

Main Lesson Block Final Report

Block: Ancient Civilizations, 10th Grade

Date: September 22-October 10, 2007

Teacher: Jacob Hundt

Student: **John Doe**

Grade: **Pass**

Final Project: *Epic of Gilgamesh* film

Total Score: 91/100

This class was focused the ancient roots of our own civilization, beginning with the invention of agriculture in the Middle East around 10,000 years ago. From these earliest settled farmers, we proceeded to examine the great civilizations of Egypt, Mesopotamia, Persia, Greece, and Rome. The focus of our discussions was on the large-scale political, economic, and cultural structures that arose among these peoples. We also examined the ways in which geography, climate, resources, technology, and systems of belief shaped the organization and development to each ancient civilization. Through our explorations of these themes, we attempted both to gain an understanding of these civilizations as coherent systems and to imagine what it was like to actually live in the ancient world. This class emphasized etymologies of English words as an important way of learning and thinking about the past. In addition, the class introduced the study of art history with a brief survey of the development of art from prehistoric cave painting until classical Greek sculpture.

Requirements and Expectations

Students were expected to complete each of the following requirements. A score of at least 60 out of 100 possible points was required in order to receive a “Pass” for the block.

1. Class Participation—8 out of 10 points

2. Daily readings, quizzes, and short writing assignments— 28 out of 30 points

Readings from a variety of ancient original texts, including the works of Homer, Hesiod, Herodotus, Thucydides, and Plato, were assigned throughout the block. Students read the *Epic of Gilgamesh* and Plato’s *Euthyphro* and *Apology* in their entirety, as well as excerpts from the book of *Genesis*. Excerpts from modern writers such as James Burke, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Joseph Campbell were also assigned. Students were assigned to complete a series of short creative and analytical writing assignments based on these readings, mostly in class.

3. Map of Mediterranean Sea and Surrounding Countries—10 out of 10 points

4. Block Test—25 out of 25 points

Students were required to complete a take-home essay test, including three essays of approximately one-page each dealing analytically with topics covered throughout the class. Tests were evaluated on the basis of accuracy, clarity of exposition and argument, and grammar/spelling.

5. Final Project—20 out of 25 points

Students were required to complete a final project selected from the list of several options presented below. All projects were expected to combine accurate, detailed historical information with artful, polished design and presentation. Students had one week of no school after the end of the block during which to complete their final project.

John did excellent work throughout this main lesson block. He displayed a strong interest in the subject and seemed to take all of the assignments very seriously. Like many of the students in the class, he seemed strongly drawn to the heroic figures of ancient history, so it was not surprising that he chose to focus on the *Epic of Gilgamesh* for his final project. Along with a group of other students, John wrote, directed, and acted in a 15 minutes film depicting events in the epic. The film was very well done and conveyed a strong understanding of the story, although there were a few rough edges in the production. John also did excellent work on the final exam. His writing was clear and polished and he demonstrated a strong, thoughtful engagement with the topics discussed in the class. The main area of improvement that John could work on would be to come to class alert and focused. He sometimes seemed exhausted in the mornings, which detracted from his otherwise solid participation.