third unlucky thief, Thrasyleon, help Apuleius explore the theme of metamorphosis? What warning does Thrasyleon's mischance deliver about pretending to be something other than what one is, and how does that lesson relate to Lucius' case?

18. How does the narrator seem to look upon the thieves' character and profession? Does he praise them or condemn them, or neither? Explain.

19. What does Lucius begin to notice about the effects wrought by his transformation? How is he different? How is he similar to the man Lucius?

20. The bandits capture a young woman betrothed to a man named Tlepolemus, and bring her to their hideaway. Why does she tell her story to the old woman who keeps house for the bandits? How does her story set up the story that the old woman tells?

Books 7-9 (Cupid and Psyche)

21. What is the occasion of the recounting of this tale? At what other parts of *The Golden Ass* does Apuleius show an interest in metanarrative--i.e. in using his episodes to comment on the powers and risks of storytelling?

22. The Cupid and Psyche story may seem to be merely an entertaining bit of fancy storytelling, but how might it be connected to Lucius' journey and eventual spiritual enlightenment? How is what happens to Psyche, that is, related to what happens to Lucius?

Book 10

23. How does Tlepolemus, Charitë's lover, manage to trick the bandits who are holding her hostage--what accounts for his success? What role does Lucius play in her rescue?

Book 11

24. How does this book frustrate both Lucius' hopes for progress and the romance tale of Tlepolemus and Charitë? Why is Apuleius able to handle his characters so gruffly without compromising the integrity of his book as a whole?

Book 12

25. After the death of Tlepolemus and Charitë, the bailiff sells Lucius to the head eunuch priest of a Syrian mystery cult, and a series of misadventures follow. What offenses against the gods do the priests commit, and how does Lucius manage to thwart their designs?

Book 13

26. At more than one point in *The Golden Ass*, as on page 203, Lucius compares himself to the heroes of Greek mythology, and Apuleius' entire book is sprinkled with Greek myth tales. What use are such comparisons and references in a work so full of entertaining yarns?

27. What lesson, if any, emerges from the combination of the tale told to the Baker's Christian wife by her confidante about Aretë, her husband Barbarus, her lover Philesietaerus, and the slave Myrmex, together with the adulterous behavior of the Baker's wife with Philesietaerus? What role does Lucius play in the wife's downfall?

Book 14

28. Lucius is sold to a market-gardener whose kind treatment of a prosperous farmer lands the man a front-row seat as witness to a domestic tragedy. How do the events following this tragedy show

Lucius' ability as an ass to "make an ass" of humans? Where else in the novel does this happen, briefly?

Book 15

29. The centurion from the previous chapter leaves Lucius with a municipal councilor whose second wife wishes to commit incest with her stepson, tries to poison him when he refuses, and ends up exiled for almost killing her own son when he drinks the poison intended for the stepson. Prominent in this book are the institution of law and the practice of medicine. How do they fare at the hands of Apuleius? Is their depiction here typical of the rest of the book? Explain.

Book 16

30. The centurion now sells Lucius to two kitchen slaves of the visiting Corinthian nobleman Thyasus, who ends up fond of Lucius for his antics and intelligence. Lucius is induced to engage in sexual acts with a noblewoman, and Thyasus borrows a condemned woman to put on a public peep-show. This is as good a place as any to explain how Apuleius handles female characters in *The Golden Ass*--how do his female characters compare in morals and conduct to his male characters?

Book 17

31. Before the main event, spectators are treated to a retelling of the tale of Juno, Minerva, Venus, and Paris' fateful choice of Venus as winner of a beauty contest. What is the point of our hearing this old story in this book, given the events swirling around it?

32. What leads Lucius to his successful escape? What does he do afterwards, and what is revealed to him and us about the nature of the goddess who will save him? Why do you suppose Isis has decided to rescue Lucius--has he done something right? Explain.

Book 18

33. Lucius is transformed and saved at last, going through the proper steps of his religious conversion to the Cult of Isis. What do we learn about the nature of Fortune, and, by implication, about humans' attempts to commandeer their own destiny?

34. What must Lucius do to earn his security--what things must he do, what tendencies restrain, what ceremonies undergo, what visions obtain? What, therefore, is Apuleius' novel telling us about how we may establish an appropriate relationship to the divine?

Book 19

35. Lucius is told by Isis to head for Rome even though he wants to go home to Madaura. What two further initiations must he undergo, and why? How does this final book bring us back round to practical matters about the connection between religion and ordinary affairs?

Edition: Apuleius. *The Golden Ass*. Trans. Robert Graves. New York: Farrar, 1951. Repr. 1988.

ARISTOPHANES QUESTIONS

Assigned: Aristophanes. *The Clouds*. (Separate edition; see below.)

The Clouds

1. In *A Guide to Greek Theatre and Drama*, Kenneth McLeish points out that in Aristophanes' plays, when real-world characters enter the fantasy land that has replaced the ordinary, their concerns seem ridiculous. How would you compare *The Clouds* to that description?
2. To what extent do the actors and chorus involve the audience in their performance? How does this tendency of Aristophanes compare to modern comedy with which you are familiar?
3. What roles does the Chorus of Clouds play throughout this comedy?
4. What does Strepsiades hope to learn at the Thinkery? What ideas does he hold about the doctrines taught there before he becomes a student?
5. From lines 128-217, what does Strepsiades actually find happening at the Thinkery? What sort of criticism is being leveled at Socrates and other contemporary philosophers (the Sophists) by this portrayal?
6. From lines 218-509, Strepsiades converses with Socrates. What kind of knowledge do Socrates and the Cloud-Chorus offer him? How does Socrates himself regard the Clouds?
7. From lines 518-626, Aristophanes speaks through the main Cloud--how is this interlude or "parabasis" related to the play's main action? Is Aristophanes including himself in the sights of his satire? Explain.
8. From lines 867-1112, Strepsiades drags Pheidippides to the Thinkery, and makes him listen to a long debate by Just and Unjust Speech. What is the subject of that debate, and what is the outcome of it?
9. From 1113-1451, we see the results of Pheidippides' education. Strepsiades deals with creditors, but why do he and his son quarrel, and how does Pheidippides justify beating his own father?
10. From 1452-end, Strepsiades takes his revenge on Socrates. Modern comedy--Shakespearean comedy in particular--involves a removal from everyday affairs in order to purge away corruptions and renew the social order. But what does Strepsiades accomplish by burning down the Thinkery?

Edition: West, Thomas and Grace. *Four Texts on Socrates*. Rev. ed. Ithaca: Cornell, 1998. ISBN: 0-801-48574-6.

ARISTOTLE QUESTIONS

Assigned: Aristotle. *The Poetics*. (Separate edition; see below.)

The Poetics (circa 340 BCE)

1. In what three respects may the arts, all modes of imitation, differ one from another? Give an example of one such difference. (2-3)
2. From what two instincts “natural to human beings” does poetry, according to Aristotle, seem to have sprung? (8-9)
3. Aristotle observes that “we delight in looking at the most detailed images of things which in themselves we see with pain” (8-9). How does Aristotle explain this curious pleasure?
4. What does comedy imitate or represent? What is the “laughable”? (14)
5. In what way does epic poetry “follow” or accord with tragedy? In what ways do they differ? (16-17)
6. How does Aristotle first define tragedy? What are the two tragic emotions by means of which catharsis is achieved, and what effect does tragedy have upon those emotions? (17-18)
7. What are the six parts every tragedy must have? Which, according to Aristotle, is the most important, indeed the soul of tragedy, and why? (18-22)
8. Tragedy, according to Aristotle, is essentially a representation or imitation, not of men, but of an *action*. What characteristics should this action have? How does Aristotle describe a “whole”? What must the poet invent to imitate an action? (20-24)
9. What, according to Aristotle, is the proper relationship between dramatic action and the representation of character? (21-23)
10. What is the main difference between poetry and history? What does Aristotle apparently mean by the term “universal”? (26-27)
11. What are the two kinds of plot and how are they distinguished? Which is better, and why? (29)
12. What are “recognition” (*anagnorisis*) and “reversal” (*peripeteia*)? Why are they important to the structure of a drama and to achieving the cathartic effect Aristotle says is the key to a successful tragedy? (30-31)
13. Since the aim of tragedy is to generate pity and fear, how does this aim influence the poet’s selection of the tragic protagonist or main character? And how should the dramatist portray character? (32-34, 37-40)
14. What is the advantage that epic has over tragedy and that conduces to “splendour” and “divert[s] the listener”? How does Aristotle differentiate the verse forms employed in tragedy from epic’s dactylic hexameter? (60-61) Incidentally, Greek verse is based on quantity, not accent: Homer’s epic meter runs as follows:

“-- u /--u /--u /--u /--u /---- (or “-- u”; long = --; short = u).

15. What does Aristotle say about the inclusion of improbable or impossible events in a tragedy? When is it advisable for a critic to look kindly on an “error” in representative poetry--something inaccurate or impossible? (62-66)

16. How does Aristotle argue that tragedy is superior to epic? (70-71)

Extra Discussion Questions

17. Is Aristotle’s conception of plot organic or mechanical? Explain.

18. Aristotle’s theory about drama has been called a “direct response to Plato’s theory of imitation.” How does Aristotle’s conception of *mimesis* (imitation, representation) provide the possibility of replying to some of Socrates’ objections as they are spelled out in *The Republic*?

19. Aristotle clearly goes beyond simply refuting Plato--he claims that drama, in particular, plays an important role in Greek life; it is not a corruptive influence. Would you offer something like that defense of art today concerning film, television, or other forms of entertainment? Why or why not?

20. Might Aristotle’s notion of the emotional effects of tragedy be construed as a reply to a Platonic objection? Explain.

21. What image of the poet is implied by much of *The Poetics*? How does this image contrast with the image of the poet to be found in Plato’s *Ion*? Which image do you prefer?

22. Aristotle observes (XXV, 5) that “not to know that a hind has no horns is a less serious matter than to paint it inartistically.” What do you think Aristotle means? Do you agree? What might Socrates say?

23. Does the movie *Jaws* arouse pity and fear in the manner described by Aristotle? Is *Jaws* therefore a tragedy in the full Aristotelian sense?

24. What about movies like *Silence of the Lambs* or *Natural Born Killers*? (Or, for that matter, a revenge tragedy like Shakespeare’s *Titus Andronicus*, recently made into an excellent film by director Julie Taymor.) People seem quite capable of viewing with pleasure psychopathic and violent behavior that would horrify them if it were done in earnest. Does this pleasure stem from a different source than the one Aristotle identifies? Is it a healthy kind of pleasure, or an unhealthy one? Explain.

25. Pick out those places in *The Poetics* where Aristotle compares poetry to painting. How does his use of this comparison differ from Plato’s? Relate these differences to their different notions of *mimesis* or imitation.

Edition: Aristotle. *The Poetics*. Trans. Seth Bernardete. St. Augustine Press, 2002. ISBN: 1587310260.

AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO QUESTIONS

Assigned: Saint Augustine. From *The Confessions* (1221-49).

The Confessions

Book 1. Early Years.

1. On 1222-23, what are Augustine's initial concerns as he begins his autobiography? How does he answer them, and how do his responses relate to the task of writing he has begun?
2. On 1223-24, what seems to be Augustine's view of a child's first days and months? How do children first learn to speak? To what extent does he suggest that children are similar to adults? How are they different?
3. On 1224-26, what does Augustine say about his earliest education--was it good for him, or bad for him? Why did he disobey his parents and teachers?
4. On 1225-26, why did the young Augustine come to dislike Greek so intensely, and to enjoy his Latin studies so much? What concerns does he express about the relationship between speech and morality, and about the experience of the senses?

Book 2. Adolescence.

5. On 1226-27, what problem begins to plague Augustine when he reaches adolescence? What picture of his parents does he give us at this point--how do they deal with his unruliness, and what hopes do they harbor for him?
6. On 1227-29, how does Augustine use his account of a youthful theft (stealing pears) as a vehicle for explaining the nature of sin at its most basic level--aside from the desire for worldly gain and similar "utilitarian" motives? Why does it matter whether one sins alone or in company with others?

Book 3. Student at Carthage.

7. On 1229-31, how does Augustine use his early love of the theater to explore the tendencies of passion? And what seems to be the purpose of art (including rhetoric), as far as he is concerned? Why does he resolve to begin studying the scriptures?

Book 5. Carthage, Rome, and Milan.

8. Augustine says that God drew him on towards Rome from Carthage, and describes how his mother Monica took the news of his departure. How are the move to Rome and the interaction with Monica related to the overall pattern of Augustine's movement towards conversion?

Book 6. Secular Ambitions and Conflicts.

9. On 1231-36 even after he meets Ambrose, what still keeps Augustine from becoming a full Christian? What thoughts does he offer regarding this hindrance? What plans does he form?

Book 8. The Birthpangs of Conversion.

10. In this book, Augustine writes about the manner in which he was at last enabled to move beyond his obsession with sexual desire. How does he explain his progress or liberation? How does Lady Contenance help him?

Book 9. Cassiciacum: to Monica's Death.

11. Augustine decides to leave behind his position as Professor of Rhetoric, and is baptized. Not long thereafter, his mother Monica dies. How does Augustine assess his mother's virtues and her faults? How does he represent his own thoughts and emotions concerning the passing of his mother?

12. In writing of his mother's last days, Augustine dwells upon a moment of spiritual insight he shared with her--what is the nature of that insight? What does it suggest about the relationship between language and spiritual truth? Moreover, what does the passage suggest about the difficulty of maintaining a state of high spiritual awareness?

Edition: Lawall, Sarah, ed. *The Norton Anthology of World Literature*. 2nd edition. Volumes 1ABC. New York: Norton, 2002. ISBN: A = 0-393-97755-2, B = 0-393-97756-0, C = 0-393-97757-9.

AUGUSTINE QUESTIONS (LONG VERSION)

Assigned: Saint Augustine. *The Confessions*, Books 1-9. (Separate edition; see below.)

The Confessions

Book 1. Early Years.

1. What are Augustine's initial concerns as he begins his autobiography? How does he answer them, and how do his responses relate to the task of writing he has begun?
2. What seems to be Augustine's view of a child's first days and months? How do children first learn to speak? To what extent does he suggest that children are similar to adults? How are they different?
3. What does Augustine say about his earliest education--was it good for him, or bad for him? Why did he disobey his parents and teachers?
4. Why did the young Augustine come to dislike Greek so intensely, and to enjoy his Latin studies so much? What concerns does he express about the relationship between speech and morality, and about the experience of the senses?

Book 2. Adolescence.

5. What problem begins to plague Augustine when he reaches adolescence? What picture of his parents does he give us at this point--how do they deal with his unruliness, and what hopes do they harbor for him?

6. How does Augustine use his account of a youthful theft (stealing pears) as a vehicle for explaining the nature of sin at its most basic level--aside from the desire for worldly gain and similar "utilitarian" motives? Why does it matter whether one sins alone or in company with others?

Book 3. Student at Carthage.

7. How does Augustine use his early love of the theater to explore the tendencies of passion? And what seems to be the purpose of art, as far as he is concerned?

8. Why does Augustine fall in with the Manicheans? What fundamental errors do they commit regarding the nature of evil and god, and how does Augustine, reflecting on his early infatuation, here correct those errors?

9. What role does Augustine's mother Monica play at this point in his life? How much credit does it appear from this book that Augustine will give Monica for his eventual conversion?

Book 4. Manichee and Astrologer.

10. While teaching rhetoric in his home town, Augustine loses an unnamed friend to illness. What reflections does he offer on the nature of grief and, more broadly, of friendship? Into what error does excessive grief lead a person?

11. What reflections does Augustine offer concerning beauty and sense-experience of physical objects? According to him, what is the proper attitude to take towards the external world and towards aesthetic perception?

12. Augustine concludes his chapter by commenting on his understanding of humanity and God at the time to which the fourth chapter refers. What seems to have been his understanding, and how does he analyze his error?

Book 5. Carthage, Rome, and Milan.

13. While still in Carthage, friends tell Augustine that the Manichean Bishop Faustus will clear up his intellectual doubts. What sort of person does Faustus turn out to be, and what understanding does Augustine take away from the encounter?

14. Augustine says that God drew him on towards Rome, and describes how his mother Monica took the news of his departure. How are the move to Rome and the interaction with Monica related to the overall pattern of Augustine's movement towards conversion?

15. Augustine is hired on in Milan as a teacher of rhetoric, thanks to a fine oration. At Milan he hears the Christian Bishop Ambrose speak. How does Augustine explain the effects of Ambrose's words on him? What else has Augustine written in this fifth book about the effects and proper use of rhetoric?

Book 6. Secular Ambitions and Conflicts.

16. Even after he meets Ambrose, what still keeps Augustine from becoming a full Christian? Nevertheless, how does he contrast the knowledge claims made by Manicheanism with what the Scriptures offer?

17. Augustine recounts a story drawn from his friendship with Alypius, and describes their plans for leading a proper life. How do Alypius' character and conduct serve as a pattern for Augustine? How do his shortcomings compare to Augustine's?

Book 7. A Neoplatonic Quest.

18. In this book, Augustine meditates on the cause and nature of evil. How does he explain these things. How, as well, does he cure himself of wishing that "individual things" might be better (125)--i.e. of fretting over the fact that God's creation contains many things "liable to corruption" and that no created thing is equal to God's perfection?

19. From 126 onwards, how does Augustine explain, from a Neoplatonic reference frame, his progression towards a more sustainable contemplation of God? What major impediment does he say has kept him from that sustainable way of contemplating God?

Book 8. The Birthpangs of Conversion.

20. In this book, Augustine comes to terms with the fact that a person's wanting to be free of what weighs him or her down spiritually doesn't (in itself) set that person free. Discuss Augustine's analysis of the problems human beings have with the "will"--what complexities are responsible for the suffering and difficulty the will's operation can cause?

21. From 141 onwards, Augustine writes about the manner in which he was at last enabled to move beyond his obsession with sexual desire. How does he explain his progress or liberation? Consider what he writes about a) "the two wills" and b) the appearance of Lady Continence, who urges him to "pick up and read" a certain passage from the Bible.

Book 9. Cassiciacum: to Monica's Death.

22. Augustine decides to leave behind his position as Professor of Rhetoric, and is baptized. Not long thereafter, his mother Monica dies. How does Augustine assess his mother's virtues and her faults? How does he represent his own thoughts and emotions concerning the passing of his mother?

23. In writing of his mother's last days, Augustine dwells upon a moment of spiritual insight he shared with her--what is the nature of that insight? What does it suggest about the relationship between language and spiritual truth? Moreover, what does the passage suggest about the difficulty of maintaining a state of high spiritual awareness?

Edition: Augustine. *The Confessions*. Trans. Henry Chadwick. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998 (reprint). ISBN: 0-192-83372-3.

THE BHAGAVAD-GITA QUESTIONS, SHORT VERSION

Assigned: *The Bhagavad-Gita* (1002-1031).

The Bhagavad-Gita

First Teaching (1014-16)

1. What is the source of Arjuna's temporary despair? Why, when the Pandavas are depending on Arjuna to lead them (as we know from the surrounding sections of *The Mahabharata*), does he suddenly lose his enthusiasm for battle?

Second and Third Teachings (1016-23)

2. By what logic does Krishna urge Arjuna to enter the battle? What intellectual or spiritual error does Krishna first identify and explain to Arjuna? In responding, consider how Krishna redefines the "self," the individual person--how is Arjuna apparently thinking of it, and what insights does Krishna offer him by way of unsettling that view?

3. What advice does Krishna give Arjuna regarding his handling of desire, anger, and strong feelings generally? Should he (or we) deaden or kill them, or is there a better way--how do the wise regard their own emotions and desires? What happens when someone fails to control strong feelings?

4. We identify our actions (good and bad ones alike) with ourselves, and insist that we and others "take responsibility" for what we do. How, according to Krishna, should Arjuna view the relation between the person who performs an action and the action that is performed? What does the term "sacrifice" have to do with that relation? What does Krishna say about his own relation to "action"?

Sixth Teaching (1023-25)

5. What promise does Krishna make about the possibility for achieving tranquility and enlightenment? What is "discipline"? What does he reveal about himself in this teaching?

Eleventh Teaching (1025-28)

6. Throughout much of the Gita, Krishna is gentle, even though the advice he offers may not be easy to follow. But in this teaching, he shows another aspect--at Arjuna's request, what new aspect of himself does Krishna allow him to see? How does Arjuna deal with that revelation? Why might it be important to the author of the Gita that neither Arjuna nor we be spared a rather unsettling insight into the nature of Krishna?

Edition: Lawall, Sarah, ed. *The Norton Anthology of World Literature*. 2nd edition. Volumes 1ABC. New York: Norton, 2002. ISBN: A = 0-393-97755-2, B = 0-393-97756-0, C = 0-393-97757-9.

THE BHAGAVAD-GITA QUESTIONS, FULL VERSION

Assigned: *The Bhagavad-Gita*. (Separate edition; see below.)

1. We tend to see life as a perpetual quest for authentic experience--we want to be "fully present" in the here and now, and we are driven to gratify (now or in some projected future) our various desires. How would the author of the *Baghavad* respond to such an outlook--what is the proper way to conceptualize "experience"? Should we think of our life path as a linear journey to some goal?
2. Regarding the text's treatment of "desire," anger, and strong feelings generally, what advice are we offered--how should we handle our emotions? Should we deaden or kill them in Stoic fashion, or does Krishna offer another strategy--how does a truly wise person regard his or her own emotions and desires?
3. We identify our actions (good ones and bad ones alike) with ourselves, and insist that we and others "take responsibility" for what we do. Deeds, we say, entail consequences and reveal character. What does the *Bhagavad* say about such a viewpoint? How *should* we consider the relation between the person who performs an action and the action that is performed?
4. Most of us think of the "self," the individual person, as fully self-contained and autonomous, and we tend to get annoyed when someone like Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, or Foucault tells us that we are shaped by powerful forces beyond our immediate control. How does the author of the *Gita* delineate the "self"? That is, when this author says "I" or "you," what does he apparently mean?
5. As the narrative unfolds, what advice are we offered about the way or ways to attain true enlightenment, a genuine understanding of Krishna? Is this enlightenment available to everyone, or to only a few? How hard or how easy is it to succeed--that is, to escape the cycle of death and rebirth in this world?
6. Some westerners have read ancient Indian religious texts and decided make radical alterations in their lives--even to the point of abandoning successful careers and relationships--to pursue the path of devotion. Is that something you think the *Gita's* Lord Krishna would approve of in most instances? Why or why not?
7. How does the *Gita's* favored life-path and its view of "salvation" compare to the Christian view in *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew*? What is similar, and what is different? For example, is salvation something to be obtained by an arduous *via dolorosa* (path of sorrow) with much spiritual struggle, or

does the *Gita* teach something different? What might the *Gita* author say about Jesus' comments about sin and damnation? Explain.

8. Throughout much of the *Gita*, Krishna is gentle, even though the advice he offers may not be easy to follow. But at what point does he reveal another, less, gentle, aspect, and how does Arjuna deal with this revelation? Why might it be important to the author of the *Gita* that we not be spared this revelation--what must readers come to appreciate about Krishna, and why?

9. After the revelation just mentioned, the Krishna again becomes mild and conversational. The text returns to the theme of wisdom and the right path, and before it ends we are given something of a jeremiad (i.e. a diatribe) against all who do not comprehend what they should. In terms of message and structure, what need is there for such a section in the *Gita*?

10. The *Gita* does not cast itself as "required reading" for spiritual enlightenment--why so? And how does it compare to what you have read from the Bible in this regard?

11. If you have read much in romantic poetry, what affinities and differences do you find between the *Gita* and authors such as Blake and Shelley? In what sense, for example, might Blake agree with the complex view of Krishna in his relationship to physical nature? How does Shelley describe the burden of self-consciousness and the combined strength and transitoriness of desire and emotion?

Edition: *The Bhagavad-Gita*. Trans. Stephen Mitchell. New York: Three Rivers, 2000. ISBN: 0-609-81034-0.

BHARTRHARI QUESTIONS

Assigned: *Shataktrayam* (1332-37).

Shataktrayam

1. Compare two poems from this collection on the difference between worldly pursuits (wealth, reputation, political power, etc.) and a desire to achieve spiritual purity and liberation (moksha) from the cycle of attachment, karma, and rebirth. What tension emerges as the lyric voice or "speaker" tries to keep these imperatives separate or to place one above the other?

2. There is some distrust of the power of love in these lyrics. But to what extent and in what ways does the speaker question this perspective? Consider the poems' references to love and its representation of or references to women.

3. Our introductions (I mean the general one about the Gupta period in India and the one about the assigned poet) explains that Bhartrhari's poetry is of a very "aesthetic" kind but also that it is admirably epigrammatical and intellectual. Explain in your own way how a few of the poems strike you with regard to their style or form: what is distinctive about the way they convey feelings and ideas or construct images for us?

Edition: Lawall, Sarah, ed. *The Norton Anthology of World Literature*. 2nd edition. Volumes 1ABC. New York: Norton, 2002. ISBN A = 0-393-97755-2, B = 0-393-97756-0, C = 0-393-97757-9.

BIBLE QUESTIONS COMBINED FROM ENGLISH 236 AT CHAPMAN U

Assigned: *The King James Bible*. From *Genesis*: Chs. 1-4 (Creation and Fall); Chs. 6-9 (Noah's Ark); Ch. 11 (Tower of Babel); Ch. 22 (Abraham and Isaac). From *Exodus*: Chs. 1-20 (pp. 65-90). *Job* (pp. 607-40). *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew* (pp. 3-44). "The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians" (pp. 206-22).

From *Genesis*

1. In Chapters 1-2, how and why does God create the earth and the heavens? To what extent does the text posit answers to such questions? What is the traditional view of the relationship between God and his creatures? (Look up the phrase "creation ex nihilo").
2. In Chapters 2-3, how does the text handle the first sin — how much detail are we given with regard to God's reasons for placing the forbidden tree in Eden, and the circumstances and thoughts that lead to Eve's transgression?
3. In Chapters 3-4, how does God respond to the sinful behavior of Adam and Eve, and then Cain? Does the text clarify his reasoning in acting as he does? What seems to be the principle behind the punishments that he distributes to those who have sinned?
4. In Chapters 6-9 (Noah's Ark), and 11 (Tower of Babel), what patterns emerge in the Fall's aftermath? How does the source of sin remain the same even as its varieties multiply? Moreover, Christian theology posits that God is all-knowing and all-powerful; what thoughts and feelings does Genesis ascribe to God as he confronts the wickedness and illegitimate ambitions of earth's people?
5. In Chapter 22, God "tempts" Abraham — what is the nature of this temptation? What would have constituted failure, or partial failure? What promise does God make to Abraham once he passes his test? Also, discuss this chapter's narrative style of — how much detail is offered to us? What is omitted that a modern storyteller might dwell upon at length?
6. In Chapters 25 and 27, Jacob wrests from Esau both his birthright and his father's blessing. What prompts him to do these things? How do you interpret the moral of this story — why is it acceptable that Jacob should do such things to his brother? How does Isaac comfort his favorite son Esau, who has been tricked along with his father?
7. In Chapters 37 and 39-46, Joseph (the son of Jacob, renamed "Israel" by God) is sold into slavery by his brothers, but later becomes the Egyptian Pharaoh's chief administrator. What special power does Joseph have, and how is that power both the cause of his initial troubles and his eventual exaltation? Discuss also this episode's emphasis on suffering, sacrifice, and redemption.

From *Exodus*, Chs. 1-20

8. In Chapters 1-2, what are the circumstances of Moses's birth and upbringing? What qualities does he begin to show when he reaches young adulthood?
9. In Chapters 3-6, in what circumstances does God call upon Moses to take up a leadership role? What trials immediately ensue, and what promise does God find it appropriate to give Moses and the Children of Israel?
10. In Chapters 7-10, what series of plagues does God send down upon the Egyptians? How does he explain his motive for raining these disasters on Pharaoh? And how does Pharaoh deal with what happens — that is, with the demands Moses makes on him and with the disastrous plagues themselves? How does this king reinforce our understanding of the destructive pattern lived by fallen humanity?
11. In Chapters 11-12, what “one plague more” does God visit upon Pharaoh and his kingdom? How does he help the Israelites protect themselves from harm, and under what conditions do they depart from Egypt? With
12. In Chapters 13-14, God prescribes the Passover commemoration, and bid Moses lead the Israelites through the Red Sea wilderness. How does Moses part the Red Sea? Describe as well the rout that occurs when Pharaoh decides to pursue the Israelites. How does this result sum up the struggles between Pharaoh and the Israelites in previous chapters?
13. In Chapters 15-17, what miracles occur as the murmuring Israelites make their way through the desert after their departure from Egypt? What pattern of behavior and attitude do the people of Israel — aside from Moses — reveal in these chapters?
14. In Chapter 18, how does Moses's father-in-law Jethro help provide a rationale for the giving of the Ten Commandments that is about to take place? Explain with reference to the advice he gives Moses about how to deal with the people's need for justice.
15. In Chapters 19-20, how does Moses prepare the Israelites for the great event that is about to happen: the descent of God to Mount Sinai and the giving of the Ten Commandments? How do the people react to this event and to the awesome presence of God? What relationship between God and ordinary Israelites is figured by these chapters?
16. In Chapters 19-20, what exactly are the Ten Commandments? Enumerate them in your own words and discuss the significance of a few of the more complex ones. If you are presenting on this question, consider also what we might gather from the Commandments and from other statements God makes in *Exodus* about what he wants from the human beings he has created? What does he want them to understand about him, and how does he want them to conduct themselves towards him and one another?

Job

17. In Chapters 1-2, on what grounds does Satan repeatedly challenge God's claims about his "perfect" servant Job? How does Job justify those claims by his initial response?
18. In Chapters 3-7, Job's friend Eliphaz argues with him about the cause of his troubles. How does Eliphaz understand Job's downfall and his continuing claims of uprightness? How does Job rebuke Eliphaz and, moreover, what is he determined at this point to do?
19. Next, in Chapters 9-13, Job argues with Bildad and Zophar, who set forth much the same worldly opinions about their friend as did Eliphaz. How does Job answer their accusations, and what attitude towards his predicament does he take up in addressing God directly?
20. In Chapters 14 and 30-31, Job lists the good things he has done — taken together, what picture of his former, prosperous, life emerges from the list he provides? And at this point in the text, to what extent does Job truly understand his predicament?
21. In Chapters 38-41, God finally responds to Job's pleas with a voice "out of the whirlwind." By what means does God build up for Job a sense of his infinite power and wisdom — what creatures, things, and processes does he employ to convey this sense?
22. In Chapter 42, Job responds one last time, and God rewards him richly. What has Job said and done (or not said and done) that leads God to restore his fortune? Why isn't his restoration to wealth and dignity equivalent to the kind of "material reward for moral goodness" scheme posited by Job's false friends?
23. A general question — almost all Bible readers have found this book magnificent, yet some have also found it disturbing. What relationship between humanity and God does the story set forth? Is God "just" in terms that we can understand? Or is that not the point? Explain your thoughts on how Job's God deals with his creatures and on what insights we should draw from Job's sufferings, his response to them, and God's response to him.

The Gospel According to Saint Matthew

Chapters 1-2

24. In Chapters 1-2, what is the story of Jesus' conception and birth? How does his birth affect his parents, Joseph and Mary? How does Matthew establish the boy's special nature right from the beginning of the first chapter?
25. In Chapter 2, how does King Herod react to the birth of Jesus? What does he do, and what information is he acting upon that drives him to this course of action? How do Jesus, Mary, and Joseph manage to escape from Herod's trap?

Chapters 3-4

26. In Chapter 3, who is John the Baptist? What expectations does he raise regarding the mission of Jesus? Into what relation does he place himself with Jesus, and vice versa?

27. In Chapter 4, why is it necessary that Jesus should undergo a series of temptations in the wilderness? What exactly are the temptations, and what threat does each constitute to him? How does he overcome them? In responding, attend to the words he speaks against the devil. Finally, what is the immediate result of Jesus' successful completion of this difficult test — what does he begin to do?

Chapters 5-7

28. In Chapters 5-7, Jesus gives his great Sermon on the Mount. This sermon covers much ground, but choose what you consider the three most important issues Jesus addresses and discuss their significance — what advice is he giving, for example, about personal conduct, setting an example for others, how to approach one's religious duties and relationship to God, etc.?

29. In Chapters 5-7, Jesus insists in his Sermon on the Mount that he has come to fulfill the scriptures (i.e. "the law" and "the prophets"; see 5.17-18), not to abolish them. How do you interpret this pledge, based on his handling of moral and religious concerns in the Sermon? In what sense does he fulfill the demands made upon people by the earlier scriptures, and in what sense might he be said to challenge or transform them?

Chapters 8-9

30. In Chapters 8-9, multitudes of people begin to follow Jesus. What demonstrations of his powers does he offer in these chapters, and what are the most important lessons that he expounds to the people? How does he reinforce his authority by refuting those who question his right to do the things he does, and challenging the assumptions of those around him?

Chapters 10-12

31. In Chapter 10, who are the twelve disciples, and how does Jesus prepare them for their mission as his assistants — what advice and warnings does he give them?

32. In Chapter 11, how does Jesus explain to the people his true relation to John the Baptist? And why does he upbraid the present generation and the important cities he names? How, towards the chapter's end, does he describe his status in relation to God the Father and in relation to ordinary human beings?

33. In Chapter 12, what rebukes does Jesus make against the Pharisees who question him? Who are these "Pharisees"? (Research the term if you are not familiar with it.) More generally, what stern warnings and difficult, almost off-putting dimension of his mission on earth does Jesus reveal in this chapter? Consider in your response to this last issue especially 12.46-50.

Chapters 13-14

34. In Chapter 13, Jesus speaks in parables to the multitude of people who gather to hear him, and he explains to his disciples why he does so. What exactly is a parable? Discuss a few of Jesus' parables in this chapter as well as the rationale he offers to the disciples for using such a device to convey his meaning.

35. In Chapter 14, what happens to John the Baptist, and how does Jesus teach a lesson about faith to his disciples? Consider his miracle of the loaves and fishes as well as his demonstration of the ability to walk on a troubled sea?

Chapters 15-16

36. In Chapter 15, how does Jesus answer the Pharisees' accusations that his disciples "wash not their hands when they eat bread"? Also, even though he says, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel," how might he be said to modify that claim by his treatment of the woman from Canaan and her daughter?

37. In Chapter 16, Jesus founds what will later become the universal or Catholic Church. How does this act come about? How does he soon thereafter nonetheless become angry with Peter, and for what reason? How does he use the moment to elaborate on the significance of his own future suffering and death?

Chapters 17-18

38. In Chapter 17, how does Jesus balance his divine status with his earthly circumstances? Consider the chapter-opening scene in which he is transfigured, and then the one towards the end where he reinforces the necessity of his own death and agrees to pay tribute money at Capernaum.

39. In Chapter 18, in what ways does Jesus advise his listeners regarding the nature of heaven and the most likely way to get there? How do you understand the message he is conveying — why is the concept of childhood so important to him?

Chapters 19-20

40. In Chapters 19-20, how does Jesus address key issues such as the spiritual significance of earthly wealth and success, family loyalty, and (at least by implication) social rank? How might Jesus's teachings about such things lead us to see him as more of a revolutionary than a preserver of the social and political status quo? Discuss a few of his most noteworthy statements along those lines.

Chapters 21-23

41. In Chapters 21-23, Jesus wrangles with the Scribes and Pharisees as well as with those within the temple of God in Jerusalem. How does he answer the main accusations they make, and what behavior on their part does he particularly condemn? On the whole, how would you characterize the change that has come over Jesus' way of dealing with and addressing those around him as he moves towards the end of his time on earth?

Chapters 24-25

42. In Chapters 24-25, Jesus describes what is often called the End of Days: an intense time of destruction and judgment that brings human history to an end and ushers in the Kingdom of God. What are the main features of this period — what signs announce it, and what cataclysms are predicted? On what principles are the good separated from the wicked?

Chapters 26-28

43. In Chapters 26-28, which cover the betrayal, trial, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension of Jesus, what patterns of human frailty and error do those around Jesus display? In responding, consider Jesus' disciples, the Roman governor Pontius Pilate, and those who condemn Jesus as a blasphemer against religious tradition.

44. In Chapters 26-28, to what extent does Matthew show us Jesus' human, suffering side, and at what key points does he do that? Why is there a need to show this dimension? Nonetheless, how do the final chapters convey an equally necessary sense of the *pageantry* or ceremonial nature of what Jesus suffers and accomplishes?

The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians

45. In Chapters 1-4, what basic reproaches does Paul level against his addressees the Corinthians? How does he chastise them or instruct them regarding the proper way to view knowledge and wisdom?

46. In Chapters 5-7, how does Paul address "fornication" and, more generally, material desire? What seems to be his view of sexuality and marriage?

47. In Chapter 9, how does Paul characterize his role as an apostle of Jesus? What does he say motivates him to do the things he does?

48. In Chapters 10-11, what does Paul suggest about the correct interpretation of freedom from the rules and restrictions laid out in Hebrew scripture? What sense of discipline does he work to instill in his followers with regard to conduct in and out of church?

49. In Chapters 12-13, how does Paul address the issue of diversity of "spiritual gifts"? How does he thereby urge unity amongst the Corinthian believers? Also, how does Paul define and elaborate upon the meaning of "charity," and how are his eloquent words in Chapter 13, Verses 11-13 related to his discussion of this key concept?

50. In Chapter 14, what does Paul suggest about glossolalia ("speaking in tongues") and why is the gift of prophesy better than speaking in tongues?

51. In Chapter 15, how does Paul describe his own career (research it briefly on the Net if you're not familiar with the story of Saul/Paul of Tarsus) and reinforce a key distinction between body and spirit in relation to the doctrine of the Resurrection of the dead?

Edition: *The King James Bible*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998. ISBN: 0-192-83525-4.

BIBLE QUESTIONS: THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES

Assigned: from *The King James Bible*. From *Genesis* (52-77), from *Job* (77-93), from *Psalms* (93-96), *Song of Songs* (96-100), *Jonah* (101-103).

From *Genesis*

1. In Chapters 1-2, how and why does God create the earth and the heavens? To what extent does the text posit answers to such questions? What is the traditional view of the relationship between God and his creatures? (Look up the phrase “creation ex nihilo”).
2. In Chapters 2-3, how does the text handle the first sin--how much detail are we given with regard to God’s reasons for placing the forbidden tree in Eden, and the circumstances and thoughts that lead to Eve’s transgression?
3. In Chapters 3-4, how does God respond to the sinful behavior of Adam and Eve, and then Cain? Does the text clarify his reasoning in acting as he does? What seems to be the principle behind the punishments that he distributes to those who have sinned?
4. In Chapters 6-9 (Noah’s Ark), and 11 (Tower of Babel), what patterns emerge in the Fall’s aftermath? How does the source of sin remain the same even as its varieties multiply? Moreover, Christian theology posits that God is all-knowing and all-powerful; what thoughts and feelings does Genesis ascribe to God as he confronts the wickedness and illegitimate ambitions of earth’s people?
5. In Chapter 22, God “tempts” Abraham--what is the nature of this temptation? What would have constituted failure, or partial failure? What promise does God make to Abraham once he passes his test? Also, discuss this chapter’s narrative style of--how much detail is offered to us? What is omitted that a modern storyteller might dwell upon at length?
6. In Chapters 25 and 27, Jacob wrests from Esau both his birthright and his father’s blessing. What prompts him to do these things? How do you interpret the moral of this story--why is it acceptable that Jacob should do such things to his brother? How does Isaac comfort his favorite son Esau, who has been tricked along with his father?
7. In Chapters 37 and 39-46, Joseph (the son of Jacob, renamed “Israel” by God) is sold into slavery by his brothers, but later becomes the Egyptian Pharaoh’s chief administrator. What special power does Joseph have, and how is that power both the cause of his initial troubles and his eventual exaltation? Discuss also this episode’s emphasis on suffering, sacrifice, and redemption.

From *Job*

8. In Chapters 1-2, on what grounds does Satan repeatedly challenge God's claims about his "perfect" servant Job? How does Job justify those claims by his initial response?
9. In Chapters 3-7, Job's friend Eliphaz argues with him about the cause of his troubles. How does Eliphaz understand Job's downfall and his continuing claims of uprightness? How does Job rebuke Eliphaz and, moreover, what is he determined at this point to do?
10. Next, in Chapters 9-13, Job argues with Bildad and Zophar, who set forth much the same worldly opinions about their friend as did Eliphaz. How does Job answer their accusations, and what attitude towards his predicament does he take up in addressing God directly?
11. In Chapters 14 and 30-31, Job lists the good things he has done--taken together, what picture of his former, prosperous, life emerges from the list he provides? And at this point in the text, to what extent does Job truly understand his predicament?
12. In Chapters 38-41, God finally responds to Job's pleas with a voice "out of the whirlwind." By what means does God build up for Job a sense of his infinite power and wisdom--what creatures, things, and processes does he employ to convey this sense?
13. In Chapter 42, Job responds one last time, and God rewards him richly. What has Job said and done (or not said and done) that leads God to restore his fortune? Why isn't his restoration to wealth and dignity equivalent to the kind of "material reward for moral goodness" scheme posited by Job's false friends?
14. A general question--almost all Bible readers have found this book magnificent, yet some have also found it disturbing. What relationship between humanity and God does the story set forth? Is God "just" in terms that we can understand? Or is that not the point? Explain your thoughts on how Job's God deals with his creatures and on what insights we should draw from Job's sufferings, his response to them, and God's response to him.

From *Psalms*

15. The Psalms on pages 93-96 offer insights about the speakers' emotional response to God and his connection to the unfolding history of the Israelites. Discuss either of these issues, or both, with reference to any two of the Psalms.

Song of Songs

16. How does this poem build a sense of the erotic bond between Solomon and his lover (perhaps "Shulamite")--what are some of the text's most powerful figures for the body and for sexuality?
17. As our editors suggest, this text (a frankly sexual poem in the midst of a collection often reticent about such things) challenges us to decide how much should be taken as material and how much

spiritualized. How do you interpret the poem with regard to its material or physical and spiritual dimensions?

Jonah

18. Why does Jonah try to avoid the mission (preaching to and warning the Assyrians of Nineveh) God has given him? That is, aside from simple fear, what erroneous assumptions about God's nature and his concern for humanity does Jonah make? How does God's "gourd" example bring those errors home to him?

Edition: Lawall, Sarah, ed. *The Norton Anthology of World Literature*. 2nd edition. Volumes 1ABC. New York: Norton, 2002. ISBN: A = 0-393-97755-2, B = 0-393-97756-0, C = 0-393-97757-9.

BIBLE QUESTIONS: THE NEW TESTAMENT

Assigned: from *The New Testament* (1206-21).

Luke 2 (1207-08)

1. How are Jesus' birth and his earliest actions received by the people surrounding him--his parents, the shepherds, Simeon, Anna, and the learned rabbis? How much of his value is known to all, and how much seems to be understood privately?

Matthew 5-7 (1209-13)

2. Jesus says he has come to "fulfill" the scriptures (i.e. "the law and the prophets"). After reading his "Sermon on the Mount," how do you interpret this pledge? In what sense does he fulfill the scriptures?

3. Jesus' pronouncements in part form the basis of modern "civil disobedience--for example, Thoreau's resistance of government encroachment on his personal liberties, Mahatma Gandhi's *Satyagraha* campaigns in South Africa and India, and Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "non-violent direct action" initiatives against segregation. Explain the logic of Jesus' remarks about how to treat one's enemies, how to deal with evil, and so forth.

Luke 15 and Matthew 13 (1213-15)

4. What is a parable? Why does Jesus employ parables so often--what does he say about this when his disciples ask him for an explanation? What functions of the parable can you infer from his "Parable of the Sower"?

Matthew 26-28 (1215-21)

5. In the betrayal, trial, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus, what patterns of human frailty are on display? Consider Jesus' disciples, the top Roman official Pontius Pilate, and those who condemn Jesus as a blasphemer against religious tradition.
6. How does Jesus respond to what others say and do against him? To what extent does the text ceremonialize Jesus' suffering? To what extent does it represent that suffering in a more directly personal and realistic manner?

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THE KING JAMES BIBLE QUESTIONS, OXFORD VERSION

Assigned: *Job*; *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew*; suggested, *Genesis*. (Separate text; see below.)

Job

1. How does the prose frame correlate to the poetic sections of Job? What contrast or contradiction do they suggest for your interpretation of Job's attitude towards his struggle?
2. What advice do Job's friends and wife, respectively, offer him? How does he respond?
3. To what extent does Job understand the cause of his predicament? Does it matter whether he understands?
4. What view of God comes across in this book? Is his behavior obviously just? Or is his conduct a challenge to readers just as much as to Job? Explain.
5. What view of the Adversary emerges from this book? How would you characterize his role? What challenges does he offer to God's justice and omnipotence?
6. What does Job do, or not do, that leads God to restore him to good fortune? Is it a matter of repentance, or something else?

The Gospel According to Saint Matthew

7. In what sense is Jesus a challenging, radical figure? Whom in the Gospel account does he offend by his advice and actions, and why?
8. How does Jesus respond to accusations leveled against him? What effect do his responses generally have?
9. What qualities might some observers find in common amongst Jesus and modern hero-figures such as Gandhi, MLK, Malcolm X, and possibly others?

10. How does Matthew, who writes after Jesus' death, establish his authority as narrator? And how does he establish Jesus' divine authority?

11. To what extent does Matthew show us Jesus' human, suffering side? Why is there a need to show it? What narrative task competes with that need, and why?

Chapters 1-2

12. Catalogs of "begetting" are traditional in the Scriptures, but how does Matthew's choice to open his narrative with one enhance the difference established by the coming of Jesus?

13. Why does Herod react as he does to the events surrounding young Jesus? What misunderstanding is he acting upon?

Chapter 3

14. What expectations does John the Baptist raise regarding the mission of Jesus? Into what relation does he place himself with Jesus, and vice versa?

Chapter 4

15. What resources does Jesus call upon in resisting the devil during the temptation in the wilderness? What is the immediate result of his success?

Chapters 5-7

16. How do you interpret Jesus' comments about sin and righteousness in connection to the Old Testament, at least insofar as Jesus himself characterizes the earlier scriptures here in his Sermon on the Mount?

17. What means does Jesus employ to confirm his authority as a spiritual teacher of both his disciples and the multitude gathered before him?

Genesis (Not Assigned)

18. Why does God create the earth and the heavens? Does the text explain, or should we not expect the narrative to explain such things?

19. How does the text handle the first sin--what do you think leads Eve to sin?

20. How does God respond to the sinful behavior of his creatures? Does the text clarify his reasoning in acting as he does?

21. What patterns do you see emerging in the aftermath of the Fall? To what extent do the children of Adam and Eve repeat their first progenitors' error--does sin remain the same in its source even as the varieties of sin multiply, or would you explain the pattern of error some other way?

22. How does God respond to the continual mistakes of his creatures? What promises does he make, and why?

Edition: *The King James Bible*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998. ISBN: 0-192-83525-4.

MANLIUS SEVERINUS BOETHIUS QUESTIONS

Assigned: Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius. *The Consolation of Philosophy*. (Separate text; see below.)

The Consolation of Philosophy

Book 1

1. Under what circumstances does Boethius first see Lady Philosophy? What aspect does she assume, and what does she have against the Muses? (3-5)
2. What is the first line of consolation offered by Philosophy, and what examples of fortitude does she provide? (7-9)
3. What complaints does Boethius lodge against his current lot? What has been done to him, by whom, and what has his experience made him think of his philosophical knowledge? (10-15)
4. How does Philosophy begin to counter Boethius' complaints? What does she suggest he has forgotten? In what way is her advice Christian? (16-21)

Book 2

5. Why, according to Philosophy, should we neither trust nor blame fortune? What mental and spiritual error does trusting in fortune or blaming it involve? (23-28)
6. Why, according to Philosophy, are power and honor vain delusions on the part of those who seek them?
7. Why is Philosophy still not satisfied with Boethius' response to her advice? (41-46)

Book 3

8. What various types of "false happiness" does Philosophy examine, and on what grounds does she dismiss them? (48-65)
9. How does Philosophy characterize God--why, for example, is it appropriate to call him "the supreme good"? (68-77)
10. How far would you say Boethius has come towards achieving a state of consolation? What assessment of his own failings and understanding so far does he offer? (78-82)

Partial question set; to be completed as time permits.

Edition: Boethius. *The Consolation of Philosophy*. Trans. Victor Watts. New York: Penguin, 2000. ISBN: 0-140-44780-6.

GAUTAMA BUDDHA QUESTIONS

Assigned: Buddha. [<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/nanamoli/wheel017.html#s1> | Three Cardinal Discourses]. (Free online source.)

First Discourse: Setting Rolling the Wheel of Truth

1. Buddha is known as “the awakened one.” As reported by his cousin Ananda Thera, how does Buddha describe his awakening to the Truth he describes and how (in terms of speaking style) does he convey its impact on his own consciousness? What effect is this discourse apparently designed to have upon Buddha’s audience (which consisted of five ascetics)?

Second Discourse: The Not-Self Characteristic

2. Buddha describes form, feeling, perception, judgment-making, and consciousness as “not-self” (things not proper to our being), and he praises “estrangement” from all these as a means of liberation and a path to enlightenment. However, his sermon itself takes the form of a rather precise, reasoned account of how to achieve the enlightenment he has attained. How might we explain that paradox?

Third Discourse: The Fire Sermon

3. This third sermon accords doctrinally with the first two, but how does Buddha’s employment of the metaphor “fire” give what his message a different emphasis or add to what he has already explained?

Edition: Buddha. [<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/nanamoli/wheel017.html#s1> | Three Cardinal Discourses]. (Free online source.)

GAIUS VALERIUS CATULLUS QUESTIONS

Assigned. Gaius Valerius Catullus. From *Lyrics* (1046-51).

1. What images, attitudes, and poetic devices appear in Catullus that we can find in much later lyric poetry, such as that of Petrarch, or Elizabethans such as Thomas Wyatt, or even in modern lyric and love poetry?

2. In what sense is Catullus’ lyric poetry not simply self-expression? What does a lyricist like Catullus reveal, and what does he conceal or dissimulate? In what sense might he be said to explore themes such as the inherent difficulty of communicating emotional states and communicating honestly with one’s romantic partner?

Edition: Lawall, Sarah, ed. *The Norton Anthology of World Literature*. 2nd edition. Volumes 1ABC. New York: Norton, 2002. ISBN: A = 0-393-97755-2, B = 0-393-97756-0, C = 0-393-97757-9.

CHUANG CHOU QUESTIONS

Assigned: from Chuang Chou (832-58).

Chuang Chou

Chapter 1 (834-37)

Note: the text sometimes uses Chuang Chou, sometimes Chuang Tzu--the latter term means "Master Chuang," while the former is Chuang's personal name. Both refer to the same person--Chuang writes about himself in the third person.

1. On 834-35, our selection begins with quotations from a mythical book, it seems--what philosophical stance does Chuang Chou take when he discusses such things as "the great bird P'eng," the cicada, and the dove in connection with human perception and understanding?
2. On 835-37, in what sense does Chuang Chou, with his comments on political or bureaucratic office and on "usefulness/uselessness," challenge the basic orientation of Confucianism? Consider also what the young herdsman says to the Yellow Emperor on 858--what does he explain to the Emperor about governing?

Chapter 2 (838-45)

3. On 838-41, Chuang Chou addresses the basic philosophical problem of self-consciousness (i.e. our awareness of ourselves as thinking beings, as mind-body units, etc.--our ability to "get a handle" on what we are). What view does he advance concerning the possibility of grasping ourselves this way?
4. On 839-43, Chuang Chou analyzes the "categories" of thought humans (especially philosophers and logicians) employ. Why, according to him, do they use such categories as "this" and "that," and what error does the use of them involve? What are the consequences of the error?
5. On 843-45, Chuang Chou offers some comments on "the sage"? According to him, what is a sage? How does he recast this figure in accordance with his own theory of knowledge (i.e. his ideas about "epistemology," as the branch of philosophy that deals with how knowledge may be gained is called)?

Chapters 3-4 (845-48)

6. On 845-46, a cook named Ting explains to Lord Wen-Hui? how he has become so adept at the culinary art. How has he done it? Why is Ting's method (if that's the right word) the fundamental way "to care for life"? What does Ting not have to do that others must do?
7. On 847-48, the carpenter Shih learns something from an ancient oak tree. What does he learn, and what underlies his further defense of the tree when his apprentice challenges the insight he has gained?

How does the next section (on “Crippled Shu” and the madman Chieh Yü, who shouts at Confucius) reinforce or modify that insight?

Chapters 6-7, 12 (848-53)

8. On 848-53, Chuang Chou focuses on Confucius in some detail, generating dialog for him about his thoughts on death and the ceremonies surrounding it, and then on Tzu-Kung’s report to the Sage about an old gardener. On the whole, how does Chuang Chou represent Confucius? Is Chuang Chou recasting him in his own image? Does he seem to approve of his Confucius’ opinions? Explain with specific reference to the text.

Chapter 13 (852-53)

9. Here the wheelwright P’ien explains to his master Duke Huan that books just don’t contain all the wonderful wisdom the Duke thinks they do. What is P’ien’s reasoning on the matter? If the wheelwright is correct, how does that complicate Chuang Chou’s status as a philosophical writer, and how might he nonetheless defend his writings? (One’ can’t be certain that he would do any such thing, but it’s worth considering.)

Chapters 17-22, 24 (853-58)

10. On 851-55 (Chs. 17-19) describe human attempts to understand other not only the consciousness of other beings, but also the state of nonbeing and the supernatural realm of ghosts. How successful are these attempts, in your view--is Master Chuang (i.e. Chuang Tzu) right in doggedly claiming he knows what fish enjoy? Does he learn anything from the skull he contemplates? What does the Invocator learn about the difference between himself and a pig? And finally, what helps Duke Huan get over his melancholy fear of a ghost?

11. On 855-56 (Ch. 20), Chuang Chou is stricken with unhappiness when he runs into a chain of predatory acts, which include his own stalking of a magpie. What is it that has made him so unhappy? How do you interpret his statement that he “forgot his body” and the magpie “forgot its true self”?

12. On 856-57 (Ch. 21), Chuang examines the “true artist” and the downright archer. What makes the artist genuine, rather than simply insolent or lazy? Why is the archer a failure, in spite of his skill?

13. On 857-58, (Chs. 22, 24), Master Chuang says that the Way is not locatable in any ordinary sense. How, then, is he able to offer us any insight about it--in what manner does the selection from Ch. 22 exemplify Chuang’s efforts in that regard?

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CLASSIC OF POETRY QUESTIONS

Assigned: from *The Classic of Poetry* (812-20). Also read "Poetry and Thought in Early China" (805-09).

"Fishhawk"

1. Who is the speaker--an individual or the community? In what sense is this poem "lyric"? What does the natural scenery add to the poem's emotional atmosphere?

"Plums are Falling"

2. What state of mind does this poem express? Why might the action of harvesting plums be especially appropriate for conveying such a feeling or state of mind?

"Dead Roe Deer"

3. What is the situation in this poem? How do you interpret the maiden's response to her situation in the final stanza? What does the "dead roe deer" symbolize?

"Boat of Cypress"

4. What might be the source of the speaker's suffering? In what sense is her "utterance" (i.e. the written poem) a way of dealing with it? How is the leading image, the boat of cypress, related to the poem's subject, and what other imagery does the speaker mention to express her grief?

"Gentle Girl" and "Quince"

5. How do "Gentle Girl" and "Quince," respectively, represent the connections people make between the objects of their affection and ordinary (or not so ordinary) material objects? How do these objects prove useful in defining and redefining feelings and relationships?

"Chung-Tzu, Please"

6. This is a romantic poem, but more specifically, how does the young woman speaker mediate between her own passion, the passion of her suitor, and the feelings and expectations of her family and society in general? How does she redefine the suitor's proper role as a lover--what must he do to keep her affections?

"I Went Along the Broad Road"

7. This very short poem nonetheless conveys something significant--how do you interpret its meaning, its message? What is it claiming about past loves and friendships? Do you agree with the sentiment expressed? Why or why not?

"Rooster Crows"

8. In this poem, the male and female speaker express different attitudes towards the coming of the dawn--what attitudes do they convey about it? What future is projected? How do you interpret the final stanza--how does it relate to the previous ones?

“Willows by the Eastern Gate”

9. What is the situation in this poem, and how is the natural scene made a vehicle for the conveyance of an emotional state?

“She Bore the Folk”

10. This poem, rather like the Homeric hymns with its paeans to Ceres and Demeter, celebrates the harvest in the form of a god, Lord Millet. How was Lord Millet born and raised? How is he like and unlike ordinary human beings? Finally, do a bit of net-research and find out why this legend was important to the Chou dynasty.

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CONFUCIUS QUESTIONS, SHORT VERSION

Assigned: Confucius. *The Analects* (820-31).

The Analects

1. The insights of Confucius are offered by means of dialogue--how might this form add to the impact of the Master's ideas? Also, if you have read some of the Platonic dialogues, how would you say the conversations between Confucius and his circle compare to Socrates' way of setting forth his ideas? Further, how do Confucius' disciples or circle of friends regard him?
2. Confucius often responds to requests for clarification on the nature of learning, teaching, and wisdom. What does he say about these things--what is it to learn and understand, what makes a good teacher, and what constitutes wisdom? What do you think about these matters?
3. What characterizes “the gentleman,” according to Confucius? What relationship does Confucius assert between individual goodness (i.e. following the Way) and the social and political environment? What does he appear to think of the “common people,” and of the degree of influence upon them that a gentleman may attain by his own conduct?
4. When Confucius is asked to compare various men with regard to their “benevolence,” he offers complex responses. What do you think he means by benevolence, based on specific references to our selections? Why not just offer a single definition and have done with the matter--what's the advantage to Confucius in the gradualist method of definition he employs?

5. Confucius refers to “the rites” and “the Way” several times. How does he define the Way? Why are established religious and ceremonial procedures so important to him? What role do poetry and music play for the individual and society?

6. Do you think that the principles Confucius sets forth about the relationship between the rulers and the ruled are of any value for citizens of a modern democratic society? How do you see the relationship between ordinary people and those who hold elective office in America? Should they set an example for all of us? Or would that be presumptuous and inappropriate? Explain your view.

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CONFUCIUS QUESTIONS, FULL VERSION

Assigned: Confucius. From *The Analects*. (Separate text; see below.)

From *The Analects*

Book 1

1. The insights of Confucius are offered by means of dialogue--how might this form add to the impact of the Master's ideas? Also, if you have read some of the Platonic dialogues, how would you say the conversations between Confucius and his circle compare to Socrates' way of setting forth his ideas?

Book 2

2. Here as elsewhere in *The Analects*, Confucius finds himself responding to requests for clarification on the nature of learning and teaching. So what does he have to say about these things--what is it to learn and understand, and what makes a good teacher? What do you yourself think about these matters?

Book 3

3. As in the first book, Confucius refers to “the rites” several times, and here he discourses on music as well. Why might following established religious and ceremonial procedures so important to him, and what do you suppose to be the significance of music to Confucius?

Book 4

4. What characterizes “the gentleman,” according to Confucius? How, for instance, does a gentleman look upon his own endeavors? In what light does he understand his relationship to others both above and below him? How does he regard his parents?

Book 5

5. When Confucius is asked to compare various men with regard to their “benevolence,” he offers some rather complex responses. Why? What do you think he means by that term? Also, what does the Master say of himself in this book?

Book 6

6. Here Confucius further elaborates on his ideas about benevolence. What nuances does he add? What is the value in his method of definition by successive and stylistically different remarks to various inquirers--why not, that is, just offer an entire definition at once, and have done with the matter?

Book 7

7. Confucius modestly disclaims his status as a sage, but it’s clear that he deserves the name. In this book, what makes him more than a gentleman--good though that title may be in itself? What benefits flow from this high degree of character?

8. In the sixth and seventh books, Confucius insists that difficulty is of the essence in learning and in conducting oneself as a gentleman. Why so? Why wouldn’t a person previously unwilling or unable to deal with “difficulty” fail to benefit from his teachings?

Book 8

9. What relationship does Confucius assert between individual goodness (i.e. following the Way) and the social and political environment? What does Confucius appear to think of the “common people,” and of the degree of influence upon them that a gentleman may attain by his own conduct?

Book 9

10. In this book, the writer says that Confucius always refused to be either egotistical or inflexible. How, up to this point in *The Analects*, has the Master demonstrated these virtues? How does he verify the author’s impression of him in the current book?

Book 10

11. What picture of Confucius emerges in this book regarding his way of dealing with those above and below him in rank? What is his like in his day-to-day habits and manner of speech? Why are we being told all this?

Book 11

12. Confucius, in hearing what his disciples have set their hearts upon, sides with Tien--why so, and what criticism does he venture of the other remarks in this vein?

Book 12

13. In this book Confucius speaks about government. How does he think that rulers and administrators can maintain order? What wise thing did Emperor T’ang do?

14. Do you think that the principles Confucius sets forth about the relationship between the rulers and the ruled are tenable in a modern democratic society? How do you see the relationship between ordinary people and those who hold elective office in America? Should they set an example for all of us? Or would that be presumptuous and inappropriate? Explain your view.

Edition: Confucius. *The Analects*. Trans. D. C. Lau. New York: Penguin, 1979.

EGYPTIAN POETRY QUESTIONS

Assigned: Ancient Egyptian Poetry (41-52). "Akhenaten's Hymn to the Sun" (42-46), "The Leiden Hymns" (46-49), and "Love Songs" (49-52).

Of interest: [LACMA's King Tut Exhibit](#) and [Bowers Museum Death and the Afterlife in Ancient Egypt Exhibit](#).

Akhenaten's "Hymn to the Sun"

1. What is the speaker's relation to the Sun-God, aside from the claim to be his offspring--what powers of act and expression does the speaker derive from the Sun? How does the speaker--let's say it's the Pharaoh Akhenaten--see his responsibilities to his people?
2. Explore the creative and ordering power that Akhenaten posits for the Sun-God: how was the world created, and what seems to be its ruling principle?
3. Discuss this hymn's literary qualities, in particular its numerous references to light and reflection--trace their significance as the poem develops. To what extent is beauty or what we would call "aesthetic perception" itself a theme in this hymn?

"The Leiden Hymns"

4. Our editors rightly suggest that one of the finest things about sacred poetry lies in its attempts to "express the inexpressible" (or, at times, the inexpressibility of the inexpressible). In any of the Leiden poems, how does the speaker go about this task--by what means is something beyond the ordinary and material suggested with regard to time, space, or spirit?
5. Compare the way the "Leiden Hymns" image forth the Sun-God? with the way the Hebrew scriptures describe Yahweh's "shape" and thought processes: see, for example, the early chapters of Genesis (God creates the world and places a forbidden tree in Eden), Exodus 3 (God as the Burning Bush), or the concluding chapters of Job (God as the Voice in the Whirlwind). What is similar, and what is different?

"Love Songs"

6. Egypt is hardly a “shame culture” when it comes to sex and the body generally, but there is a sense of reserve about the speakers in these poems--examine a few of them and try to capture this quality: about what, exactly, is the speaker shy or reserved, hesitant to express his or her love?

7. It seems that the mainstays of love poetry are attempts to convey a sense of longing or distance, a sense of erotic pleasure, and (often) a sense of something that transcends straightforward sexual feelings and experiences. Examine one or more of the Love Songs for these attempts, and discuss your findings about how, specifically, the poet conveys these things.

Edition: Lawall, Sarah, ed. *The Norton Anthology of World Literature*. 2nd edition. Volumes 1ABC. New York: Norton, 2002. ISBN: A = 0-393-97755-2, B = 0-393-97756-0, C = 0-393-97757-9.

EURIPIDES QUESTIONS

Assigned: Euripides. *Medea*. (Separate text; see below.)

Medea

1. How does Medea justify killing her own sons--what does she say her motives are? Is she consistent in this regard?
2. How do the chorus, the King, and Jason regard Medea before she kills her two sons? What assumptions about gender and “Greekness” might be said to inform their statements?
3. In the myth cycles, Jason is a hero. How does Euripides handle this figure from Greek legend?
4. Euripides is often called an ironist because he structures his plots in unusual ways. Find an instance or two where the choices he makes seem contrary to ordinary expectations for plot development or character presentation.
5. How does Euripides compare with Aeschylus or Sophocles with respect to the balance between character presentation and plot development?
6. How does Euripides compare with Aeschylus or Sophocles with regard to the relationship between the human and the divine? How important are myth and the gods in Euripides’ dramatic universe or *cosmos*?
7. Consider Aristotle’s later theory of tragedy, in which a noble character commits an “error” and that character’s downfall generates some degree of empathy (pity and fear) on the audience’s part, with the end result being “catharsis” (emotional purification and/or clarification) for the spectators. Does *Medea* fit this pattern, or would you describe its probable effect differently?

Edition: Euripides. *The Complete Greek Tragedies: Euripides 1: Alcestis, Medea, Heracleidae, Hippolytus*. Eds. Richmond Lattimore and David Grene. Chicago: U of Chicago Press, 1983. ISBN: 0-226-30780-8.

EPIC OF GILGAMESH QUESTIONS

Assigned: *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (10-41).

The Epic of Gilgamesh

Prologue and Part 1. Gilgamesh; The Coming of Enkidu (12-17)

1. Who was Gilgamesh? Use the internet to respond to this question in more detail than the Norton introduction provides.
2. What heroic attributes does the prologue give Gilgamesh? What other goal might the prologue be designed to achieve--what about its final paragraph in this light?
3. When Uruk's men complain against Gilgamesh, the goddess Aruru creates Enkidu for him as a companion. What is Enkidu like--how does he live before he meets with any human beings? What does he look like?
4. What happens when a trapper, following the advice of his father and then Gilgamesh, brings Enkidu a temple prostitute? What does this episode suggest about the author's view of the difference between human beings and animals, between the wild and the civilized?
5. How are Gilgamesh and Enkidu brought together? And how specifically is the bond of friendship established between them when they meet? What can you draw from this episode concerning Mesopotamian ideas about heroism, rank, and friendship?

Part 2. The Forest Journey (17-24)

6. What moves Gilgamesh to make his journey to the "Land of the Living," where fierce Humbaba guards the cedars? How much of his motive has to do with fame, and how much, perhaps, to more complex motives? Explain with specific reference to the text.
7. What role do gods such as Enlil, Shamash, and Ninsun play in this episode?
8. How does Enkidu serve his comrade Gilgamesh throughout this episode? What dreams does Gilgamesh recount to him, and how does he interpret them? What counsel does he offer the hero regarding Humbaba before and after the fight?
9. What seems to have been the point of this episode, in which the monster Humbaba is at last killed and many of his cedar trees cut down? What "reward" (if that's the right way to interpret the episode) accrues to Gilgamesh and his companion Enkidu?

Part 3. Ishtar and Gilgamesh, and the Death of Enkidu (24-30)

10. Why does Gilgamesh refuse Ishtar's desire for him? How does she respond to his rejection and to his killing the Bull of Heaven?

11. How does Enkidu come to terms with the knowledge (given in a dream) that he is to die? What vision of the afterlife does he pass along to Gilgamesh? In what manner does he die, and why is that way unacceptable to him?

Part 4. The Search for Everlasting Life (30-35)

12. Gilgamesh now seeks out the immortal human Utnapishtim. But first, how does he explain his quest to the Man-Scorpion?, Siduri the woman of the vine, and Urshanabi the Ferryman? What explanation does he give? What do they say about him and his quest?

13. When Gilgamesh finally meets Utnapishtim towards the end of Part 4, what insight into human life does this immortal man reveal? How does this insight clash with the virtues of active heroism we have seen in Gilgamesh and Enkidu?

Part 5 The Story of the Flood (35-38)

14. Give an outline of the flood story in this epic, and briefly compare it with the story of Noah in Genesis Chapters 6-9. What is similar, and what is different?

15. What conflicting motives and attitudes do the gods reveal concerning the destruction of humankind? And in general, do you find that the gods in this epic have been a positive force or a destructive one for humans--or both? Explain with reference to specific parts of the text?

Parts 6-7 The Return, The Death of Gilgamesh (38-41)

16. In these brief parts, Gilgamesh is tested by Utnapishtim and fails, a serpent whisks away the youth-restoring flower he had plucked from the sea bed on Urshanabi's advice, and at long last the hero dies. What compensation does the conclusion of the text offer for the inevitability of death? Does it seem that the text presents this as sufficient or satisfying?

17. Do you find that the heroic ideal remains constant in this epic, or do you think it changes after the death of Enkidu, when Gilgamesh becomes fearful of death? Judging from your now completed reading of Gilgamesh, what makes a character heroic in the author's eyes? What must a hero confront? What are his limitations?

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HOMER QUESTIONS

Assigned: Homer. *The Odyssey*, Books 1-4, 9-12 (pages 225-78; 319-76). I have included a complete set of questions, but the entire epic is not assigned.

General Questions

1. How does Homer establish the significance of the story he is about to tell? How does he maintain interest in the tale as it unfolds? Keep in mind that “suspense” is not a key factor in Greek literature since the audience usually knows from the outset how things will turn out.
2. How would you characterize the narrator, the fictive “Homer” whose voice we imagine as singing the verses of *The Odyssey*?
3. What direct references to the craft or performance of poetry do you find in *The Odyssey*? What do they tell us about the importance of poetry in Homer’s day? In responding, consider also indirect references such as the ones the text makes to weaving and singing--after all, Homer himself might be said to “weave” his story, stitching together the various episodes and characters into a meaningful tale; and of course an epic bard sings his verses.
4. What qualities does the text hold up as heroic? Keep track of heroic qualities and the episodes in which they are most evident and necessary. Are there different kinds of heroism? If so, what is the distinction between the different kinds of heroism?
5. What kinds of behavior are treated as contemptible in *The Odyssey*? Keep track of these qualities and the characters who embody them. Find episodes where contemptible behavior occurs.
6. How does the poem represent mortal women? Since Penelope is the most important woman in *The Odyssey*, what qualities does she possess, and how does she respond to the troubles she faces? (Some of the other women are of note, too--Eurycleia the serving woman, the faithless maidservants, Nausicaa the Phaeacian princess, and Helen of Sparta, Menelaus’ queen, whose elopement with Prince Paris sparked the Trojan War.)
7. How do Homer’s gods think and behave? How do their actions and motivations differ from the conception of god in other religions of which you have knowledge? What role do the Homeric gods play in human affairs, and what is the responsibility of humans with respect to those gods?
8. What can you gather from *The Odyssey* about the way the Homeric Greeks lived their daily lives? About how they governed themselves and what sorts of social distinctions there may have been among the citizens of Ithaca? For example, how important is the royal household to the rest of the Ithacans?
9. Keep track of *The Odyssey*’s structure--make a diagram or chart of some kind that illustrates the main episodes and their relation to one another. To get you started, the epic is divided into three main parts or plot-complexes:

1) The maturation of the young prince Telemachus; 2) The wanderings of Odysseus--mostly recounted as past events; and 3) Odysseus' return to Ithaca and re-establishment of his authority as king. Consider also that although the poem's action takes place over the course of forty days, the text refers when necessary to events spanning twenty years--i.e. from the beginning of the Trojan War on through the ten-year wanderings of Odysseus after the ten-year war.

Book 1

10. What does the invocation (the first 12 lines) say the poem as a whole will emphasize?
11. What first impression does this book give us of the gods? How much of a role do they play in human affairs? What seems to motivate their actions?
12. What is our first introduction to various characters? The suitors, for instance.... are they a homogeneous group, or are there differences among them? What qualities does Telemachus possess at the outset?

Book 2

13. How, according to Antinous, do the suitors view Penelope's reluctance? Why do they think they are justified in behaving as they do?
14. How well does Telemachus handle the suitors' chief Antinous and his self-justification?

Book 3

15. How does Athena help Telemachus prepare to meet the old King Nestor?
16. What is the purpose of this book? Why is it important that Telemachus go and visit old Nestor, aside, of course, from the fact that he's out for news of his father Odysseus?
17. What exactly does Nestor tell Telemachus about the War and the return home? Why does he dwell upon the fate of Agamemnon, killed by Aegisthus, the lover of Clytemnestra?

Book 4

18. How does Menelaus represent himself as responding to his wanderings on the way home to Sparta?
19. Why does Menelaus still value and accept Helen, even though her elopement with Paris led to the Trojan War?

20. How might Menelaus' story about the Old Man of the Sea, Proteus, be instructive to Telemachus in his quest to find his father? Why, for that matter, would Menelaus' response to the knowledge Proteus gives him be instructive for Odysseus?

Book 5

21. What sort of character is Calypso? How long does Odysseus stay on her island? What is the source of Calypso's power over Odysseus? To what extent does she help Odysseus or hinder him once the decision to let him go is forced upon her by Hermes?

22. How does Odysseus respond to the shipwreck that he meets upon leaving Calypso? Follow the motions of his spirit as he struggles to save himself--that is, track how the poet represents Odysseus' emotions and thoughts during and after the shipwreck.

Book 6

23. How is the behavior of Nausicaa, the young Phaeacian princess who discovers Odysseus washed up on the shore, appropriate to the situation? What makes her an admirable character?

24. How does Odysseus treat Nausicaa? What is his strategy in approaching her?

Book 7

25. What sort of kingdom is Phaeacia? How well is it governed, judging from the way the King relates to his family and subjects, and the way he receives the suppliant washed up on his shores?

26. How might the impression Odysseus and we receive of Phaeacia be significant for Odysseus' subsequent return to Ithaca?

27. What does Odysseus say when Arete questions him sharply and asks him to reveal his identity?

Book 8

28. What effect does the song sung by the harper Demodocus have upon Odysseus? Demodocus sings again later in the book--again, with what effect on Odysseus? Is the latter's response different from what we would expect of modern-day "heroes"?

29. How does Odysseus respond to the challenge of Broadsea? What Odyssean qualities shine through in this episode of athletic competition?

Book 9

30. When does Odysseus reveal his identity? How has he been careful in keeping that information to himself from Books 5-8?

31. List Odysseus' tales in the order that he tells them. What patterns of meaning do you find emerging from this order?

32. Patterns aside, what do the individual stories Odysseus recounts tell us about him and his men? For example, what makes Odysseus a worthy leader? Does he make mistakes while leading his men? How is he better than his men? Are there dangers in his strengths?

33. This is actually a question for books 9-12 as a unit, but I'll ask it here: why is it important that Odysseus recount all his wanderings as past events? Why doesn't Homer simply construct his epic as a linear (i.e. "straight-line") progression of events from the Trojan War onward?

Book 10

34. What sort of character is Circe? Why (aside from her magic) is she able to turn Odysseus' men into swine? What have they done to offend her, or what weakness do they show?

35. What makes Odysseus succumb for a time to Circe's enticements? What is his mistake here?

36. Why does Odysseus need to visit Hades (the Greek Underworld) and consult with Tiresias the blind prophet of Thebes?

Book 11

37. What does Odysseus learn from Tiresias in Hades? What other characters does Odysseus speak with, and what does he learn from them?

38. In general, how would you characterize Odysseus' attitude towards his journey to the Underworld? That is, what does the episode tell us about him?

39. What is the Greek Underworld (Hades) like? How is it unlike the Christian Hell?

Book 12

40. Odysseus returns to Circe's island after his visit to Hades. What adventures still await him? Again, what do those adventures tell us about Odysseus as a hero?

Below are the rest of the questions for *The Odyssey* (Only Books 1-4 and 9-12 are assigned reading.)

Book 13

41. How do Poseidon and Zeus interact in this book? What is the balance of power between them? How does Zeus assert his authority?

42. How does Odysseus handle his return to Ithaca? How much does he tell those he meets about his true identity and intentions? How much help does Athena give him?

43. How is this book pivotal regarding the action of *The Odyssey* as a whole? What necessary qualities, that is, does Odysseus show in this first step of his return to power?

Book 14

44. What is the function of Eumaeus the swineherd? How does he treat Odysseus, and how does Odysseus treat him? How much of the truth does Odysseus tell him?

Book 15

45. What is Telemachus' main diplomatic challenge in this book? How does Athena help him meet the challenge?

46. What role does Helen play in this book? What does the prophecy she makes reveal about her? Why might it be significant, in terms of *The Odyssey* as a whole, that Helen, whose misbehavior towards her husband set in motion the Trojan War, gives Telemachus a robe to bestow upon his future bride?

47. Who is Theoclymenus, and why is it appropriate that Telemachus should treat him kindly?

48. What is Eumaeus' own story, as he recounts it to Odysseus? Does the story indicate why Eumaeus is especially loyal to Odysseus? If so, what's the reason?

Book 16

49. In this book Odysseus reveals his identity to Telemachus. What does the reaction of the two characters tell us about the Greeks' attitude towards the expression of emotion? How does their attitude differ from ours? (Think of American film heroes like John Wayne or Clint Eastwood.)

50. In what ways does Telemachus show in this book that he has matured?

Book 17

51. In Elizabethan revenge tragedies, it is common for the villain to declare himself a thorough rascal. In what way do Melanthius the goatherd and the suitors throw away a chance to redeem themselves in this book? Why do they fail?

52. Around line 480 Odysseus tells a "resourceful" tale, namely that he was sold into slavery in Egypt. Although the tale is a lie, what purpose does it serve, aside from establishing some cover for Odysseus in concealing his true identity?

Book 18

53. Why is it appropriate that Odysseus disguise himself from the suitors (with Athena's help) as a beggar?

54. Why is it significant that Odysseus overcomes the swaggering beggar Irus?

55. What part does Athena play in this book? That is, what effect does she have on Odysseus and the suitors?

Book 19

56. Penelope questions the stranger (Odysseus in disguise) closely, and he claims to be Aethon from Crete. Do you think that Penelope knows or suspects Odysseus' real identity? Why or why not?

57. Whether she suspects anything or not, how does Penelope test the stranger? What qualities does she manifest in this book that make her a worthy match for Odysseus?

58. Interpret the dream that Penelope relates to the stranger towards the book's end. Does it reveal things about her stance towards the suitors that would probably surprise even her?

59. Why does Penelope tell the stranger about the contest to string Odysseus' bow that she is planning to announce?

Book 20

60. What portents announce the struggle to come? How does Odysseus react to them?

61. Athena inspires the suitors to behave even more inappropriately than usual. Why does she do that? What effect does their behavior have on Odysseus and Telemachus?

Book 21

62. Penelope fetches Odysseus' bow and announces the contest to the suitors. How do the suitors again prove that they deserve the "blood wedding" that awaits them?

63. The suitors mock at the stranger for wanting to take his turn with the bow. Penelope tells them to let him go ahead--why?

64. Odysseus strings his own bow at the book's end. How does Homer represent this moment? For example, why don't we hear anything from the suitors right after Odysseus shoots his first arrow?

Book 22

65. As logic dictates, Antinous is the first to die. How do the remaining suitors try to appease Odysseus? Why, in view of *The Odyssey's* task as we have discussed it in class, would it be inappropriate for Odysseus to accept their arguments or pleas?
66. At what points in the struggle is Athena active? How much does she help Odysseus, and how much credit is mainly his?
67. Why might it be significant, in light of *The Odyssey's* task as we have discussed it in class, that around line 400 Odysseus, in Fagles' translation, refers to the work that remains to be done in the book as "household chores"?
68. How do Odysseus and Telemachus deal with Melanthius the goatherd and the women who sported with the suitors? Consider the intensity of the violence throughout this book--do you find it unsettling or "over the top"? Why or why not? Does the epic narrator take up an attitude towards the violence?

Book 23

69. Why does the text refrain from making Penelope recognize Odysseus outright? Why does Penelope insist on testing Odysseus even after all that he has done in the hall?
70. Why is it appropriate that the couple's bed should be involved in the main test of Odysseus' identity?
71. Around line 300, Odysseus recounts the prophecy that Tiresias had made about the King's further adventure and death in old age? Why would Homer remind us of this prophecy, just as the poem achieves its goal of bringing Odysseus home and reestablishing him successfully as master of Ithaca?

Book 24

72. Describe the interaction of the suitors' shades with others in Hades. How do Agamemnon and Achilles view each other's fates?
73. How does Odysseus test his father Laertes, now living a hard life, after the slaughter has been accomplished? What's the point of testing his father?
74. What problem remains for Odysseus to deal with, even though he has rid himself of the suitors and their hangers-on? What reason do the suitors' surviving kin give for their attempt to kill Odysseus? Is it grief alone, or something different?
75. How does the reconciliation between Odysseus and the surviving kin occur? Without Athena's divine assistance, what would be the prospects for immediate or eventual reconciliation?

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Assigned: Homer. *The Iliad*. (Separate text; see below.)

The Iliad

General Questions

1. How does Homer establish the significance of the story he is about to tell? How does he maintain interest in the tale as it unfolds? Keep in mind that “suspense” is not a key factor in Greek literature since the audience usually knows from the outset how things will turn out.
2. How would you characterize the narrator, the fictive “Homer” whose voice we imagine as singing the verses of *The Iliad*? What relation to the story does this narrator maintain?
3. What direct or indirect references to the craft or performance of poetry do you find in this epic? What do they tell us about the importance of poetry in Homer’s day? In responding, consider also indirect references such as the ones the text makes to weaving and singing.
4. What qualities does the text hold up as heroic? Keep track of heroic qualities and the episodes in which they are most evident and necessary. Are there different kinds of heroism? If so, what is the distinction between them?
5. What kinds of behavior are treated as contemptible? Keep track of these qualities and the characters who embody them. Find episodes where contemptible behavior occurs.
6. How does the poem represent mortal women? What qualities do they possess, and how do they compare in status and quality to the epic’s men?
7. How do Homer’s gods think and behave? How do their actions and motivations differ from the conception of god in other religions of which you have knowledge? What role do the Homeric gods play in human affairs, and what is the responsibility of humans towards them?
8. Keep track of the epic’s structure--make a diagram or chart that illustrates the main episodes and their relation to one another.

Book 1

9. What does the invocation say the poem as a whole will emphasize?
10. What first impression does this book give us of the gods? How much of a role do they play in human affairs? What seems to motivate their actions?
11. Agamemnon commands the Achaean hosts against Troy, but manages to enrage Achilles. What does he do to spark Achilles’ fury, and what seems to motivate him when he does it?
12. Achilles is of course the hero of *The Iliad*. How would you size up his conduct at this point? To what extent do you take Achilles’ wrath (*menis*) as purely heroic? Whatever your response, what does the term mean to you? What do you suppose it means to Homer?

13. From the outset of *The Iliad*, the gods intervene in human actions, with Zeus at the center of the whole affair. How does this most powerful of gods see the war between the Trojans and Greeks? In what way is his power over the other gods limited?

Book 2

14. Why does Zeus send Agamemnon a dream urging him to attack the Trojans? What surprise awaits Agamemnon when he does this, and why?

15. How do Odysseus and Nestor keep the troops in line? What can you say about the Greek warrior ideal on the basis of this effort to maintain discipline? What role does Thersites play with regard to this ideal?

16. The "Catalogue of Ships" is probably not among the most fascinating passages in *The Iliad* for a modern reader, but what significance might it have had for Homer's audience? Why do you suppose Homer spends so much time providing an "accurate" descriptive list of this sort?

Book 3

17. Before the battle is joined, Paris agrees to fight alone with Menelaus (Helen's wronged Spartan husband). What happens when Paris is on the point of losing, and how does this outcome complicate the heroic scheme of *The Iliad*?

18. How does Homer present Helen, the former Spartan queen with "the face that launched a thousand ships" here in the third book? What is remarkable about Helen?

Book 4

19. What game is Zeus playing in this book with Hera and Athene, both of whom thirst for the destruction of Troy's army and indeed the entire city? What is the cause of their anger? (See Book 24) Why doesn't Homer just tell us the cause here in the fourth book?

20. After Pandarus breaks the truce and wounds Menelaus, Agamemnon harangues his troops. How does Diomedes distinguish himself in this regard?

Book 5

21. Apollo and Ares support Aeneas and his Trojans, while Hera and Athena take the Greeks' side. Diomedes even manages to wound Aphrodite. What relationship does Homer posit in *The Iliad* between humans and gods? Does the presence of the gods exalt the human characters, or diminish them? Explain.

Book 6

22. The Lycian Glaucus and the Greek Diomedes meet in no-man's land during battle, converse at length, and affirm their friendly ties. This is obviously not a realistic exchange, so what purpose does such an episode serve?

23. What is going on in Troy when Hector returns there? How do Paris and Helen respond to Hector's summons to return to battle?

24. When Hector catches up with his wife Andromache, what is her view of his part in the war? To what extent do Hector's heroic words comfort her?

Book 7

25. What agreement do Athena and Apollo arrive at concerning the current fighting between Greeks and Trojans? How do the mortals find out about this agreement? Given the fact that Hector's challenge is not entirely of his own making, how does he distinguish himself in issuing it?

Book 8

26. How does Hera try to subvert the will of Zeus in this book? What plan does Zeus finally reveal?

27. Why might Homer be unconcerned about offering advance notice to his audience? What makes his narrative compelling in spite of such openness about what is coming next?

Book 9

28. What change in attitude does Agamemnon undergo in this book? How do his lieutenants react? What rhetorical approaches do Odysseus, Ajax, and Phoenix respectively make to assuage Achilles' anger?

Book 10

29. Here another side of the Greek warrior ethos shows. Characterize this other side with reference to the actions and words of Odysseus and Diomedes, who have been sent to find out what the Trojans are up to. How do they deal with the spy Dolon? How does the narrative handle this bloody scene--does it seem to approve? Explain.

Book 11

30. What is the balance between the Trojans and Greeks at this point in the war? What role does Zeus play in orchestrating the action in this book? And what role does Nestor play in advancing the action?

Book 12

31. While Patroclus and Nestor were talking, the Achaeans retreated from the battle. What advice does Polydamus, son of Trojan commander Panthous, offer Hector? How does Hector respond to this advice, and why?

32. How does Homer describe the violence of battle in this book? What seems to be the primary aim of his descriptions--is he being realistic, presenting an ideal, or both?

Edition: Homer. *The Iliad*. Trans. Robert Fagles. New York: Penguin, 1990. ISBN: 0-140-27536-3.

HORACE QUESTIONS

Assigned: [*The Art of Poetry*](#) (*Ars Poetica*) at Perseus Project Site. Page numbers have been removed, but the questions below move sequentially from the beginning of Horace's epistle to the end.

Ars Poetica (circa 10 BCE)

Optional Exercise: lay down the rules, the "decorum," of some popular art or cultural form today, offering your best justification for such rules and your best defense of the art or cultural form you have chosen to describe. Bring the results to class.

1. What advice does Horace offer "you writers"? How would you contrast his advice, here and elsewhere in the letter, to post-romantic tenets about the individual poet and the creation of poetry--i.e. most particularly the emphasis on originality, individualism, and the centrality of emotion in art?
2. Horace compares the changes that a language undergoes with the changes that nature undergoes. What is the poet's role in shaping the language of an entire people? What might one infer from this analogy about the durability of culture itself? Can art, for Horace, embody universal and eternal values, or is that something we must not expect of it? Explain.
3. Horace writes, "If you want me to cry, mourn first yourself." Does this sentence indicate an interest in language as an expressive vehicle, or does it have more to do with Horace's notions about imitation and decorum? Explain.
4. How important is poetic tradition, according to Horace? To what extent may a poet depart from earlier traditions, and what limitations do poets face when they so depart?
5. According to Horace, what is more important to a Roman audience than the poet's ability to convey individuality or emotional intensity? How are his remarks here important for their reflection on his central concern with "decorum," or artistic propriety?
6. Concerning tragedy and the satyr plays connected with it, what, in Horace's view, is appropriate to show onstage, and what should instead be narrated rather than shown? Why? What are the proper functions of the dramatic chorus?
7. How does Horace discuss the development of tragedy and the changes that have occurred in musical accompaniment? What do his observations suggest about his view of drama's social value, its relation to the audience's mores? Similarly, how does he view the connection between the Satyr play and the tragedy proper?
8. What does Horace suggest about the artist's responsibility to the various Roman social classes?

9. What contrasts does Horace make between Greek and Roman artists and art? He may appear to be casting his own people as pedestrian business-folk and builders, but is there more to his statements than that? Explain.
10. What, according to Horace, is the source of good poetry? From whence comes the poet's material? Is content the first and most important thing to determine, or is form the first consideration? What is the relationship between form and content?
11. What does Horace say is the best sort of poetry? Why should poetry both teach and delight (i.e. be *utile et dulce*, useful and pleasant), rather than just one or the other?
12. Horace writes that poetry is like painting—*ut pictura poiesis*. Later Renaissance and Neoclassical critics made much of this statement, but what does it seem to mean here in Horace's letter?
13. Why, according to Horace, is the poet, unlike the lawyer, not allowed to be second-rate? How does the poet's social purpose differ from that of the lawyer?
14. What does Horace say were the first functions of poetry? Does he see much need to defend the arts against any detractors, or is it evident to him that art's value is beyond dispute?
15. What does Horace assert about the ultimate source of good poetry? Is it a matter of genius, of cultivating one's talents, or both? What are your own thoughts about this longstanding critical debate?
16. Horace ends his verse essay as he began it, with grotesque references to madness. Why do you suppose he brackets his letter with such references? What notion of poetry is he dismissing or downplaying by means of his final reference? How does the "mad poet" image invoke the Horatian poet's worst fears about the reception of his work, about his public standing?
17. What were Plato and Aristotle interested in regarding art that Horace appears not to be interested in? How does his lack of interest here reflect a fundamental difference between the Greeks and the Romans? (general question)
18. Horace is an important figure for those interested in whether art shapes a given culture, or whether it merely or mainly reflects values already present in that culture. What do you think? Can/should art transform people and make them see things in radically new ways, or does/should it mostly reflect and validate (i.e. imitate or represent approvingly) what most people already think they know about morality, politics, and other broad areas of life? Or is the question too stark? (general question)
19. Do you think that your own generation is more "Horatian," i.e. conformist, than rebelliously "Romantic," or is it the other way around? Explain. (general question)

Edition: Perseus Project, [The Art of Poetry](#).

THE JATAKA QUESTIONS

Assigned: from *The Jataka* (1002-10).

The Jataka

1. Find out and set down some basic concepts of Buddhism--"the Four Noble Truths" would be a good place to start your Google search if you are using the internet as a research tool. A wise philosopher once wrote (to paraphrase) that Buddhism "promises nothing and delivers everything." What might he have meant by that, based on what you discover about Buddhism?
2. What virtues may be derived from the selected stories about the Buddha's previous incarnations? How does he view himself in relation to others? How does he deal with those who don't treat him kindly?

Edition: Lawall, Sarah, ed. *The Norton Anthology of World Literature*. 2nd edition. Volumes 1ABC. New York: Norton, 2002. ISBN: A = 0-393-97755-2, B = 0-393-97756-0, C = 0-393-97757-9.

KALIDASA QUESTIONS

Assigned: Kalidasa. *Śakuntala and the Ring of Recollection* (1267-1332).

Śakuntala and the Ring of Recollection

Act I

1. What tone does the Prologue establish for the play to come? What inferences may be drawn from the conversation between the Director and the Actress?
2. How does this act represent the awakening of love for each other in the King and in the ascetic young woman Śakuntala? What do they have going for them? What obstacles do they face?
3. How does the text's religious symbolism and context help us understand the subtleties and most significant layers of meaning in the story so far?

Act II

4. How might the Buffoon (the King's sidekick) be said to affect our perception of the King's continuing love for Śakuntala? What is the Buffoon's view of affairs of the heart, hunting, and courtly responsibilities?

Act III

5. Describe the alternation between directness and indirectness in the two lovers' expression of their desire for each other. What points of etiquette must be observed, but in what sense does this act also legitimize the love between the King and Śakuntala as "natural"?

Act IV

6. Why does the sage Durvasas become angry with Śakuntala, and what curse does he place upon her? What point about erotic passion does this incident reinforce?

7. What omens and what rituals surround the departure of Śakuntala for the palace and the fulfillment of her marriage with the King? What are her father Kanva's expectations for her once she gets there?

Act V

8. The King can't remember that he has married Śakuntala, but what thoughts does the text attribute to him at this difficult point--what virtue does he recognize in the young woman? Why do the ascetics who have brought Śakuntala to the Court now abandon her there?

Act VI

9. With Śakuntala now whisked away by nymphs, the King is bitterly remorseful that he has remembered her too late. How does this act constitute part of the King's penance? What opportunity for redemption does the god Indra provide?

Act VII

10. How does the text structure the King's rediscovery of and reconciliation with Śakuntala? How is the presence of their child instrumental in this process, and what larger significance does this child point to beyond the King's personal happiness?

Edition: Lawall, Sarah, ed. *The Norton Anthology of World Literature*. 2nd edition. Volumes 1ABC. New York: Norton, 2002. ISBN: A = 0-393-97755-2, B = 0-393-97756-0, C = 0-393-97757-9.

LIVY (TITUS LIVIUS) QUESTIONS

Assigned: *The Early History of Rome*, Books 1-2. (Separate text; see below.)

From *The Early History of Rome*

Book 1

1. General question: when Livy narrates Roman history, what most interests him? Does he try to explain history by referring mostly to whole groups, or to certain individuals? How much stock does he put in politics, economics, and social conditions in his explanations of historical events? Give an example or two that you think shows his deepest interests, his focus in explaining events.

2. General question: how does Livy deal with the Roman people's foundational myths or legends? Does he "buy" them? If so, to what extent or in what manner? Why would an historian bother to detail such legends--what possible value could they have for the present? Give an example or two from Book 1.
3. What does Livy say in his Preface about the enterprise of writing history? What are his assumptions concerning what constitutes history and why it is valuable to people in the present? (pp. 29-30)
4. In the Preface, Livy suggests that Romans now are different from the way they were in past times. What does he say accounts for the change in character? What view does he seem to take of his own Augustan era? (30)
5. What does Livy say about Aeneas' contributions towards the making of Rome? What did Aeneas do when he came to Italy? And what did his son Ascanius or Iulus do afterwards? What is suggestive in this story for Rome's later pattern of development? (31-33)
6. Now we come to the story of Romulus and Remus. How does the founding of Rome come about? Who are Faustulus, Numitor, and Amulius, and what role do they play with respect to the twin brothers? What causes the twins to quarrel? (34-37)
7. How does Livy characterize Romulus as a King? what did he do for his people, aside from strengthening them militarily? (38-41)
8. Regarding the infamous "rape of the Sabine women," what military qualities do the Romans show in putting down that people (and others) after seizing their women? Why are they so successful at war, and how do they turn war into a means of furthering their civilization? (41-49)
9. How does Livy sum up Romulus' reign and account for its conclusion? How much credence does he lend the stories told about Romulus' final day? (48-49)
10. What most characterizes the rule of Numa Pompilius? What basic anxiety about the Roman people's welfare does Numa try to address, and by what means? What change does Numa's governing strategy bring about in the character of the Roman people, and how does it change the way Rome's neighbors saw the emerging city? (50-55)
11. How does Tullus Hostilius, Numa's successor, differ from that King, and how does he deal with the civil war between Rome and the Albans? How do he and the Romans look upon the outrage committed by the hero Horatius against his sister? (55-62)
12. What does Tullus do when the Alban commander betrays him and joins the rebellious Fidenae? What lesson does Livy draw from this episode, and what seem to be his sentiments about the resulting destruction of Alba? (63-66)
13. How does Tullus' reign end? How does Livy judge his successor Ancus Marcius? What is his main shortcoming, and what virtues lend him some measure of worth? (68-72)

14. What is the story behind Lucumo's (Lucius Tarquinius Priscus') decision to abandon Tarquinii for Rome? By means of what character traits and by what actions does he get himself elected King? What role does his wife Tanaquil play in his meteoric rise? (72-77)

15. What causes Lucius Tarquinius Priscus' troubles in the concluding period of his rule? What does Servius Tullius have to do with the trouble, and how do Tanaquil and he manage to overcome the peril following Priscus' assassination? (78-81)

16. What contribution to the development of the Roman state does Servius Tullius make after he becomes King? (81-83)

17. What lesson about the significance of Roman religion does Livy draw from his anecdote about a scheming Sabine man and a clever Roman priest after Servius Tullius' establishment of a temple of Diana in Rome? (84-85)

18. What accounts for the animosity borne by the son of Priscus, Lucius Tarquinius, against Servius Tullius? What role does the younger Tullia (wife of Arruns and sister of the elder Tullia, wife of Lucius Tarquinius) play in the rise of her sister's husband? What happens to Servius, and what contrast between his reign and the upcoming reign of Lucius Tarquinius Superbus emerges from the details of the old king's murder? (86-90)

19. How does Tarquinius Superbus, the last of Rome's Etruscan kings, measure up as a ruler? Does he differ from his predecessors? Consider his conduct of the campaign against the town of Gabii --by what method does he overcome this town, and what does Livy apparently think of that method? (91-96)

20. What marks the early years of Lucius Junius Brutus? Why does he behave as he does, and what special virtues does he possess? (99)

21. What initial events set in motion the downfall of Tarquinius Superbus and, therefore, the end of Tarquin rule over Rome? What is it about Lucretia, wife of Lucius Tarquinius Collatinus, that sparks Sextus Tarquinius' lust? What argument does Sextus employ in forcing Lucretia to submit to his violent assault? Why is this such a powerful argument? (100-101)

22. What does the playing-out of Lucretia's sad story--her public suicide and Brutus's subsequent actions--illustrate concerning the Roman idea of honor? How does a woman demonstrate her honor? How is a man expected to demonstrate his honor?

23. With regard to Lucretia's legend, what can you make of that fact that so often the founding myths of a people involve either sexual transgression or physical violence? (102-104)

Book 2 (107-126 only)

24. How does Livy qualify what had seemed to be pure affirmation in his previous recounting of how the Tarquin kings were driven from Rome, and the Republic founded? What precautions does Brutus take when he becomes consul, and why? (107-110)

25. What circumstances lead to Brutus' death? How does Livy cap off his account of this Roman founder? (110-15)

26. How does the Tarquin period continue to cast a shadow over the newly founded Roman Republic? How do the actions of the soldier Horatius Cocles, and then Gaius Mucius Scaevola, counter the continuing Etruscan threat in characteristically "Roman" ways? What effect does Scaevola's boldness have upon Porsena, King of Clusium? (115-26)

Edition: Livy (Titus Livius). *The Early History of Rome*. Trans. Aubrey de Selincourt. New York: Penguin, 2002 (repr. with new introduction). ISBN: 0-140-44809-8.

LONGUS QUESTIONS

Assigned: *Daphnis and Chloe*. (Separate text; see below.)

Daphnis and Chloe

Prologue and General Questions

1. In the Prologue, what purpose does the author give for telling the story? From what source has he drawn it, and what significance might such a reference to another genre imply?
2. Critics sometimes identify a given text as "metanarrative." What does that term mean, and how--after you have read some of Longus' pastoral tale--might it apply to *Daphnis and Chloe*? What purpose might the metanarrative aspect of the story serve?
3. It's clear that Longus has reflected much on the youthful experience of love and on humanity's relationship to nature. As you read, consider how the narrative explores these things, and then set down the insights he offers us.
4. The realms of myth and dream play significant roles in *Daphnis and Chloe*. How do you interpret those roles? What, for example, does Longus' allusion to various stories about the gods from Homer and others have to do with the text's exploration of courtship and sexuality?

Book 1

5. How are Daphnis and Chloe found? What sort of people are Lamon and Myrtale, and Dryas and Nape? Why do they name the children as they do? What seems to be the narrator's attitude towards the people, setting, and events he describes in these first few pages?
6. How do Daphnis and Chloe, respectively, first experience love, and how do they interpret their erotic stirrings?
7. If there were a prize for unsuccessful suitorship advanced by inappropriate means, Dorcon the cowherd would win easily. What does his failure, along with the partly comic misunderstandings and misadventures of Daphnis and Chloe themselves, suggest about the importance of "courtship" in dealing with natural sexual instinct?

8. By the end of the first book, the main characters have beaten back a foray by Tyrian pirates, and the emphasis shifts back to Daphnis' longing for Chloe. What is the relationship in Book 1 between external plot developments and the internal development of the two young lovers?

Book 2

9. The second book opens at harvest time, with due honors for Dionysus. What associations cluster around that god? How does the narrative exploit them for comic effect and perhaps for a more serious look at Daphnis and Chloe's experience of love?

10. Philetas the cowherd enters the scene--what story does the old man tell, and what guidance does he offer Daphnis and Chloe? What new dimension does he add to the conception of "Love"?

11. Just as Daphnis and Chloe are about to be initiated into full sexuality, some "rich young men from Methymna" unwittingly come between them. What happens, and how do you understand Longus' choice to pose *this particular* obstacle just when he does, and then to follow it up with a miraculous rescue by Pan, god of the wood and pastoral pipe?

12. What alliances between art and nature are explored when Lamon tells the story of the pan-pipe's origin, Philetas demonstrates all the various kinds of pastoral melody, Dryas dances the movements of the harvest, and Daphnis wins Philetas' pipe as a gift for his own impressive command of the instrument?

13. Daphnis and Chloe end the second book by swearing oaths of fidelity. Why does Chloe insist upon a second oath from Daphnis--this time an oath by the goats he tends? There is also just a mild allusion to the potential for violence in such "primal" matters as erotic passion--how has the text handled this potential so far in the first two books?

Book 3

14. When springtime rolls round again, Daphnis and Chloe try to follow nature, taking as their example the rams and ewes. Why doesn't this plan work? What is the narrative suggesting about the difference between humans and animals with regard to sexuality?

15. How does Lycaenion, the young wife of Chromis, assist Daphnis in his quest? What attitude does the narrator take towards this--well, *instruction*--by a married adult woman of an adolescent male?

16. What effect does Lycaenion's mention of Chloe's virginity have on Daphnis? What does the story of Echo, as recounted by Daphnis to Chloe, have to do with this issue?

17. What keeps Dryas and Nape as well as Lamon and Myrtale from approving of the marriage match that Daphnis is so eager to make with Chloe? How do the Nymphs help Daphnis, and what obstacle remains in spite of this help?

18. The third book ends with another of the tale's allusions to myth--Daphnis' reaching for a fine apple and awarding it to Chloe. What associations does the allusion to Aphrodite's first-place finish in a

beauty contest with Paris as judge bring with it concerning the love-match between Daphnis and Chloe? (Look up the story in a myth guide if you're not familiar with it.)

Book 4

19. The master Dionysophanes and his wife Cleariste plan a visit to the farm that Lamon and Myrtale manage for them, but first to arrive are the couple's son Astylus and his companion Gnathon. What trouble from Lampis the cowherd precedes their arrival, and what implications beyond the literal destruction of the garden might his actions have?

20. What danger does Gnathon's misconduct pose for Daphnis? How does Gnathon describe his passion for Daphnis after his initial attempt on the boy fail--what is the basic and dangerous flaw in Gnathon's assumptions about love?

21. Lamon, alarmed at the prospect of losing Daphnis to Gnathon's plot, reveals the circumstances of the boy's discovery and upbringing. How does Dionysophanes explain his behavior once it becomes clear that Daphnis is his long-abandoned son? What attitude does this narrative take towards the class barrier between the master and his servants?

22. What leads Dionysophanes to hold a feast in Mytilene, and what does Megacles, Chloe's father, have to say for himself? On the whole, what significance emerges from the now-completed romance pattern in which two children are abandoned, discovered as foundlings, raised in a pastoral setting, and then reunited with their successful parents?

23. How do the marriage rites and then the married life of Daphnis and Chloe strike a balance between nature, the demands of civil society, and art?

Edition: Longus. *Daphnis and Chloe*. Trans. Paul Turner. New York: Penguin, 1989. ISBN: 0-140-44059-3.

LUCRETIUS QUESTIONS

Assigned: Titus Lucretius Carus. *On the Nature of the Universe (De Rerum Natura)*. (Separate text; see below.)

On the Nature of the Universe

Book 1

1. What two main principles does Lucretius set forth as the cornerstone of his philosophy? According to him, what great benefits will his fellow Romans derive from this adaptation of Epicurus' ancient philosophy?

2. What are the characteristics of the atoms that Lucretius says account (along with "vacuity" or "space") for all that happens in the universe? To what extent do you suppose Lucretius wants us, as mortal beings, to derive confidence or even comfort from this description of the atomic structure of our world?

3. What criticisms does Lucretius offer concerning the pre-Socratic philosopher Heraclitus? What about Empedocles and Anaxagoras--what philosophical errors did they commit, briefly?

4. Why is it absurd, according to Lucretius towards the end of the first book, to suppose that everything tends towards the universe's "center"? What does he say is in fact the case? Why can't there be any limits to the extent of the universe?

Book 2

5. At the beginning of the second book, how does Lucretius characterize the lives of ordinary people who have not attained to the wisdom he unfolds? What counsel does he give Memmius to avoid this fate?

6. How, throughout this book, does Lucretius demonstrate that the primary matter of the world around us is invisible, and by what process does he infer the behavior and characteristics of this invisible atomic substructure?

7. What does Lucretius identify as the source of movement or change and creation? But what accounts for "free will"--do you find his argument on this point consistent in light of his materialist beliefs? Explain.

8. Why, according to Lucretius, doesn't it make sense to suppose that the gods created the universe for us and that they are responsible for what goes on in it? What relationship does Lucretius posit between the gods and humankind?

9. How does Lucretius account for the existence of sentient beings, given the non-sentient nature of atoms themselves?

10. What does the term "death" signify within Lucretius' philosophical system--how should human beings conceive of their own death, and what are we to think about the course that the cosmos will run over a vast period of time?

Book 3

11. Lucretius proposes to relieve his readers of the fear of an afterlife. What effects does he say this fear has on people, both at the beginning and the end of the third book?

12. How does Lucretius explain the workings of mind and spirit? What arguments does he make to suggest that they, like the body, are subject to dissolution at death?

13. Towards the end of the third book, what strategy or strategies does Lucretius employ to reconcile his readers to the idea that death puts an end to personal identity and consciousness, that it really is "the end"? How effective do you find his attempts in this regard?

Book 4

14. How does Lucretius account for our capacity to see and sense things, both real and insubstantial (i.e. “imagination”)? What good is the evidence of our senses if what we see can’t directly reveal to us the nature of things?
15. How does Lucretius explain phenomena such as movement of the body, sleep, and so forth? Do you find his method of explanation scientific, whatever its accuracy? Explain.
16. Lucretius is particularly concerned to account for amorous urges--the power of Venus. Why do you suppose his explanation leads him to dwell on the frustrations and dangers inherent in eroticism? How might this instinct pose a threat to his philosophical claims?

Book 5

17. Lucretius again discusses the character of the gods and how they might regard what happens on earth. According to him, why doesn’t it make sense to suppose that the gods concern themselves with human affairs or that the earth was designed for human use?
18. What account does Lucretius give us of how the earth and the heavenly bodies were formed and why the heavens move as they do? What accounts for the cycle of day and night?
19. What explanation does Lucretius offer for the development of life on earth? And how did language and fire come into use?
20. According to Lucretius, how and why did something like what we might broadly call a “social contract” develop, and why did people begin to worship gods?
21. Towards the end of the fifth book, Lucretius discusses the desire for novelty and laments its effects for human society. What does he say induces this desire, and what do his remarks suggest about his overall view of human society’s prospects in the long run?

Book 6

22. What does Lucretius say causes thunder and lightning and earthquakes? Why does it make sense for him to dwell at length on such things in terms of the general rhetorical purpose of *On the Nature of the Universe*?
23. What process does Lucretius follow in arriving at his explanations throughout this book--why is he content to set forth many plausible explanations rather than whittle the field down to the one that really applies?
24. How does Lucretius explain the origin and spread of plague? Why end an otherwise uplifting book on such a note, if indeed the manuscript ends as the author would want it to end?

Edition: Lucretius. *On the Nature of the Universe*. Trans. Ronald Melville. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999. ISBN: 0-192-81761-2.

THE MAHABHARATA QUESTIONS

Assigned: from *The Mahabharata* (953-1001).

Note: I use modified spellings below since the wiki text editor does not parse the special transliteration markings of our anthology's translation.)

Book 1. "Origins" (959-65)

1. What is common to the several stories about the birth of the Kuru generation of rulers (the children of Dhrtarashtra and Pandu)? What expectations for the future do such stories give rise to?
2. How does the narrative style your understanding of this epic? Consider the order in which the various characters' origins are recounted--how are they related temporally, and how do they set up later events?
3. What causes the enmity between the Pandus and the Kauravas? Examine especially the rivalry of Arjuna and Karna. And what role does King Duryodhana play in engendering this rivalry?

Book 2. "The Assembly Hall" (967-83)

4. Yudhishtira wagers all he has and loses every bit of it--even the wife of the Pandavas, Draupadi. How does this situation come about? To what "legal riddle" does Yudhishtira's predicament give rise? How is it dealt with?
5. Which characters intervene most forcefully in the wake of the dice-game crisis? What perspectives and solutions do they offer? Consider Draupadi and at least one other character.

Book 5. "The Preparation for War" (983-89)

6. Who is Krishna? What does Dhrtarashtra want from him? How does Krishna begin to assert his powers, and how does Duryodhana respond to Krishna's mediation?
7. When Krishna tries win over Karna to the Pandavas' side, how does Karna justify his steadfast refusal to abandon Duryodhana?
8. In section 45 (988-89), Balarama surveys the battle situation, and promptly takes his leave--why does he do so, and what point might the narrator be making when he includes this brief mention of Balarama's discomfort over the coming battle?

Book 8. "The Book of Karna" (990-94)

9. Consider the battle ethics of Bhima (who kills Duhshasana) and Arjuna (who kills Karna) as well as Krishna, who advises Arjuna to kill Karna. What attitude does the text take up towards the violence of battle?

10. What virtues does Karna possess? How do his faults haunt him? One thing to examine is how he bears up in confronting his violent end--what does this say about him? Is he entirely "evil," or is that an oversimplification?

Book 9. "The Book of Shalya" (994-98)

11. Duryodhana has been a grand villain in the epic. When he flees to the water, how does he justify his decision? What do others apparently think of him and of his fight with Bhima?

Book 11. "The Book of the Women" (998-1000)

12. What reproaches do Draupadi, Ghandari, and Kunti level against the Pandava brothers and Krishna? Do the accusations ring true? Explain.

Book 12. "The Book of Peace" (1000-01)

13. What kind of peace is established? Does it seem like a satisfactory ending? Why or why not?

14. How does Vyasa reconcile Yudhishtira to the devastation that has gone before? How much of the narrative has been ascribed to fate, and how much to human error? On the whole, are the *Mahabharata* selections we have read a story about a destiny that was bound to come about, or is it a tale of individual characters' actions--or is there a problem with making such a distinction in the first place? Explain.

Edition: Lawall, Sarah, ed. *The Norton Anthology of World Literature*. 2nd edition. Volumes 1ABC. New York: Norton, 2002. ISBN: A = 0-393-97755-2, B = 0-393-97756-0, C = 0-393-97757-9.

OID QUESTIONS

Assigned: Publius Ovidius Naso. *Metamorphoses*, from Books I, II, V, IX, X (1134-1182).

From *Metamorphoses*

"Apollo and Daphne" (1138-41)

1. How does Apollo at first court Daphne? What metaphor does the narrator employ to describe the pursuit that follows? Where do the narrator's sympathies seem to be placed, based on what he says about the two main characters?

2. What becomes of Daphne? How does the narrator tie the story of Daphne's metamorphosis to his own time? Does some principle underlie this change--why does Daphne change in the specific way she does?

"Io and Jove" (1141-47)

3. What metamorphosis does Io, the daughter of the river god Inachus, undergo? How and why does she recover her humanity?

4. As part of his mission to kill Io's guard Argus, Mercury recounts the story of Pan and Syrinx. What connects this "story within a story" to the tale about Io and Jove?

"Europa and Jove" (1147-49)

5. Much of Book 2 (from which this story comes) reflects Ovid's reflection on the relationship between humans and nature. How might this brief episode be said to complete such a reflection?

"Ceres and Proserpina" (1149-61)

6. How does this story (especially its framing device of the contest between the Muses and the nine daughters of Pella's ruler Pierus) reinforce Ovid's ideas about proper respect for the gods?

7. How does this story also reflect, by way of dramatizing Ceres' grief-stricken actions after Pluto's abduction of her daughter Proserpina, on "courtship" and, more generally, on the power of Eros or love in both human and divine affairs?

8. What role does the nymph Arethusa play in this section? Why is her presence (and her self-narrated story) significant to Ovid's themes of change and compensation for the loss that comes with change, or "metamorphosis"?

"Iphis and Ianthe" (1161-65)

9. In this story about same-sex desire, how does the goddess Isis help solve Iphis' dilemma? Describe this resolution with regard to the supposed conflict between natural inclination and cultural prohibition--is Ovid perhaps repudiating this kind of desire, or is he instead indirectly validating it?

"Pygmalion" (1166-67)

10. Why does Pygmalion reject the ordinary women of Cyprus, and instead invest his hopes in a statue? This brief story has sometimes been interpreted as a comment on art's power to remake life in its image. Extrapolate from that idea--how might we interpret the story along those lines?

"Myrrha and Cinyras" (1167-74)

11. Pygmalion's onetime statue gives birth to Paphos, who in turn begets Cinyras, father of a daughter (Myrrha) who is stricken with incestuous desire for him. In this story about a primal taboo--incest--how does the narrator deal with the conflict between natural inclination and cultural prohibition?

12. What happens to Myrrha in the wake of her exposure and flight from her enraged father? Is the story's conclusion punishment, compensation, or both? What's the point of our remembering Myrrha's sad story?

"Venus and Adonis" (1174-82)

13. How is Venus' falling in love with Adonis revenge for the fate of Myrrha? Why (aside from the obvious "time-killing" function as the pair rest) does she tell Adonis the story of swift Atalanta and Hippomenes--what lesson is Venus imparting to her companion about consorting with gods, and perhaps about love itself?

Edition: Lawall, Sarah, ed. *The Norton Anthology of World Literature*. 2nd edition. Volumes 1ABC. New York: Norton, 2002. ISBN: A = 0-393-97755-2, B = 0-393-97756-0, C = 0-393-97757-9.

OVID QUESTIONS, MELVILLE TRANSLATION

Assigned: Publius Ovidius Naso. From *Metamorphoses*.

From *Metamorphoses*

Book 1

1. How does the narrative structure of Book One suit the subject of Ovid's poem? In responding, consider at least two of the following sub-questions:

- a) What does the narrator ask of the gods in his brief invocation? What hopes does he advance for his poem?
- b) How does the narrator transition from his description of the Four Ages into the Flood Story? What comes between these two recountings, and what significance does this interlude hold for the material surrounding it?
- c) What logic underlies the transition (440ff) from the new creation to the story of Apollo and Daphne? What ties them together?
- d) What connects the Apollo/Daphne story with the Jove/IO Story? (cf. 573ff)
- e) What is the connecting link between the Jove/IO story and Phaethon? (753ff)

"The Creation" (pp. 1-3)

2. How was the Earth created (6-87), and by whom? How does this creation account differ from, the one offered in Genesis, if you are familiar with that account?

3. Who created humans, and why? (73-87) How did they differ from animals? What does Ovid's handling of this issue tell you about his stance towards the stories he tells?

“The Ages of Mankind” (pp. 3-8)

4. How does the narrator describe the Four Ages (95ff)? What reason does he offer for the deterioration from the Golden to the Silver Age? What causes the deterioration into the Bronze and Iron Ages?
5. What seem to be Jove’s intentions with regard to the Iron Age human race? Does he plan to destroy them all? Why do Deucalion and Pyrrha alone survive? What redeeming qualities do they have? (319ff)

“The Flood” and “Deucalion and Pyrrha” (pp. 9-14)

6. Deucalion and Pyrrha pray to Thetis (370ff). What does she tell them to do? What, if anything, does Themis’ promise have to do with Jove’s promise to make a new and better race of beings? (249ff) How does the narrator sum up the principle of this new dispensation?

“Apollo and Daphne” (pp. 14-18)

7. How, from 502ff, does Apollo at first court Daphne? What metaphor does the narrator employ to describe the pursuit that follows?
8. What becomes of Daphne around 546ff? How does the narrator tie the story of Daphne’s metamorphosis to his own time? How does her change differ from the one suffered by Lycaon? Does some principle underlie this change--why does Daphne change in the specific way she does, and not in some other way?

“Io” (pp. 18-23)

9. What metamorphosis does Io, the daughter of the river god Inachus, undergo? (586ff) How does she manage to turn into a human again?

“Phaethon” (pp. 23-24)

10. How is the final tale of Book One (about Phaethon) related to Ovid’s task as an epic poet?

Book 2

“Phaethon, continued” (pp. 25-36)

11. The obvious moral of this tale is “don’t aspire beyond your powers or your lot.” But how does Ovid case this moral in doubt--what does his narration suggest about the way the Gods uphold their order?

“Callisto” (pp. 37-40)

12. What links this story to the previous one, aside from the fact that Jove meets Callisto while surveying the damage from Phaethon’s disastrous ride?

“The Raven and the Crow” (pp. 40-43)

13. What is the principle behind the transition from “Callisto” to this tale? What does the “Chinese Box” method of narration add to the main story’s significance?
14. How does the sad story of these two birds frustrate the theme of natural regeneration set forth at the outset of Book 2?

“Ocyrhoe” and “Mercury and Battus” (pp. 43-45)

15. What common theme links these two stories? What connects them to the whole of Book 2?

“The Envy of Aglauros” (pp. 46-49)

16. Why is it appropriate that Minerva should turn Aglauros into *stone*? Why not some other punishment?
17. Describe the behavior and the effects of Envy. Why is she so closely associated with poison?

“Jupiter and Europa” (pp. 49-50)

18. How does this story complete the poet’s reflection in Book 2 on the relationship between humans and nature?

Book 3

“Cadmus” (pp. 51-54)

19. What does the manner of Thebes’ founding suggest about the city’s future?
20. How does this tale relate to Ovid’s ironic handling of nature in Book 2?

“Diana and Actaeon” (pp. 55-58)

21. When Actaeon turns into a stag and is pursued by hounds, what human characteristics does he miss most? Why?
22. How does this story handle the theme of female violence? Does such violence seem justified here? How does its significance go beyond the immediate tale? Why do you suppose the narrator comments at the end on others’ views of Diana’s conduct?

“Semele and the Birth of Bacchus” (pp. 58-60)

23. How does Ovid’s Juno compare to Virgil’s Juno, and/or Homer’s Hera?
24. How does this story relate to the story of Phoebus in Book 2? What relationship between the human and the divine does it explore or assert?

“Tiresias” (pp. 60-61)

25. In what way does this story advance the theme of “compensation for loss” as one significant feature of relations between gods and human beings?

“Narcissus and Echo” (pp. 61-66)

26. How is this tale an exploration of the psychology of love? How does it compare to other tales in which Ovid’s narrator addresses this complex issue?

“Pentheus and Bacchus” (pp. 66-73)

27. How does Pentheus interpret Bacchus and his rites? What power does Bacchus represent in this story?

28. Offer your view on why Pentheus’ mother, Agave, does not recognize her own son before she tears him to pieces. One possibility--how might the fact that she cannot recognize him be taken as a comment on Ovid’s theme of poetry’s power?

29. What attitude does the teller of the tale take towards the violent behavior of the Bacchantes? Is their violence a positive and appropriate thing here?

“The Daughters of Minyas” (pp. 74-75)

30. Why is the girls’ storytelling inappropriate? How might this impropriety reflect back upon Ovid?

“Pyramus and Thisbe” (pp. 76-79)

31. Ovid seems to have *invented* this story rather than to have borrowed it, and he offers it in a “deadpan” style. Again, how does the tale-telling make Ovid subject to the perils of his own fictional storytelling?

32. What is unusual about the metamorphosis here?

“The Sun in Love” (pp. 79-82)

33. What is the connection between Hyperion and the daughters of Minyas? How do they both transgress?

34. How does Ovid’s tale show the limitations of metamorphosis as a strategy for escape from peril or compensation for harm done?

“Salmacis and Hermaphroditus” and “The Daughters of Minyas Transformed” (pp. 83-86)

35. Salmacis aggressively pursues and merges with the son of Hermes and Aphrodite. The gods grant her wish--why, then, does the narrator allow Hermaphroditus to retain his male identity? How is Ovid treating the female character in this story?

36. What opposition does the narrator explore between “weaving” and the vines of Bacchus? Why is the punishment--transformation into bats--appropriate?

“Athamas and Ino” (pp. 86-91)

37. Describe the back-and-forth process of punishment and compensation in this tale: what do children have to do with this process? Why are they at the center of it?

“The Transformation of Cadmus” (pp. 91-93)

38. What does Cadmus hope to accomplish by his prayer to be turned into a snake? What comfort do he and his wife get from their transformation and what happens afterwards?

“Perseus and Andromeda” (pp. 93-98)

39. In what sense might Perseus be said to redeem the “star-crossed lovers” theme of Book 4?

40. Perseus shows his mettle as a storyteller at the end of Book 4. Consider the beginning of the next book--how is Ovid underscoring the limitations of even this powerful kind of storytelling?

“The Rape of Proserpine” (from Book 5)

41. Explain the “nature myth” involved in this tale--how is the story about the seasons or cycles of nature?

42. How does this story treat the issue of sexuality? Why does Venus, goddess of love, insist on pursuing the course she does, and why does Jove (the Roman Zeus) accept the outrage that has been committed against Proserpine (also called Persephone)?

43. Who or what undergoes metamorphosis in this story? Is metamorphosis invariably a positive thing in “The Rape of Proserpine”? Why or why not?

“Arethusa” (from Book 5)

44. How does Ovid construe the gods in this story?

45. How does Ovid treat sexuality in this story?

46. Does this story offer any comment or perspective on “The Rape of Proserpine”? What are your reasons for thinking as you do on this point?

Tereus, Procne, and Philomela (from Book 6)

47. How does Ovid handle the violent subject matter of his story? To what extent, for example, does he describe Tereus’ rape and mutilation of Philomela graphically? What would you say is Ovid’s attitude towards the cannibalistic revenge Procne takes on Tereus?

48. We have seen that weaving is often a metaphor for poetry and its power. How might that be the case in this story? Is there any other way to connect the tale with this theme of poetry's power?

3. How does Ovid, in this tale and others, differ from authors who offer us some conventional "moral"? What do you suppose we are expected to take away from our reading of such Ovidian fables about metamorphosis?

"Orpheus and Euridyce" (from Book 10)

49. You have read Persephone's story - does that cast any light on (or shadow over) Orpheus' quest to recover Euridyce from the Underworld? Why or why not?

50. What reasons does Orpheus give Persephone for wanting to enter Hades? What constraint do the Underworld gods impose on Orpheus in his quest, and why can't he return for a second time after his initial failure?

51. What powers does Orpheus have as a poet? Explain.

52. What do you believe to be the significance of the course of love that Ovid pursues after he is denied a second chance to rescue his Euridyce?

"The Death of Orpheus" (from Book 11)

53. Orpheus is torn to shreds by Bacchantes, female followers of Bacchus' wild mystery cult. What power or order might the Bacchantes represent, in a wider social and political context? That is, how, with reference to the previous Orpheus tale, has Orpheus offended more than these women's vanity?

54. What role do Apollo and Bacchus play in this tale? Why do they take Orpheus' side? Why is it appropriate that the Bacchantes are turned into trees?

"Hyacinth" (230-32)

55. TBD.

"Pygmalion" (232-34)

56. TBD.

Book 11

"The Death of Orpheus" (249-52)

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58. What role do Apollo and Bacchus play in this tale? Why do they take Orpheus' side? Why is it appropriate that the Bacchantes are turned into trees?

Book 15

"The Apotheosis of Julius Caesar" and "Epilogue" (374-79)

59. TBD.

60. TBD.

Edition: Ovid. *Metamorphoses*. Trans. A. D. Melville. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998. ISBN: 0-192-83472-X.

FF100 OVID QUESTIONS MELVILLE TRANSL., TO COMBINE WITH ABOVE

Assigned: from *Metamorphoses*.

From *Metamorphoses*

"Pentheus and Bacchus"

1. How does Pentheus interpret Bacchus and his rites? What power does Bacchus represent in this story?
2. Offer your view on why Pentheus' mother, Agave, does not recognize her own son before she tears him to pieces. One possibility--how might the fact that she cannot recognize him be taken as a comment on Ovid's theme of poetry's power?
3. What attitude does the teller of the tale take towards the violent behavior of the Bacchantes? Is their violence a positive and appropriate thing here?

"The Rape of Proserpine"

4. Explain the "nature myth" involved in this tale - how is the story about the seasons or cycles of nature?
5. How does this story treat the issue of sexuality? Why does Venus, goddess of love, insist on pursuing the course she does, and why does Jove (the Roman Zeus) accept the outrage that has been committed against Proserpine (also called Persephone)?
6. Who or what undergoes metamorphosis in this story? Is metamorphosis invariably a positive thing in "The Rape of Proserpine"? Why or why not?

"Arethusa"

7. How does Ovid construe the gods in this story?

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9. Does this story offer any comment or perspective on “The Rape of Proserpine”? What are your reasons for thinking as you do on this point?

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11. What reasons does Orpheus give Persephone for wanting to enter Hades? What constraint do the Underworld gods impose on Orpheus in his quest, and why can’t he return for a second time after his initial failure?
12. What powers does Orpheus have as a poet? Explain.
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15. What role do Apollo and Bacchus play in this tale? Why do they take Orpheus’ side? Why is it appropriate that the Bacchantes are turned into trees?

“Tereus, Procne, and Philomela”

16. How does Ovid handle the violent subject matter of his story? To what extent, for example, does he describe Tereus’ rape and mutilation of Philomela graphically? What would you say is Ovid’s attitude towards the cannibalistic revenge Procne takes on Tereus?
17. We have seen that weaving is often a metaphor for poetry and its power. How might that be the case in this story? Is there any other way to connect the tale with this theme of poetry’s power?
18. How does Ovid, in this tale and others, differ from authors who offer us some conventional “moral”? What do you suppose we are expected to take away from our reading of such Ovidian fables about metamorphosis?

Edition: Ovid. *Metamorphoses*. Trans. A. D. Melville. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1986. ISBN: 0-192-83472-X.

OID QUESTIONS

Assigned: Publius Ovidius Naso. *The Art of Love*.

The Art of Love

Book 1

1. How does the narrator refer to the god Love at the beginning of his first book? How seriously does he take this god? Aside from Eros the God, what exactly does Ovid apparently mean by “love”? Is it romance, or just sex? Or both? Explain with reference to an example or two.
2. What view of women comes through in the first book? Do you think that Ovid’s narrator looks down on women, or are they represented as neither better nor worse than men? Explain.
3. To what extent does Ovid’s narrator appear to think love holds sway over all else in life? is it just a small part of life, or the most important thing in life? Explain with reference to at least one specific passage.
4. To what extent does Ovid’s narrator approve of deception in the service of love? Does sincerity trump acting and deception during a love pursuit, or is it the other way around? Or would you explain Ovid’s view on honesty and deception some other way?
5. What purpose do Ovid’s various allusions to Greek and Roman mythology serve in the first book? Are they just ornamentation, or do they significantly enhance the ideas set forth concerning love?

Book 2

6. What does Ovid apparently think about fidelity--does it matter whether men and women are faithful to one another? How closely should a man watch over his wife’s conduct? When a man is caught committing adultery, how, according to Ovid, should he handle the situation?
7. What comments does Ovid make about the temper of his times? Most particularly, what does he say about the power of money with respect to love affairs, and how does he describe the value of his advice in comparison to that power?
8. Ovid counsels men that a certain amount of deception and flattery is necessary when it comes to dealing with women; what underlies this advice, aside from the desire to succeed in love? Does he simply think women are vain, or is there more to it than that?
9. What good advice does Ovid offer men in this book? What advice, if any, do you disagree with? Why?

Book 3

10. What does Ovid imply about marriage? Does he take it seriously? How should a woman conceive of her role once she marries? Should she challenge the patriarchal order, or work within it? Explain.
11. In a broader context, to what extent do you think Ovid rebels against the existing social order--do you suppose he is trying to undermine public morality, or is he up to something else, something that applies mainly to private individuals? Explain.

12. Why is Ovid, when he advises women, so interested in adornment of all kinds? What does this interest have to do with his apparent conception of human nature and his idea of the good society?

13. A general question--Tom Wolfe's latest novel is entitled *I Am Charlotte Simmons*, and it deals with sexual mores on today's college campuses. What do you think of this issue? Do you approve or disapprove of what appears to be a rather open and even aggressive attitude towards sexual experience on the part of both young men and young women?

Edition: Ovid. *The Love Poems*. Trans. A. D. Melville. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998. ISBN: 0-192-83633-1.

PINDAR QUESTIONS

Assigned: Pindar. Selected *Odes*: Isthmian 3-4 (56-61); Olympian 2 (80-85); Nemean 3 (101-05); Pythian 2 (146-51); Olympian 7 (164-69); Isthmian 7 (224-26). (Separate text; see below.)

From *Odes*

1. In any of the assigned odes, how does Pindar relate himself and his task as an artist to the athletes whose accomplishments he celebrates?
2. To what extent do Pindar's observations extend to areas of life beyond the realms of sporting competition and art? How does one or more of the assigned odes deal with such broader concerns?
3. What role do the lineage or family connections of the sports participants and, more broadly, Greek mythology play in one or more of the assigned odes?

Edition: Pindar. *The Odes*. New York: Penguin, 1982. ISBN: 0-14-044209-X.

PLATO QUESTIONS

Assigned: Plato. *The Apology of Socrates* (779-99).

The Apology of Socrates

1. How does Socrates characterize his accusers, and how does he interpret the charges they have made against him? Refer to relevant sections of the text in your response.
2. It has long been a point of contention whether Socrates is "guilty" of something, or whether we are to suppose him completely innocent of any offense against Athens. What do you think, and why? Refer to the text in your response.
3. Do you think that Socrates intends his remarks as a serious legal defense? Why or why not? What exactly are the main points of his defense, and what do you suppose he is trying to accomplish by means of his remarks?

4. We have spent a fair amount of time in this class discussing Greek heroic characters. What picture of Socrates emerges from this dialogue--to what extent does he resemble a traditional Greek hero? To what extent does he differ? Refer to the text in your response.

Edition: Lawall, Sarah, ed. *The Norton Anthology of World Literature*. 2nd edition. Volumes 1ABC. New York: Norton, 2002. ISBN: A = 0-393-97755-2, B = 0-393-97756-0, C = 0-393-97757-9.

Assigned: Plato. *Crito*. (Separate text; see below.)

Crito

1. What is it about Socrates, at the beginning of the dialogue, that Crito finds so admirable? What contrast between their outlooks is thereby set up, and how does Socrates respond to Crito's admiration?
2. Socrates infers from a dream that he will be executed the next day, but not sooner. What is the content of that dream, and what is its significance--that is, what does it suggest about the model of heroism that Crito may be offering in the pattern of Socrates' life and death?
3. After Socrates recounts his dream, what reproaches does Crito make against Socrates' decision to stay and die--what seems most important to Crito in this regard?
4. How does Socrates begin responding to Crito's concerns--describe his method of questioning Crito about his remarks, and Socrates' framing of the correct question both should be addressing.
5. Socrates develops his exploration of the issue at hand by means of a literary fiction--namely, he personifies the Laws of Athens. What arguments do the Laws advance against Crito's suggestion of flight from the City?
6. The text concludes with a vision. Why do you suppose Plato has chosen to proceed by way of a literary device (personification) and then a final reference to ecstatic vision? Why not simply offer us straightforward arguments against leaving Athens --what effect, that is, does the literariness of the text have upon the argument itself?
7. Plato makes Socrates uphold the laws of Athens in spite of the many's abusive implementation of them. Is that how you see the nature of law and the individual's relationship to it? Namely, what should a person do when good laws are unjustly applied? What should a person do when a law itself enshrines stupidity and cruelty--as in, say, the infamous Dredd Scott case in the nineteenth century, which reaffirmed the rights of slaveholders?
8. Law seems to be something divine in the *Crito*, and to an extent the American Founders treat it that way, too: we are, John Adams wrote, "an empire of laws, and not of men." To what degree can law transcend the ordinary citizen and the powerful ruler alike? Are we ever fully a government of laws alone?

Edition: West, Thomas and Grace. *Four Texts on Socrates*. Rev. ed. Ithaca: Cornell, 1998. ISBN: 0-801-48574-6.

Assigned: Plato. *Gorgias*. (Separate text; see below.)

Gorgias

1. From 3-20, Socrates engages Gorgias and tries to define the nature and sphere of influence of rhetoric. How does Gorgias define rhetoric, and what does he take to be its subject matter?
2. From 21-34, Socrates explains in conversation first with Gorgias and then with Polus the problems he finds with the practice of rhetoric. Why, according to Socrates, isn't rhetoric genuine expertise? What, then, is it, and what is its appeal?
3. From 34-45, Socrates offers a variation on his usual argument that people who do wrong not because they are inherently evil, but rather because they are working from a misguided sense of what is best for themselves. On what grounds might this claim be challenged? Further, how is Socrates beginning, at least indirectly, to describe the proper relationship between the citizens of a state and their rulers?
4. From 46-62, Socrates explains to his listeners why it's better to suffer wrong than to do wrong, and why a person who does wrong would actually benefit from judicious punishment. What are his reasons for these claims? And to what conclusion about rhetoric does all this reasoning lead Socrates?
5. From 63-69, Callicles accuses Socrates of pandering to the multitude. According to Callicles, what really underlies claims about "justice" and "equality"? Upon what does he ground his own claims that inequality in political power and material possessions is not only allowable but necessary?
6. From 70-91, Socrates and Callicles continue their sparring match about "the authentic way of life." How does Socrates attempt to undermine Callicles' praise of pleasure and desire as a basis for measuring personal success and status in the community? Why isn't pleasure to be identified with the good, according to Socrates?
7. From 92-101, how does Socrates connect dramatic poetry to the great politicians Callicles mentions? What, according to Socrates, does a genuine "craftsman" do, and why is the maker of tragedies not such a craftsman? How is democratic politics in Athens similar to the city's dramas?
8. From 102-25, Socrates develops his ideas concerning what would constitute real statesmanship. How ought a good ruler treat his subjects, and with what goals in mind? Is he offering an achievable goal, or is he suggesting that achieving the well-ordered community is impossible under a democratic system?
9. From 126-135, Socrates declares himself the only true statesman, and explains, with prophetic accuracy, why any trial conducted against him is bound to end in his condemnation. Why, according to Socrates, would he lose in court? How does his employment of a fable about the Gods' institution of justice help him cap the reorientation of values towards which his entire dialogue has been building?

10. Socrates asserts straightforwardly throughout *Gorgias* that when it comes to governance, philosophical truth, art, and ethics, the people of a democratic polity are by no means the source of legitimate standards. How would you update Socrates' complaints to make them apply to C21 American culture and political life? If you disagree with these modernized complaints, how would you counter them?

Edition: Plato. *Gorgias*. Trans. Robin Waterfield. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1994. ISBN: 0-192-83630-7.

Assigned: Plato. *The Symposium*. (Separate text; see below.)

The Symposium

General Questions

1. Is there an order or progression in the speeches on love? Comment on the structure of the *Symposium* in terms of the arguments set forth about love.
2. The *Symposium* is obviously a literary text, not a dry work of philosophy. To what extent does the work's literary qualities suit the topic - love - and how does it affect your view of the philosophical positions offered?

Questions on the Speeches

3. What is your first impression of Socrates? How does that impression affect the way you understand him later in the dialogue?
4. How does the doctor, Eryximachus set the topic and the tone for the discussion to follow?
5. Phaedrus' speech comes first - summarize the points that Phaedrus makes. To what extent does he do justice to the topic?
6. Pausanias follows with his view of love. What distinctions does he introduce concerning love? How does he view friendship, and why is it so important to him? For example, what does politics have to do with friendship between an older and a younger man?
7. Now we move to the physician Erixymachus' speech. How does Erixymachus compare love between a man and woman with male/male companionship? What does political life have to do with the latter kind of companionship, according to him? How does Erixymachus' status as a doctor affect his view of love or friendship and its uses?
8. Aristophanes the comic poet follows. What, according to him, is the origin and nature of love? What is its purpose with respect to the individual? How does he ultimately view relationships between men and women? What value does he accord to friendship between two men? A structural question: how does Aristophanes' manner of proceeding provide some relief from the kinds of speeches we have been hearing so far?

9. What is Agathon's criticism of the speeches preceding his own? What, according to him, is the true nature of the god Love or "Eros"? How does the structure and crafting of Agathon's speech mark him off from the others?
10. Socrates begins his turn by questioning Agathon. What point is he driving at in his questioning? That is, what has been the problem or problems with all the preceding speeches? How is Socrates' manner of interrogating Agathon characteristic of him, if you have read other Platonic dialogues?
11. Socrates proceeds by ascribing what he says to the woman Diotima of Mantinea, who seems to be an expert in matters of love and prophecy.
- a) Why does it matter that Love isn't a god, but is instead a "spirit"?
- b) What is the "object" of love in its most general sense?
- c) How does Diotima use the term "procreation," and why is it a central term with regard to the purpose of love?
- d) Why, according to Socrates, does Diotima argue that love between males produces better "offspring"?
- e) Pages 53-56, from the passage beginning, "The proper way to go about this business..." is the heart of Socrates' speech. Set down the ascending stages that the lover is said to go through. What is the ultimate purpose of this ascent, the ultimate prize to be attained?
12. Alcibiades enters just after Socrates concludes his speech. What effect does his entrance have upon the dialogue thus far? How does Alcibiades praise Socrates? How might one interpret Alcibiades' characterization of Socrates, and even Alcibiades' presence in the text generally, as more than comic relief? How might they be significant with regard to the various things that have been said about love's nature and purpose?

Edition: Plato. *The Symposium*. Trans. Robin Waterfield. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1994. ISBN: 0-192-83427-4.

PLAUTUS QUESTIONS

Assigned: Titus Macchius Plautus. *The Braggart Soldier*.

The Braggart Soldier

1. What's the point of offering us a brief dialogue between the soldier Pyrgopolynices and his servant Artotrogus before Palaestrio steps onstage to recount the plot? What do we learn about the two characters from their conversation?
2. Palaestrio's synopsis (lines 79-155) recounts a large part of the plot. What story does the plot reduce to--what needs to happen, and what values have been violated that must be set right? Also, since plot

recounting breaks the dramatic illusion, how would you describe the kind of pleasure the playwright must be aiming to give the audience?

3. From 156-258, the Soldier's middle-aged neighbor Periplectomenus and his servant Palaestrio work up a plan to deal with their dilemma--the Soldier's slave Sceledrus has seen Philocomasium smooching with Pleusicles in Periplectomenus' home. Who is the mastermind here, and what plan does he devise?
4. From 259-584, the plan is put into action. What are Sceledrus' fears, and why do you suppose Palaestrio and Philocomasium are able to play upon them so successfully? What makes Philocomasium such a sympathetic character at this point?
5. From 584-813, consider Periplectomenus. Why is he a sympathetic character? Why does he want to help Pleusicles and Philocomasium? What view of marriage does the old man set forth?
6. From 585-813, Palaestrio converses with Periplectomenus and Pleusicles. What new plot emerges around line 765, cooked up by Palaestrio?
7. The prostitute Acroteleutium and her maid Milphidippa are enlisted in Palaestrio's plot from around line 870 onwards. What claims are made for and against women in the process of laying out and executing the plot against Pergopolynices? How do their wiles compare with those of Palaestrio?
8. As the play moves towards its end, is it lust that does Pergopolynices in, as he suggests when he realizes he has been duped, or would you describe his downfall another way? Also, what constitutes the happy ending of this comedy? What has been set right that was wrong?

Edition. Plautus. *Four Comedies*. Trans. Erich Segal. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1996. ISBN: 0-192-83896-2.

SAPPHO QUESTIONS, FULL VERSION

Assigned: Sappho. *Poems*. (Separate text; see below.)

Poems

1. What effect does the fragmentariness of Sappho's poetry have on your interpretation of the individual poems you read?
2. What are the qualities of Sappho's lyric voice as you discern them? In other words, what kind of speaker are we listening to--what attitudes towards others and towards experience does she convey?
3. How does the speaker deal with her own passions (erotic or otherwise) and the passion of others? Would you say she is concerned primarily with matters of the heart, or with other things? Explain.
4. What kind of relationship do you conjecture between the speaker and those whom she addresses? Use an example or two in your response.
5. Memory is often important in lyric poetry--what role does it play in Sappho?

6. How does Sappho refer to nature in her poems? What significance does she give nature, what connections does she make between nature and human society?
7. What role do the gods play in Sappho's fragments? How does she address Aphrodite in particular?
8. What kinds of references to death and sleep do you find in Sappho? Explore a few of them to draw out their significance for the poem/s in which they occur.
9. Sappho's circle is female, but at what points does her speaker refer to men? What does the speaker seem to think of men and their relationships with women?

Edition: Sappho. *Poems*. Trans. Mary Barnard. UC Press, 1999. ISBN: 0-520-22312-8.

SENECA QUESTIONS

Assigned: Lucius Annaeus Seneca. *The Trojan Women; Thyestes*. (Separate text; see below.)

The Trojan Women

1. From lines 1-159 the Trojan King Priam's widow Hecuba and the Chorus (women of fallen Troy) set the play's tone. What do they say about the suffering that has already been visited upon them? What philosophy or outlook does Hecuba derive from the fall of Troy?
2. From 160-368, after Talthybius announces the will of the shade Achilles that Polyxena and Astyanax must die, King Agamemnon and Achilles' son Pyrrhus assess the situation. What has the war supposedly taught Agamemnon and his peers in age? How does Pyrrhus respond to Agamemnon's advice?
3. From 369-402, Calchas delivers his opinion and the Chorus comment on what they have just heard from Agamemnon and Pyrrhus. What view does Calchas take of Achilles' demand? Why do you suppose the Chorus members are driven to discuss death at this point? What do such interludes accomplish in terms of the drama's progression or impact?
4. From 403-521, Andromache enters and converses with an old servant, her son by fallen Hector near them. How does Andromache assess the prospects for frustrating the hated Achilles' demands? What hopes does invest in her son Astyanax?
5. From 522-810, Andromache and Ulysses (Odysseus) argue over the fate of Astyanax. How does Ulysses position himself with respect to the demand he issues that the boy must be surrendered to the Greeks? How does Andromache counter Ulysses' demand and his counsel to her? Does she appear heroic at this point, or not? Explain.
6. From 811-1007, first the Chorus speak, and then Helen, entering to dress Polyxena and carry out the Greeks' designs, argues with Andromache and Hecuba. How does Helen cast her role in the Trojan War and its aftermath? How do the other two women interpret her actions? What view of human nature and affairs does Hecuba set forth?

7. From 1008-end, after the Chorus discuss the value of shared grief, the Messenger enters and, at Andromache's bidding, recounts the killing of Polyxena and Astyanax. To what extent does the Roman Seneca's Messenger call to mind the tragic heroism of Greek drama in his description of Astyanax and Polyxena's death? Do you think this play gives us heroes at all, or heroes of the same kind that we find in the Greeks? Explain.
8. A final question--Aristotle claims that Greek drama's representations of suffering and death have a cathartic effect--arousing and calming the passions, and possibly leading the audience towards intellectual clarity on matters of great importance. What do you think the intended effect of Senecan tragedy is? (One way to approach this question would be to consider what good, if any, it does Andromache to hear the Messenger's description.)

Thyestes

9. From lines 1-120, the Ghost of Tantalus (grandfather of Atreus and Thyestes) resists the demands of the Fury. What attitude towards vengeance, suffering, and violence does this exchange set forth to guide us for the rest of the play?
10. From 121-75, the Chorus members discuss the situation before them. What is unusual about the subjects of this Chorus and perhaps about their treatment of the situation? Also examine briefly what they say from 337-403 about the upcoming meeting between Atreus and Thyestes--what does the play gain by their naive remarks?
11. From 176-336, Atreus and his Attendant argue. What does Atreus say has made him conceive a desire for revenge against his brother Thyestes? Why does this desire take the particular form it does? Why is he so sure that Thyestes will fall into the trap?
12. Also from 176-336, what does Atreus hope to achieve by carrying out his treacherous plot? What view of kingship does he set forth, and how does the Attendant counter that view?
13. From 404-545, Thyestes mulls over his hopes and apprehensions concerning his son young Tantalus, and then meets Atreus. Why is Thyestes willing to come back to Argos? What hopes does he still have, and how does Atreus feed them?
14. From 546-884, the Chorus listens to the Messenger's recounting of Atreus' fulfillment of his scheme. What is the point of offering such a lurid account? What lesson do the Chorus members derive from it?
15. From 885-1112 (end), Atreus delights in making Thyestes slowly learn the agonizing truth about his meal. What does Atreus apparently believe he has accomplished--has he "set things right"?
16. We discussed Senecan stoicism in class. What Stoic truth has this play brought home to us concerning the nature and consequences of inordinate passion? Is there any way in which we might see the play as cathartic or healthy for an audience? Explain.

Edition: *Seneca: The Tragedies*. Vol. 1. Eds. David R. Slavitt and Palmer Bovie. Trans. David R. Slavitt. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1992. ISBN: 0-801-84309-X.

SOPHOCLES QUESTIONS

Assigned: Sophocles. *Oedipus the King*; *Oedipus at Colonus*; *Antigone*.

Oedipus the King

1. Aristotle refers often in his *Poetics* to *Oedipus Rex* as an example of an excellent tragedy. Audiences have always found the play compelling--how do you explain its success?
2. In what sense is Oedipus, though a king, also an "everyman" figure? In other words, how might this play be said to explore something fundamental about the limitations involved in being human?
3. From lines 1-89, what qualities do the people attribute to Oedipus? What heroic qualities does he attribute to himself? Aside from saving Thebes, what is Oedipus being called upon to do?
4. From lines 169-245, what assumptions do the Chorus make about the relationship between humans and the gods? How does Oedipus contradict them immediately afterwards?
5. From lines 340-526, Oedipus engages with the blind prophet Tiresias. What is the basis of Oedipus' appeal to Tiresias--how does he try to get the truth from him? How is Oedipus' attitude towards Tiresias and the kind of knowledge he represents inconsistent?
6. From 527-72, why do the Chorus not accept the charges Tiresias has leveled against Oedipus? What *would* constitute proof for them?
7. From 573-750, Oedipus and Creon argue--how does Creon interpret Oedipus' anger? What charges does he make against the king, what prediction does he offer about Oedipus' future?
8. From 751-953 Jocasta inquires about the disagreement between Oedipus and her brother Creon. What information does she pass on to Oedipus that only makes his misery worse? What does Oedipus reveal about his past, and how much does he now understand about his guilt?
9. From 954-97, the Chorus assess the situation as it stands. What makes them anxious? How do their remarks affect your understanding of their trustworthiness as judges of the drama unfolding before them?
10. From 998-1182, first Jocasta and then she and Oedipus hear unexpectedly from a Corinthian Messenger. What does his information about Polybus at first lead both to assume about the power of prophecy and the course of human life, and what subsequent revelation proves devastating to them? How is this scene "ironic"?
11. From 1183-1350, Oedipus carries on to the bitter truth, which he hears from the old Herdsman mentioned by the Corinthian Messenger. Why doesn't he stop the process of unconcealment? What lesson does the Chorus draw from his ruin?

12. From 1351-1449, a Messenger describes what happened when Oedipus entered the palace and saw that Jocasta had hanged herself. How might *hearing* this event rather than seeing it change an audience's perspective on the events?
13. Regarding the same episode, what symbolic implications emerge from Oedipus' blinding himself? Do you find his action courageous and heroic, or do you interpret it some other way? Explain.
14. From 1450 on, Oedipus laments and seeks exile. How does he understand what has happened to him? Why is it necessary that the audience hear him after all that has occurred?
15. By the end of the play, what is the status of Oedipus as a tragic hero? Do you think that an audience would pity him, or judge him harshly? What do you think of the Chorus' final pronouncement? Explain.

Oedipus at Colonus

1. From lines 1-141, when Oedipus first arrives at Colonus, what sort of reception does he receive, and what are his expectations? What does he offer the people of Thebes ?
2. From lines 142-336, how does Oedipus explain his ordeal and present circumstances to the chorus? What problem does he have in persuading them?
3. From lines 337-518, what is the state of relations between Oedipus and his children? Why is Oedipus still important to Thebes ?
4. From lines 519-76 and again from 1894-end, if you have read *Antigone*, how does the behavior of the sisters Antigone and Ismene in the present play compare to their behavior in *Antigone*?
5. From lines 577-616, what reason does the Chorus give for extracting from Oedipus the story of his past? How does he defend himself? What role does the complex metaphor of "sight" or "vision" play in his defense?
6. From lines 617-817, why does Duke Theseus of Athens accept the request of Oedipus? What does Oedipus promise he can do, and under what circumstances? What role does the Chorus play at the end of this section?
7. From lines 818-1008, during the argument with King Creon of Thebes, what powers does Oedipus ally himself with against his former kingdom? How does Creon try to undercut Oedipus' self-defense?
8. From lines 1009-1192, Creon faces the wrath of Theseus and Oedipus. How does Theseus contrast his own and his city's principles with Creon's actions? How does Creon counter the charges?
9. From lines 1193-1414, Oedipus is constrained to accept the will of Theseus and his daughters and see Polynices. Why are they all so insistent that he greet his hated son, and how is the situation ironic considering Oedipus' previous statements? Why is this section an appropriate point for the Chorus' observations about human existence?

10. From lines 1415-1645, how does Polynices' behavior in the wake of his father's rejection compare to Oedipus' conduct during his own ordeal in *Oedipus the King*? How does he respond to his father's oracles and curses? Why won't Oedipus relent?
11. From lines 1646-1893, Oedipus receives his summons and goes to meet his death. What is the character of that death? What does Oedipus bid Theseus of Athens do in order to avert destruction by Thebes?
12. From lines 1894-end, Antigone and Ismene lament their father's death and their present circumstances. This makes psychological sense, but why is it important in understanding the significance of Oedipus' tragic life and mysterious death?
13. To what extent does Oedipus' insight during his exile and at the point of death compensate him for the ruin of his house and the pain he has suffered? In other words, to what extent does Sophocles offer his audience an "answer" to the problem of the relationship between humans and the gods?
14. Throughout, the chorus has offered variants on its final pronouncement, "all rests in the hands of a mighty power," and it has said, too, that we should count no one happy until death has come. How do such statements complement or contrast with the actions and attitudes of the characters themselves concerning the gods and human life?

Antigone

1. Do you consider Antigone or Creon the more important character in this play? Or do you consider them both equally important? In your response, consider why one or the other, or both, might deserve the title of protagonist or tragic hero.
2. What vision of rulership does Creon set forth? To what extent does he remain true to that vision? What would you say is Creon's most important mistake, and why?
3. With what powers does Antigone align herself? Would you say that her mission has more to do with personal concerns than with religious piety, or would that be an unfair interpretation of her conduct? Explain.
4. How important is gender in this tragedy? Which of the characters treats it as an important consideration? How does Sophocles' handling of female characters differ, in general, from the way Aeschylus treats female characters?
5. Does the chorus in *Antigone* get to the bottom of why the two main characters suffer--do they understand the cause and nature of the tragedy that unfolds in front of them? Explain.
6. How important are the gods in this play? Can you tell with whom they side? Or do they remain inscrutable? Explain.
7. Do you think the way Antigone treats her sister Ismene is proper, given her insistence upon familial piety? What is the basis for Antigone's harshness towards Ismene, and how does Ismene interpret Antigone's approach to the respective claims of family and state?

8. Aside from simply advancing the plot, what is the significance of the Sentry in this play? How does his conduct serve as a foil for more important characters? How does that same conduct undermine Creon's claims about the best way to keep citizens loyal?

Edition: Sophocles. *Three Theban Plays*. Trans. Robert Fagles. NY: Penguin, 2000. ISBN: 0-140-44425-4.

T'AO CH' IEN QUESTIONS

Assigned: T'ao Ch'ien. Selected Prose and Poetry (1360-73).

T'ao Ch'ien

1. General question: T'ao Ch'ien's outlook as a poet stems from Daoism--find out what you can about this belief system on the Internet and set down the most significant characteristics you discover.
2. In any of the selections, when T'ao Ch'ien describes the good life, what are its main characteristics? To what extent is this "good life" solitary, and to what extent does the poet welcome the company of others?
3. In any of the selections, what does T'ao Ch'ien suggest is most conducive to the good life? What things are most likely to get in the way, and what does it take to remove such obstacles?
4. In any of the selections, how much credit does T'ao Ch'ien give wine-drinking for his performance as a poet and his happiness more generally? What are the benefits of wine and what are its limitations for him?

Edition: Lawall, Sarah, ed. *The Norton Anthology of World Literature*. 2nd edition. Volumes 1ABC. New York: Norton, 2002. ISBN A = 0-393-97755-2, B = 0-393-97756-0, C = 0-393-97757-9.

TIBETAN BOOK OF THE DEAD QUESTIONS

Assigned: *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*. (Separate text; see below.)

The Tibetan Book of the Dead

General Questions

Note: These general questions are not pleasant, but they seem appropriate since we are studying a book that has to do with preparation for death. If you don't want to think about this matter for personal reasons, that's understandable.

1. What's your own view of death? Do you find it necessary or useful to think of your own death, or of the death of others who are still with you but who might someday be gone? Or is the subject best avoided if at all possible? Explain.
2. How does American culture treat death, at least as a rule, and aside from religious values? What sorts of things happen with regard to terminal-stage medical care and healthy people's attitudes

(friends, the general public, etc.) when a person is known to be dying of an illness, or very old and in failing condition?

3. Based on the religion with which you are most familiar, what would you say is the purpose of such events as funerals, viewings, wakes, and any number of the various ceremonial actions and words that accompany the passing of a loved one? Is it simply commemoration and a way of expressing sorrow, or something in addition? Explain.

4. How much difference does it make, with regard to your attitude towards death, whether a person's passing is sudden and untimely, or due to a slow illness? Can a person ever be "ready" to die? Explain your response.

5. How was death treated in, say, the 1800's and earlier in America and elsewhere, as well as today in countries without much access to technology?

6. Materialists (those who don't accept any metaphysical explanations for material processes) might respond to the Tibetan Buddhist understanding of the "mind-body complex" as follows: "the consciousness that generates all those noble thoughts about spiritual realms of truth is itself the product of electrochemical processes in the brain. We are 'soft machines'--we run on electricity, and when the plug is pulled, the machine shuts down. End of story. No more consciousness. Hasta la vista, baby. Period." So how do you suppose a Tibetan Buddhist would respond to that challenge?

Chapters 5-6

7. How important does the mentor or guide seem in some of the many prayers in these chapters--what does he or she do, in general terms? Do the prayers take up a tone of authority, or are they best characterized some other way?

8. How much responsibility lies with the person who is about to die or who has already died? Is this person mostly dependent on the guide, or is he or she more of an active participant than that?

9. What are some of the difficulties that the dead must expect as they move through the various stages (the "in-between states") of the death process?

10. What seems to be the status of the kinds of "images" (mild deities, fierce deities, etc.) that the guide advises the departed person to pay attention to? Are they what we would call "real"? Entirely imaginary? Explain.

11. How much difference does it make whether or not someone has lived as a practicing Buddhist when it comes time to go through the death process? Why does such a person still have a chance at moving to a better, more "enlightened" level of awareness?

12. Most who aren't familiar with Buddhist beliefs probably find the elaborate schematizing and "envisioning" of the fifth and sixth chapters confusing. What would you say is the point of so much complexity in dealing with something most people think of as simple?

Edition: *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*. Trans. Robert Thurman. New York: Bantam, 1993. ISBN: 0-553-37090-1.

VIRGIL QUESTIONS

Assigned: Publius Vergilius Maro. *The Aeneid*.

The Aeneid

Book 1

1. From lines 1-41, how does Virgil use his prologue to set priorities for the epic to come: what will be the essentials, scope, and the point of the work? How does this prologue compare to Homer's invocation in *The Odyssey*?
2. From lines 42-184, we get our first look at Virgil's gods. What is Juno's (i.e. Hera's) interest in withholding favor from Aeneas? How does she compare with Homer's Hera? What is her relationship with Aeolus? And what is Neptune up to at this point?
3. From lines 185-263, we first meet Aeneas and his crew. What kind of hero does this first look lead you to expect in the person of Aeneas? What qualities can be discerned from his words and actions?
4. From lines 264-355, when Venus (Aphrodite, Aeneas' mother) demands help from Jupiter (Zeus), with what promises does he console her? How might we suppose these promises differentiate Virgil's purpose in *The Aeneid* from that of Homer in *The Odyssey*?
5. From lines 356-497, what advice and hope does a disguised Venus offer her son Aeneas? What introduction does she provide him regarding the Carthaginian Queen Dido? How does Aeneas describe his own plight when he answers Venus?
6. From lines 498-595, Aeneas stops to take in some images of the Trojan war. Why is it appropriate that Virgil should include such a metanarrative incident, in which a work of art becomes the subject of a work of art? How does Aeneas' viewing of Dido's these war scenes strengthen him and lend him authority? How does this incident strengthen Virgil's hand as maker of a uniquely Roman epic?
7. From lines 596-752, Aeneas' men recount part of their story to Dido, and then Aeneas steps out of his protective cloud to converse with Dido. What affinities between Dido's new realm and Aeneas' Trojan remnant emerge? What does the Queen offer Aeneas and his people, and why?
8. From lines 782-821, what intrigue does Venus plot? How does she plan to ensnare Dido, and why does she want to do that?
9. From lines 822-908, how does the narrator describe Dido's act of falling in love with Aeneas? How does her passion manifest itself? How does the scene between Dido and Aeneas compare to any one of the guest/host scenes you have come across in Homer?

Book 2

10. From lines 1-338, Aeneas recounts for Dido and her court the story of Troy's fall. What contrast does Aeneas make between Trojans and Greeks as he retells the tale? In particular, how does he characterize Sinon, whom the Greeks tasked with selling the Trojans on the story of Greek flight and the Wooden Horse's religious value?

11. From lines 339-583, the departed Hector comes to Aeneas in a dream, telling him to abandon the defense of Troy, but Aeneas and his companions return to the fight. Describe Aeneas' self-defense of his valor as a defender of Troy and its ancient ways: what limitations does Virgil impose on him as an individual hero? How has the shade of Hector undercut Aeneas in his desire to go down fighting?

12. From lines 584-702, Aeneas tells of Priam's being forced to witness the slaughter by Neoptolemus of his son, and then being knifed by the same son of Achilles. How does Aeneas' narration both affirm and undercut Greek heroism? Moreover, how does it drive home the human cost of war (and of empire-building like that of the Romans)?

13. From lines 703-998, Aeneas burns to kill Helen, but Venus makes him see the futility of clinging to Troy and sends him to gather his family. Virgil's Roman tradition relies on *pietas* (reverence for one's family and ancestors); how does this section rely on such piety to drive the action? Still, what irony is also at work even as Aeneas shepherds his family to safety? (In responding, consider Creusa's fate and the words her shade speaks to Aeneas.)

Book 3

14. From lines 1-82, Aeneas and his followers build a town (called "Aenas") in Thrace. But what does Aeneas learn from the shade Polydorus that makes him want to leave the new town behind? In what manner is this news imparted, and what significance does the precise manner of delivery add to what would otherwise be straightforward advice?

15. From lines 83-233, Apollo provides an omen to the Trojan remnant, and they, led by father Anchises, try to interpret it. What interpretive error does Anchises make, and as a result what do the followers of Aeneas learn about their true direction and destiny?

16. From lines 234-319, Aeneas and his Trojans land on the Strophades, where they encounter the Harpies. What upsets the Harpies, and what does Celaeno predict lies in store for Aeneas and his people?

17. From lines 320-592, Aeneas sails around various Greek islands, and, a year having passed, goes to Buthrotum where he encounters Andromache, the fallen Trojan hero Hector's wife. What is her story, and what are the main features of the prophecy that her new husband Helenus offers Aeneas?

18. From lines 593-682, the Trojan remnant fulfill some of Helenus' prophecies, and then from lines 683-786 having made harbor at the Island of the Cyclops, they meet Achaemenides and, later, the Cyclops.

What advice does Achaemenides give them? And how does the Trojans' encounter with the Cyclops differentiate them from that of Ulysses (Odysseus) and his men?

19. From lines 787-829, Aeneas' father Anchises dies. How do you interpret this event in light of what has happened so far and what must happen in the near future? Why is it appropriate, if sad, that Aeneas' father should depart the epic at this point?

Book 4

20. From lines 1-297, Dido falls in love with Aeneas after his heroic recountings, and the pair (with Juno's contrivance and Venus' strategic acquiescence) "marry" during their rain-driven encounter in a secluded cave. How does the poet describe this romantic scene? What are the nearly immediate consequences of this liaison for Dido, and what error, by Roman standards, has the Queen committed in this passionate episode?

21. From lines 298-565, Jupiter (warned by Rumor) hears about Aeneas' tardiness, and sends Mercury to remind him of his duties. How does Mercury describe Aeneas' responsibilities? When Aeneas turns his mind to sailing for Italy, what strategy does he choose, and how does he defend himself against the charges leveled at him by Dido?

22. From lines 298-565 again, if Aeneas is still "heroic" in leaving Dido, what constitutes his heroism? What is the irony involved in Virgil's making him behave as he does (abandoning the woman he loves in mid-winter, unannounced)? That is, how does Aeneas' action clash with Roman ideals of loyalty and honor?

23. From lines 566-833, the narrator describes Dido's "fatal madness" and her suicide. The Queen's majestic passion is clearly the center of the fourth book, but in what ways does the narrator try to distance Augustan Roman readers from her? For example, consider how Dido treats her sister Anna and what she (Dido) says about the gods.

24. From lines 834-76, what loyalty does Anna show her dying sister, and how does Juno weigh in on the quality of Dido's demise?

Book 5

25. From lines 75-663, Aeneas presides over sporting competitions in Sicily, the kingdom of Acestus. What is the occasion of the games, what are either the main events or a few of the more noteworthy competitions, and how does Aeneas manage the whole affair?

26. From lines 664-773, Juno sends Iris down to stir up trouble for the Trojans once again. What kind of trouble does she cause, and what is the outcome? How does this episode (like so many others in *The Aeneid*) implicitly offer a way to make sense of chaotic and irrational human behavior?

27. From lines 774-864, how does Aeneas at first react to the crisis in his midst? What advice does Nautes give him, and what further insight does the ghost of his father Anchises provide? All this

advice combined, what is the plan for Aeneas' near future? How might the episode be said to appeal strongly to Virgil's fellow Romans and contemporaries?

28. From lines 865-972, how do the gods — in this case Venus (Aphrodite) and Neptune (Poseidon) get involved in the action? How does Neptune defend himself from the charge that he is unfair to the Trojans? What promise does he make to Venus regarding Aeneas and his Trojan followers, and what is the "catch" in his offer?

Book 6

29. From lines 1-273, what preparatory work and ritual does the Cumaean Sibyl lay out for Aeneas as a traveler to the Underworld? What prophecies does she make, and why is it so important to deal with the departed Trojan Misenus?

30. From lines 273-726, describe the physical and moral structure of the Underworld through which Aeneas passes with reference to at least two of his encounters with the shades as well as his interaction with the Cumaean Sibyl who is his guide.

31. From lines 273-726, what basic similarities do you find between Virgil's account of the Underworld and the one Homer gives in *The Odyssey* Book 11? What is the biggest difference in Virgil's account? Consider, for example, how the two authors handle the firmness of the boundaries between the living and the dead.

32. From lines 739-1039, Aeneas travels in the Elysian part of the Underworld, and his father Anchises' shade gives him a look at the future of his people — the future Roman Republic and Empire. What explanation does Anchises offer Aeneas concerning the world's creation and the reincarnation of souls?

33. Again with reference to lines 739-1039, examine the Roman future Anchises lays out for his son with regard to the way the speaker uses causally linked events to reveal the character of Rome rather than just its history — what qualities does Anchises emphasize in the illustrious Romans-to-be he names? What makes his Rome, as a political and military entity, so distinctive?

Book 7

Questions on this book still need to be written.

Book 8

Most questions on this book still need to be written.

x. On 1125-29, Virgil offers his own variation on Homer's "Shield of Achilles" description in *The Iliad* 18.558ff (page 189ff in Norton World Lit. A). The technical term for such standout descriptions is ekphrasis. What vision of Rome does the shield offer Aeneas and Virgil's readers? What does it add to Anchises' comments from the Elysian Fields concerning the future?

y. If you have read the part of *The Iliad* (18.558ff) to which Virgil's description pays its respects, compare the two — examine the difference between what Homer thought important to describe on the shield Hephaestus (Vulcan) made for Achilles and what Virgil considers worth representing on Aeneas' shield.

Book 9

34. From lines 1-89 and 144-209, what difference in attitude shows between Turnus and Aeneas and his Trojans? How does their approach to war differ?

35. From lines 210-515, what plan do Nisus and Euryalus form against the Rutulian besiegers? How does it work out (see also 576-605), and what is the significance of this portrait in the middle of a warlike ninth book so focused on the clash of great armies?

36. Lines 601-876 begin with the epic narrator's prayer to the Muses to help him sing "carnage and death." In the section that follows, how does Ascanius conduct himself during the battle? What special favor does Apollo accord Ascanius? How does Numanus manage to enrage Ascanius, and how does the latter deal with him?

37. From lines 766-923, attention shifts to Turnus. Describe the slaughter that Turnus visits on the Trojans in this section of Book 9. Nonetheless, what mistake does Turnus make even as he triumphs, and how does he manage to escape the dangerous situation in which he finds himself?

Book 10

38. From lines 1-146 and then from 715-814, what role do the gods play in this book — namely, Jove (Zeus), Venus, (Aphrodite), and Juno (Hera)? What is Venus' plea to Jove, and how does he satisfy her requests? How does Juno interpret the human action unfolding below her and defend her own actions regarding it?

39. From lines 147-427, what marvels occur that help Aeneas in his quest to shore up the support of allies and then come back to rescue his besieged Trojans? In responding, discuss the advice given him by the sea-nymphs, and the incident that involves Aeneas's helmet or "crest."

40. From lines 428-602, describe the fight between Pallas and Turnus. In what regard does Turnus appear to hold his opponent, and why? What role does Hercules play in the action that transpires? Why is he filled with sorrow about the death of Pallas?

41. From lines 603-714, Aeneas must rally his dispirited Trojans. What acts of valor does he perform? How does he respond to those who ask for mercy? What insults does Liger make against Aeneas, and how does Aeneas deal with this soldier and his taunts?

42. From lines 815-1079, the spotlight is on the Etruscan king Mezentius. Why do his own people despise him? When he is wounded, how does his son Lausus intervene. Nonetheless, how does

Mezentius meet his death, and how does Aeneas behave when he finally takes this fierce warrior down?

Book 11

43. From lines 1-241, describe the funeral procession and rites of Aeneas' fallen comrade Pallas, son of Evander. How does Evander learn that his son is dead, and how does he handle the news and deal with his ally Aeneas? What are Aeneas' thoughts and emotions about the loss of his friend?

44. From lines 242-354, what problems beset Turnus now that he is back in Latinus' territory? What do the common people say about him, and what case does Drances make against Turnus? What unwelcome advice does the Greek settler Diomedes offer Turnus even as he refuses the Rutulian King assistance?

45. From lines 355-534, what misgivings does King Latinus make clear regarding hostilities against Aeneas? How does Turnus respond to the old King's anxieties and to his proposed solution to Latium's troubles?

46. From lines 535-705, the armies ready themselves for battle, and Camilla comes to the aid of Turnus. What is this woman's story — how did she come to be the Italian equivalent of an Amazon warrior? What is her special relationship with the goddess Diana, and how does Diana help her? Finally from lines 706-1068, in which Camilla meets her fate, how does the narrator choose to represent this female warrior's death to us — what makes her last moments so memorable?

Book 12

47. From lines 1-129, what pressure is brought to bear upon Turnus to end his quest for marriage with Lavinia? What effect does all the pleading have on Turnus, and why does he find it impossible to give up that quest?

48. From lines 130-372, with King Latinus still experiencing misgivings and anxious to come to terms with the Trojans, what promises are exchanged by each side? What do the ordinary people of Latium think of the proposed duel and projected deal? How does Juturna (Turnus' water-nymph sister) insert herself into the unfolding events?

49. From lines 373-518, Aeneas is wounded and Turnus turns his rage on the Trojan forces. How does Venus intervene to help Aeneas through this perilous moment in the battle? What remedy does she provide to heal the wounded warrior?

50. From lines 519-752, describe the domestic scene as Latium appears to be on the brink of destruction: what leads Queen Amata to take her own life. What are Turnus' thoughts as a consequence of the fighting going on around him and his own situation at this point in the story?

51. From lines 753-915, Aeneas and Turnus square off at last. What has spurred Turnus to go forwards and meet Aeneas? How does the encounter play out, and what role do the gods take on as it unfolds?

52. From lines 916-1029, Jove and Juno argue about the human events unfolding below. How does Juno defend her actions in favor of Turnus and against the Trojans? What favor does she ask of her husband now that a Trojan victory is inevitable? How does Jove respond to this request — what promises does he make to Juno about Italy's future, and how does his response speak directly to Roman readers in Virgil's own time?

53. From lines 1030-1113, Aeneas and Turnus fight for the last time. How does this climactic match between the two opposing champions unfold? What role does Jupiter play in the events? On the whole, how would you assess the relative value of Turnus as an opponent of Rome's futurity now that the epic has come to an end — how does his defeat, by implication, reflect on Aeneas and his Trojans as well as on Virgil's Rome?

Edition: Virgil. *The Aeneid*. Trans. Robert Fagles. New York: Penguin Classics, 2008. ISBN-13: 978-0143105138.

VIRGIL QUESTIONS, ANOTHER EDITION

Assigned: Publius Vergilius Maro. *The Aeneid*, from Books I-II, IV, VI, VIII, XII (1052-1134).

The Aeneid

Book 1

1. On page 1055, how does Virgil's invocation from lines 1-18 compare to Homer's invocation in *The Iliad* (120) and *The Odyssey* (225)? What is similar about the heroes and narrators? What is different?
2. On pages 1057-58, Aeneas stops to take in Carthage's artistic images of the Trojan war. Why is it appropriate that Virgil include such a "metanarrative" incident—one in which a work of art becomes the subject of a work of art? How does Aeneas' viewing of Dido's Trojan War scenes strengthen him and lend him authority? How does this incident strengthen Virgil's hand as maker of a Roman epic?
3. On pages 1060-63, Aeneas steps out of his protective cloud and meets Dido. What is similar about the two leaders' stories, and what does Dido offer Aeneas and his people? In what condition does Aeneas find her kingdom when he arrives?

Book 2

4. On 1063-70, Aeneas recounts for Dido and her Court the story of Troy's fall--what contrast does Aeneas make between Trojans and Greeks as he retells the tale? In particular, how does he characterize Sinon, whom the Greeks tasked with "selling" the Trojans on the story of Greek flight and the Wooden Horse's religious value?
5. On 1070-75, the departed Hector comes to Aeneas in a dream, telling him to abandon the defense of Troy. Even so, Aeneas and his companions return to the fight. Discuss Aeneas' self-defense on his valor

as a defender of Troy's territory and its ancient ways--what limitations does Virgil impose on him as an individual hero? How has Hector undercut Aeneas in his desire to go down fighting?

6. On 1076-78, Aeneas tells of Priam's being forced to witness the slaughter by Neoptolemus of his son Polytes, and then knifed by the same supposed son of Achilles. How does Aeneas' narration both affirm and undercut Greek heroism? Moreover, how does it drive home the human cost of war (and empire-building like that of the Romans themselves)?

7. On 1079-85, Aeneas sees Helen and burns to kill her, but his mother Venus grants him visions that make him see the futility of clinging to Troy and sends him off to gather his family. A major characteristic of Virgil's Roman tradition is *pietas* (piety towards one's family and ancestors). How does the concluding selection from Book 2 rely upon that characteristic to impel the action forwards? What irony is also at work even as Aeneas acts in all piety to shepherd his family to safety? (In responding, consider Creusa's fate.)

Book 4

8. On 1085-92, Dido falls in love with Aeneas after his heroic recountings, and the pair (with Juno's contrivance and Venus' strategic acquiescence) "marry" during their rain-driven encounter in a secluded cave. What are the nearly immediate consequences of this liaison for Dido? Insofar as she is to blame for her predicament, what error (by Roman standards) has the Queen committed?

9. On 1092-98, Jupiter (warned by Rumor) hears about Aeneas' tardiness, and sends Mercury to remind him of his duties. How does Mercury describe Aeneas' responsibilities? When Aeneas turns his mind to sailing for Italy, what strategy does he choose, and how does he defend himself against the charges leveled at him by Dido?

10. Again with reference to 1092-98, if Aeneas is still "heroic" in leaving Dido, what constitutes his heroism? What is the irony involved in Virgil's making him behave as he does (abandoning the woman he loves in mid-winter, unannounced)--how does Aeneas' action clash with Roman ideals of loyalty and honor?

11. On 1098-1106, the narrator describes at length Dido's "fatal madness" and her suicide. The Queen's majestic passion is clearly the center of Book 4, but in what ways does the narrator try to distance Augustan Roman readers from her? (For example, consider how Dido treats her sister Anna, and what she says about the gods.)

Book 6

12. On 1106-16, describe the physical and moral structure of the Underworld through which Aeneas passes. What similarities do you find between Virgil's account and the one Homer gives in *The Odyssey* 11? What is the biggest difference in Virgil's account? (Consider, for example, how the two authors handle the firmness of the boundaries between the living and the dead.)

13. On 1116-25, Aeneas travels in the Elysian part of the Underworld, and his father Anchises' shade gives him a look at the future of his people--the future Roman Republic and Empire. What explanation does Anchises offer Aeneas concerning the world's creation and the reincarnation of souls?

14. Again with reference to 1116-25, examine the Roman future Anchises lays out for his son with regard to the way the speaker uses causally linked events to reveal the character of Rome rather than just its history--what qualities does Anchises emphasize in the illustrious Romans-to-be he names? What makes his Rome, as a political and military entity, so distinctive?

Book 8

15. On 1125-29, Virgil offers his own variation on Homer's "Shield of Achilles" description in *The Iliad* 18.558ff (page 189ff in Norton World Lit. A). The technical term for such standout descriptions is ekphrasis. What vision of Rome does the shield offer Aeneas and Virgil's readers? What does it add to Anchises' comments from the Elysian Fields concerning the future?

16. If you have read the part of *The Iliad* (18.558ff) to which Virgil's description pays its respects, compare the two--examine the difference between what Homer thought important to describe on the shield Hephaestus (Vulcan) made for Achilles and what Virgil considers worth representing on Aeneas' shield.

Book 12

17. On 1129-34, Aeneas defeats Turnus (the Rutulian prince who leads the Latin opponents of the Trojan settlers). What heroic qualities does Aeneas show in his words and actions when he confronts Turnus? What role does Jupiter play in this episode?

Edition: Lawall, Sarah, ed. *The Norton Anthology of World Literature*. 2nd edition. Volumes 1ABC. New York: Norton, 2002. ISBN A = 0-393-97755-2, B = 0-393-97756-0, C = 0-393-97757-9.

VIRGIL QUESTIONS, MANDELBAUM TRANSLATION

Assigned: *The Aeneid*.

The Aeneid

Book 1

1. How does Virgil's invocation from lines 1-18 compare to Homer's invocation in *The Odyssey*? What is similar? What is different?
2. From lines 24-116, we get our first look at Virgil's gods. What is Juno's (i.e. Hera's) interest in withholding favor from Aeneas? How does she compare with Homer's Hera? What is her relationship with Aeolus?

3. From 131-76 and 221-311, we first see Aeneas. What kind of hero does this first look lead you to expect? What heroic qualities does he show?
4. From 312-417, when Venus (Aphrodite, Aeneas' mother) demands help from Jupiter (Zeus), what promises does he console her with? How might we suppose these promises differentiate Virgil's purpose in the *Aeneid* from that of Homer in *The Odyssey*?
5. From 418-525, what place does Dido have in Jupiter's plans for Aeneas? How does Venus' story about Dido's history complicate your view of those plans?
6. From 526-624, Venus, in disguise, offers her son Aeneas advice. How does this interaction between a goddess and her mortal son compare with Odysseus' conversations with Athena?
7. From 625-687, what is the significance of this passage in which Aeneas beholds images of the Trojan war? Why is it appropriate that Virgil include such an episode at this point?
8. From 698-897, what affinities between Dido's kingdom and Aeneas' Trojan remnant emerge?
9. From 918-1053, why does Venus (Cytherea is another name for Venus or Aphrodite) want to ensnare Dido?

Book 2

10. We spent some time on the purposes served by Odysseus' recounting of his exploits in Books 9-12 of *The Odyssey*. What purposes does Aeneas' retelling of his final days in Troy serve?
11. A major Roman characteristic is *pietas*, or piety towards one's family and ancestors. How does this book rely upon that characteristic?

Book 3

12. From 1-95, Aeneas and his followers build a city in Thrace. But what lesson does Aeneas learn from Polydorus that makes him want to leave the new city Aeneadae behind?
13. Next they sail to Delos, and lines 96-253 are taken up with Anchises's interpretation of Apollo's omens, and with the consequences of that interpretation. What mistake does Anchises make, and as a result what do the followers of Aeneas learn?
14. From lines 254-346, the Trojan remnant of Aeneas land on the Strophades, where they encounter the Harpies. What do they learn from the Harpies, and what is to be understood from the manner in which Aeneas and his people have learned something more about their destiny?
15. From 347-606, Aeneas sails around various Greek islands, and, a year having passed, goes to Buthrotum where he encounters Andromache, the fallen Trojan hero Hector's wife. What is her story, and what are the main features of the prophecy given them by her new husband Helenus?

16. From 628-59, what exchange takes place between Aeneas and Andromache? How do the two of them reflect on the history and future of the Trojans?
17. From 660-739, the Trojan remnant fulfill some of Helenus' prophecies, and then at 740-873 they land on the Island of the Cyclops, where they meet Achaemenides and, later, the Cyclops. How does the Trojans' confrontation with the Cyclops differentiate them from Ulysses (Odysseus) and his men?
18. At the end of the third book, Aeneas' father Anchises dies. How do you interpret this event in light of what has happened so far, and what must happen in the near future?

Book 4

19. How does Virgil explore the "heroism" of Aeneas in this book? What limitations are placed upon Aeneas in his love affair with Dido? To what extent, if any, does he seem to resist those limitations?
20. Dido is clearly the center of this book, and her situation contains much pathos. Does Virgil's narrator treat her with entire sympathy, or does he try to distance his audience from her? If so, by what means does he do that?
21. How are the gods involved in the action of the fourth book? Mainly, what goes on between Juno and Venus?

Edition: Virgil. *The Aeneid*. Trans. Allen Mandelbaum. New York: Bantam, 1981. ISBN: 0-553-21041-6.