

Mr. Francis
E3-EL

Homer's Wily and Wonderful Women

Invoking the Muse, Homer first calls Odysseus πολύτροπον (“much-turned”¹), which Robert Fitzgerald translates as “skilled in all ways of contending” (1.2). Yet Odysseus spends much of the epic beholden to or at the mercy of women. Perhaps the limits of his ἀρετή² (“excellence”) and μῆτις³ (“wisdom”) are reached when he faces the feminine virtue of these sometimes plotting or powerful females.

For this assignment, you will develop a thesis (or central argument) and compose two body paragraphs in support of that argument. You should develop your thesis from the following topic:

Discuss the role of women in Homeric Greece by comparing and contrasting two or more characters from Homer's Odyssey (at least one from each list).

List A: Antikleia, Arete, Athena, Eurykleia, Nausikaa, Penelope

List B: Helen, Kalypso, Kirke, Klytaimnestra, Melantho, the Sirenes

The topic is deliberately broad, to allow for a range of responses. Your thesis should be fairly specific and should not attempt to respond to the prompt in its entirety.

In addition to writing mechanics, the assignment will be assessed based on strength of argumentation, appropriate use of textual support, correct use of MLA style, and completeness and convincingness of synthesis between arguments and evidence.

Please use standard MLA format. The assignment must be double-spaced, with one-inch margins all around. Please use a 12-point, Times New Roman font. All assignments must have an appropriate and creative title. Length guideline: 2-3 paragraphs. No coversheets.

You must complete a full-length rough draft to be peer edited in class. Your peer-edited rough draft should be submitted with the final draft. The two drafts should be stapled separately.

¹ polytropon, i.e., “much-traveled” or possibly “wily” (perseus.tufts.edu)

² arete

³ metis