

Roman Film Research Project

Pick a film on a Roman historical theme (not mythological), and discuss its background, themes and techniques, comparing it to at least one ancient source on the same or similar subject. The essay should have four parts:

- I. **Plot outline:** give a synopsis of the film in your own words, giving the main characters' screen names with actors' names in parentheses the first time they appear. This summary should be fairly detailed, several paragraphs, enough to help substantiate and make clear the analysis you give later, but not excessively detailed. Include brief quotations of key dialogue if necessary.
- II. **Ancient Background:** describe and discuss an ancient Roman source that deals with the same or closely similar subject matter. (I can help you find that in the library.) How does it tell the story, and what perspective does it take on the events? What is the moral (expressed or implied), or the reason behind telling the story? Include accurate paraphrases and/or brief quotations to back up your points. How does the film compare to the historical source you examined? Where there are historical inaccuracies, attempt to explain them.
- III. **Techniques, Production, and Reception:** read reviews and research the making of the movie. Give any significant details you can discover about its production, and your own observations of its techniques. Consider such questions as: Who was the main creative force behind it? Was it based on a novel or other source material? How was it financed? What kind of locations, sets, music, special effects, etc., were used, and why? What sorts of actors were cast, and what were their performances like? Any other relevant context? Details should be included to the extent they are revealing, interesting, or significant for your interpretation of the film.
- IV. **Themes and Interpretations:** What are the main themes in the film, and its artistic intent, in your view? Make sure to consider how the film fits into the genre(s) of which it is part, and satisfies those expectations or innovates in regard to them. To the extent that that helps make your points, compare with other films we have watched in class, or which you have seen elsewhere. Make sure to give your evaluation of the film. What aspects of it are effective or less than effective in your view, and why? What are its strengths and weaknesses?

1-page plan is due April 13, 2018. This should specify which ancient sources you intend to read, how you will access the film, citations for at least three reviews, and for at least two articles from *Variety* or other trade publications about the production of the film, scholarly articles, or book chapters.

I expect that the final product will be somewhere around 4,000 words, but that will depend a lot on the subject matter and how much information is available. The exact length is less important than the specificity, substance, and insight of your discussion. Please feel free to include screen shots.

Final product is due on or before Friday, May 11, 2018, 9:00 a.m. The 5 best will be published on the classics department blog, and the authors will earn 5 extra points on the final grade.

Roman Film Research Paper Rubric

Background

Best ancient source(s) are identified and properly cited (not by page number)

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Ancient source(s) are well-understood and interpreted

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Significant differences between film and source(s) are identified

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Techniques, Production, Reception

Elements of film-making (sets, locations, script, acting, etc.) are analyzed and discussed

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Production history is well-researched and discussed

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Reviews and reception are well-researched and discussed

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Themes

Synopsis is clear, concise, and supports later analysis

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Historical inaccuracies and inventions are plausibly explained

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Themes are well-articulated and supported with details

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Mechanics and Style

Citations include all the relevant information, and use Chicago style consistently

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Errors in the sentence structure, word usage, punctuation, and spelling are few

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Sentences are varied and the language is clear, specific, and uninflated

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Comments:

Ancient Worlds on Film (CLST 140) Prof. Francese

Warrior Queen (2003) DVD7581

Centurion (2010) DVD7579

Cleopatra (1934) DVD7601

Cleopatra (1963) [DVD 3817] –

Cleopatra (1999) – DVD7584

Demetrius and the Gladiators (1954) – DVD7585

Druids (2001) – DVD7580

Hannibal (1959) DVD7577

Julius Caesar (2004) DVD7586

Jupiter's Darling (1955) DVD7583

Pompeii (2014) DVD7578

The Fall of the Roman Empire (1964) [DVD 5277]