

Connell-Greeks at War
Third Writing Assignment
Recommended Length 2-3 pages

Library Project: Locate, summarize and evaluate one scholarly article on either the Iliad or Thucydides (preferably on the theme you plan to pursue in your final research paper). Among the common goals of Concordia's Inquiry Seminars is information literacy. Information literacy involves 1) locating appropriate research materials, 2) evaluating information and its sources critically, and 3) using information and sources ethically. (I got this language out of one of the original documents laying out guidelines for Inquiry Seminars from Spring, 2006. I need to determine the name and location of this document.) In completing this assignment, you will take first steps toward all three of these goals.

1. Locating appropriate research materials:

There are enormous volumes of web and print materials on Homer's Iliad, but this assignment asks you specifically to locate a scholarly article. In academic writing, scholarly (=peer-reviewed) sources are typically the appropriate research material. Our library liaison, Virginia Connell, will discuss with you ways to distinguish scholarly from popular sources. She will also point you toward several key bibliographic resources and show you how to use them to identify appropriate and relevant articles. Having identified such an article, you will need to obtain it either by printing it (if it is available in electronic form), copying it (if we have a hard copy of the journal in the library), or by requesting it from Interlibrary Loan.

2. Evaluating information and its sources critically:

In identifying an appropriate article, you will already have engaged in evaluation, but this assignment asks for evaluation beyond selection.

a) Evaluate the source. What is the author's claim to expertise? What is the character and status of the publication in which the essay appears? How timely is the article and is the topic of the article one that is highly time-sensitive or not? (Some instructors require that articles used in a research paper appear after a certain date. It is easy to see why that is more of a concern in some areas of research than others.)

b) Summarize and evaluate the content. No matter how distinguished the author or the publication, you should only accept the thesis asserted in the essay if it is well-supported by evidence and argument. In order to evaluate the author's case for her or his claim, you first need to present that case in summary form. Identify both the author's main claim and main arguments. Then, critically evaluate the claim(s) and arguments. Tell your reader why he or she should or should not be persuaded by the essay. You can either challenge or endorse the author's evidence or reasoning from the evidence. Additionally, if you have already identified your prospective theme for your research essay, you could evaluate the article in terms of its relevance to that project. (You will need to evaluate the relevance as well as cogency of each entry in your annotated bibliography due later in the semester.)

3. Using information and sources ethically: You will need to provide complete and exact MLA citation for the article in question. Further, you should be careful to indicate when you quote from the article, giving an appropriate citation of the location of the quotation. Avoid paraphrase. Either quote or rephrase in your own words.