

### In-Class Writing #1: Figurative Language

Understanding figurative language (i.e., language that is not literal) and how it works is an important factor in understanding what any people of a particular time and place thought about their worlds. One type of rhetorical figure—the epic simile—was used and emulated by poets for thousands of years. For this assignment, assess how Homer (the nominal poet of *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*) uses epic similes to convey classical Greek attitudes, ideas, values, and allegiances. Then write an essay in which you advance and defend some specific thesis about how epic similes function in Greek literature as an expression of their culture. Your essay must make several assertions in support of your thesis; make specific, accurate references to the action of the narratives; quote and analyze specific passages as evidence; and, through close reading and analysis, explain how the passages cited support the point you are making.

You may bring to class one page (one side only) containing notes and epic similes you plan to cite.

I will grade the essays according to the following standard grading rubric:

#### Essay Scoring Guide

**An "A" essay does the following:** The essay is well organized; presents a clear point or assertion in answer to a significant question at issue; uses relevant, authoritative evidence to support/illustrate the assertion being made; and clearly demonstrates the relationship between the two. The essay shows genuinely critical reflection by going beyond the obvious and class discussion. The paper avoids mere summary. The content, tone, and style of the paper demonstrate the writer's awareness of audience, as well as questions the audience may raise. The paper is free of serious problems with grammar, punctuation, spelling, and mechanics. The essay demonstrates the author's ability to use source materials appropriately.

**A "B" essay does the following:** The essay demonstrates essentially the same qualities as the "A" essay, but with less awareness of audience and with a less well-defined point or assertion. The connection between the point and evidence is usually less clear than in the "A" paper. The level of critical reflection is not as high as in the "A" paper, and the writer may resort to some unnecessary summary. The paper's evidence and exploration of the texts may not go far beyond class discussion. The paper is free of serious problems with grammar, punctuation, spelling and mechanics. The essay demonstrates the author's ability to use sources appropriately.

**A "C" essay does the following:** The essay is adequate for college level, but contains some organizational weaknesses and/or lacks a clearly defined thesis. The question at issue in the essay may also lack significance. The essay does contain a central argument, but makes insufficient use of evidence to support or illustrate its argument. The essay shows that the author has some awareness of audience. The essay may also contain some problems with grammar, punctuation, and/or mechanics which could have been easily corrected with casual editing. The essay demonstrates the author's ability to use sources appropriately, although this ability may be less developed than in the "A" or "B" essay.

**A "D" essay does the following:** The essay is poorly organized, contains an inadequate thesis, demonstrates minimal awareness of audience, and/or provides little evidence to back up its argument. The essay may also have serious problems with grammar, punctuation, and/or mechanics.