

## FIRST ANALYTICAL PAPER

**Length:** At least 4-6 full pages of text, double spaced, following MLA format, plus an accurate Works Cited page. A template is available on the class website, <http://success.obenauf.net>. I will not grade any paper that falls short of these basic criteria, nor will you be permitted to resubmit your work. You have the tools to meet these expectations—use them!

**Due:** Monday, October 9, 2023, in hard copy at the start of class.

**Notes:** You may write on any text we are reading before Fall Break (“The Foster Portfolio,” the selected Satires of Horace, the selected Satires of Juvenal, “Dinner with Trimalchio” from The Satyricon, “Lanval,” “Sir Orfeo,” and Mankind). With written permission from your instructor, you may use a reading from later in the semester for the second text for prompts 2 or 3.

You should not consult any outside sources or resources for this assignment. This assignment specifically asks you to develop an argument based solely on evidence you find in our course materials without the aid of summaries, articles, AI tools, etc. The course readings, your MLA Handbook, my MLA template, and my Guide to Writing will be sufficient for successfully writing this essay.

Your first paragraph should provide just enough context for your reader to understand your thesis and the essay that follows without any other familiarity with the texts or topics you discuss in your paper. You should offer a clear, sophisticated thesis at the end of the introduction that sums up the argument developed in the body of your essay. The body of your paper should lay out an original case based on clear analysis of carefully chosen and rigorously cited textual evidence. Your conclusion should go beyond recapping the things you have already said. All of your analysis needs to go beyond summarizing the texts or regurgitating class discussion (although I encourage you to explore ideas you raised in your reading journal, in a short reaction paper, or in class discussion). Your entire essay should be coherent and proofread.

**Instructions:** Write a rigorous, analytical essay on ONE of the following topics.

1. Explain how ONE text defines failure in the society for which it was originally written. Formulate your own argument for the society’s definition(s) of failure—without regard to its view(s) of success. Do not quote a dictionary. Instead, rely on evidence from the text. Then, you may consider whether failure is merely the opposite of success in this society, or is it something different? Are there clear examples of success? How do failure and success compare with each other as your text portrays them? What are the consequences of each? Your ultimate goal is to use the topic of failure to demonstrate how success was measured in the society for which your text was originally written.

2. **Examine ONE value associated with success in TWO texts.** You will be using a theme such as power, status, money, friendship, ambition, love, reputation, education, knowledge, etc. as a proxy for success at distinct places and times in history. You should **analyze each text separately** and in depth before exploring their similarities and differences. Your conclusion should explore what this evidence suggests about success more broadly in the society for which each text was written. As you look for evidence of your concept, you will formulate your own definitions based on the way your concept is portrayed in each of your texts, and not from a dictionary. Do not quote a dictionary.
3. After reviewing the reflection questions that I have announced throughout the semester, or formulating a pair of your own with Dr. Obenauf's prior written approval, **choose ONE pair of "meaningful differences" and examine the way TWO different texts appear to answer it.** Here are some good possibilities:
  - love vs. loyalty
  - honor vs. duty
  - loyalty vs. duty
  - greed vs. ambition
  - human worth vs. possessions
  - obedience vs. disobedience
  - life vs. death
  - word vs. action

For instance, you could consider the meaningful difference between love and loyalty in "Dinner with Trimalchio" and "Lanval." Or you could write on the difference between loyalty and duty as these concepts are portrayed in "Lanval" and "Sir Orfeo." The combinations are endless.

You will need to demonstrate each permutation fully before comparing and contrasting them. For example, if you are analyzing the way Horace and Juvenal understand the philosophical difference between greed and ambition in ancient Rome, you would show (in separate paragraphs) how Horace understands ambition, then greed, and then the difference between them (citing plenty of textual evidence); then you would show (in separate paragraphs) how Juvenal understands each and the difference between them (again with ample illustrations from the text), and finally you would compare the two texts before offering your conclusion in which you describe a shift in society from one text to the other. Your conclusion should explain how your pair of differences points to different (or similar?) understandings of success in the societies for which each was originally written.

A dictionary will not help you here, since definitions have changed since even our most recent text, so please do not quote a dictionary in your paper. Also, while many of the questions won't work for this topic, you may use questions I asked in connection with texts you are not analyzing; with my approval, you could even propose a pair of differences of your own. The goal is to analyze the way two different literary works from distinct times and places answer the question I initially posed for your own reflection in order to see how aspects of success have evolved over time.