

Course texts

Murphy, C. 2007. *Are we Rome?* New York: Houghton Mifflin. (paperback edition: Mariner Books, 2008)

Shakespeare, W., with A. R. Branmuller (ed.). 1999. *Antony and Cleopatra*. New York: Pelican Shakespeare.

Shaw, G. B. and S. Weintraub (introduction). 2006. *Caesar and Cleopatra*. New York: Penguin Classics.

Welcome to English 101, a requirement for virtually all college students. This course develops students' proficiency in college level reading and writing through practice of critical thinking and well-developed expository writing. Find below details on the assignments, readings, and other course information. Dates and schedule subject to slight revision due to class needs or unforeseen events. Essay assignments below show basic requirements. Much more detail and practice will be provided in class. All essays should be typed, double-spaced, in 12-point Verdana font, 1" margins, with in-text citations and references arranged in APA-style format. For essay length requirements, one page ≥ 250 words.

Attendance is required, and as per college policy, students may be dropped after missing a week of class time, or about 3 hours of a 3-unit course. Arriving late and leaving early adds up to unexcused absence as well as does skipping class completely. An attendance record will be posted each day, and students should sign in upon entering class. Online courses are available for students looking for a more independent schedule.

Warning: late essays are not accepted for credit. Late essays will not be scored but will be marked zero. Don't be late: a zero on any of the essays would severely decrease course grades. Students are encouraged to submit drafts early, both for revision tips and to avoid being late due to emergencies.

Essay #1: Analysis and refutation (6 pages total, due in three 2-page parts—part 1.1 due 7/23, part 1.2 due 7/24, and part 1.3 due 7/28, with an optional bonus 1.b due 7/29)

Write three 2-page analyses of assigned text arguments contrasted with newspaper editorials, opinion columns, or persuasive essays. The three separate parts of essay #1 are due on different days but averaged into one score. For each part, students should choose one of two approaches: either refute ideas from *Are we Rome?* using the assigned essays and other supporting points, or use ideas from *Are we Rome?* and other ideas to argue against the contrasting essays, columns, or arguments. Use the chart below to help organize your work.

Due date	Op/ed column, persuasive essay, or thesis/argument (find links online at http://www.snorko.org/lacc)	Contrast to hypotheses, arguments, or claims of <i>Are we Rome?</i>
e1.1 7/23	...common Rome/America comparisons, from Oswald Spengler's to Pat Buchanan's, are rarely meant to be laudatory. Instead, they are admonitory in nature, warning that the "bread and circuses" of the United States, too, will—and should—soon end. Key is the superficiality that both Romans and Americans were somehow malevolent, forgetting that in comparison with the alternatives of the times, most of the "Other" voted with their feet to get within the imperial borders by any means at their disposal. ...Cullen Murphy ...does not draw extensively from the evidence of the ancient world, other than selected quotes in translation from the usual grim Roman moralists. That paucity of ancient evidence is buttressed on the modern side by a plethora of references to contemporary culture...used to hammer home the preordained point that our selfish right-wing elites have become like Suetonius's vulgar Julio-Claudians in devouring public resources, eroding our freedoms, and ruining our name and influence abroad. But even the non-classicist will finally bristle at such simplicity, replete as it is with references to the movies <i>Spartacus</i> and <i>Gladiator</i> and the video game <i>Rome: Total War</i>The predetermined conclusions govern the presentation of evidence. ...Murphy selects several areas for	<i>Are we Rome?</i> That question leads to others: Does the fate of Rome tell us anything useful about America's present or America's future? Must decline and fall lurk somewhere ahead? Can we learn from Rome's mistakes? Take heart from Rome's achievements? ...If you're looking for reasons to brush comparisons aside, it's easy enough to find them. The two entities, Rome and America, are dissimilar in countless ways. ...some comparisons do hold up, though maybe not the ones that have been most in the public eye. Think less about decadence, less about military might, and more about how our two societies view the outside world, more about the slow decay of homegrown institutions. Think less about threats

e1.1 cont't	<p>comparison—the capitals, the legions, the fixers, the outsiders, and the borders—mines his ancient and modern popular cultural referents, and then offers the cookie-cutter results. That Murphy is witty, writes well, is well versed in irony, and understands the excesses of American popular culture still does not mean that his conclusions are not mostly as superficial as they are predictable from Hanson, V. 2007, May 28. Pop romanizing. <i>National Review</i>.</p>	<p>from unwelcome barbarians, and more about the healthy functioning of a multi-ethnic society. Think less about the ability of a superpower to influence everything on earth, and more about how everything on earth affects a superpower. (11—12)</p>
e1.2 7/24	<p>Mr. Murphy contends that if Americans recommit ourselves to good government, if we focus more intensely on assimilating new immigrants, if we quit asking our armed forces to do more than is reasonable and we start paying more attention to other cultures – well, we just might succeed where Rome failed. This is right, but not entirely so. Mr. Murphy does not pay enough attention to the health of our culture. Classical historian Jerome Carcopino, for example, pointed to the loss of social cohesion and purpose that resulted from the traditional family's decline as a reason for Rome's collapse. The habits of civic virtue that Mr. Murphy identifies as critical come first from an ordered home and a commonly shared commitment to remissive moral norms, which contemporary American individualism undermines. Under late Rome's decadent "bread and circuses" regime, the common man satisfied himself with material pleasures, ignoring the betterment of himself and society. Mr. Murphy sees this in contemporary America, but it's hard to discern why, absent a robust belief in God or some other authoritative ideal, people can be convinced to sacrifice the pursuit of luxury for a higher good – even their civilization's survival.</p> <p>from Dreher, R. 2007, Jul. 30. Are we Rome? How the U.S. can avoid its own version of the fall of the Roman empire. <i>Dallas Morning News</i>.</p>	<p>What is Rome saying to us today? In the pages ahead I'll focus on a half dozen issues for which the example of Rome provides parallels of direct relevance for America. ...Some of the parallels have to do with how Rome and America function on the inside; others have to do with outside pressures and constraints. The parallels aren't fixed in place, and they don't point to an inescapable future. Taken as they are, though, they trace a path that leads to foreseeable consequences—a path, after all, that Rome has already been down. ...The example of Rome instills one more thing—not so much a lesson as a state of mind. It encourages an appreciation for the workings of time itself: patient, implacable, and very, very long. This state of mind can induce a form of resignation. ...Or it can put you on high alert. Time achieves revolutions by invisible increments. Changes that seem inconsequential over a single lifetime can upend the social order over three or four. We don't naturally think in these terms; we're all hemmed in by our one-lifetime horizon. But Rome has a way of raising the vantage point, altering your perspective. (17—21)</p>
e1.3 7/28	<p>Is America the new Roman Empire? Yes, obviously it is. America dominates the planet militarily, economically, culturally, as much or more than Rome ever did. Americans know their position and their superiority as surely as the Romans did. ...[in] Murphy's nightmare...He sees three bleak possible futures for Pax Americana. In one, the borders are locked off and the security state peeks into every bedroom. In another, America's megalopolises break off into city-states: Cosimo di Medici, meet Michael Bloomberg. In his grimmest scenario the breakdown of controlling authority and the sense of "in-this-togetherness" that government provides leads to "the rise of corporate feudalism on a global scale." ...Sounds bleak, but is that a scenario where the American empire falls and snooty Chinese tourists snap photos standing aside the rubble of old Washington? No; it's a scenario where America has basically won. Commerce has won out. Culture has won out. If you believe that spreading American cultural norms around the world is more important than planting the flag or christening some new military camp, what's there to fear from a future where government controls less and less and business governs the affairs of man more than nationalism?</p> <p>from Weigel, D. 2007, Jul. 9. Quo Vadimus? Looking at Washington, dreaming of Rome. <i>Reason Magazine</i>.</p>	<p>Certain futures are all too plausible; we've made a start on each one of them. For instance, there's the Fortress America scenario. ...Or there's the City-State scenario, already emerging in many parts of the world. ...And then there's what might be called the Boardroom scenario—the extension of corporate ownership to ever larger areas of ordinary life, not just in America but world wide. ...So here's the Titus Livius Hundred-Year Workout Plan: First, instill an appreciation of the wider world. ...Second, stop treating government as a necessary evil, and instead rely on it proudly for the big things it can do well. ...Third, fortify the institutions that promote assimilation. ...Fourth, take some weight off the military. ...Are we Rome? ...In important ways we're clearly making some of the same mistakes. But the antidote is everywhere. The antidote is being American. (198—206)</p>

For each of the three parts of essay #1, study both the week's reading from *Are we Rome?* and the contrasting readings. Determine what each author believes (topic + opinion = thesis) and why (reasons, examples, and evidence = argument). Organize your 2-page analyses into three long paragraphs in the following fashion:

The first sentences of the first paragraph should list the author, title, date and thesis of the work and identify that it is to be refuted. Here are a couple models: **On page 17 of his 2007 book *Are we Rome?*, Cullen Murphy mistakenly claims Rome is so important historically and culturally that all educated people should consider the lessons Rome offers us today—or—In his July 9, 2007 column *Quo Vadimus? Looking at Washington, dreaming of Rome*, David Weigel wrongly suggests that governments should yield power to corporations.** Next, briefly list the reasons given in the original as support. The last sentences of the first paragraph should state a contrasting opinion on the topic to be argued as the alternate thesis.

The second paragraph should explain and refute the original argument in detail, point by point, reason by reason. Explain why the original has misunderstood the situation, gone too far in its approach, forgotten important information, presented an impractically idealistic goal, or otherwise created a flawed analysis.

Try to use ethical, associative, and predictive reasoning to critique the argument refuted:

Ethical reasoning: judge right and wrong standards of morality as applied to topic

Associative reasoning: compare to other situations or events as they inform topic

Predictive reasoning: predict hypothetical future results as models for action

The third paragraph should explain reasons, examples, or other evidence to support the alternate thesis. Do not simply repeat the refutation of the second paragraph, but argue a case in support of the alternate thesis. Try to use ethical, associative, and predictive reasoning to support your alternative thesis. Use as an example at least one source of information on the topic not presented in class but personally found through research and give an author, title, date reference (also document these researched sources in the annotated bibliography for the journal assignment below).

Grading rubric for each part to essay #1; four categories, up to one point each = top score 4

_____ The original source info, thesis, and argument of an assigned work are identified in the first paragraph and designated unsatisfactory;

_____ An alternate thesis on the topic is presented at the end of the first paragraph;

_____ The argument supporting the original is refuted point by point in the second paragraph;

_____ An argument supporting the alternate thesis is developed and sufficiently explained in the third paragraph, perhaps using ethical, associative, and predictive reasoning; one referenced outside source explained as support.

Essay #2: Political analysis, contrasting colloquial fiction and academic non-fiction styles (3-page academic analysis + 3-page short story = 6 pages total, with half-done draft due 7/31; complete final draft due 8/7)

Research a current foreign policy situation or event to evaluate Murphy's argument on either the US' self-image, military, or corruption. Research a wide variety of editorials and news stories, and include analysis of at least 4 newspaper articles, editorials, or opinion columns published in the last six months (these may include two previously used for essay #1, if desired). Outline, draft, and revise a 3-page formal academic persuasive analysis of the situation with clear introduction (including thesis and outline of argument), fully explained body of argumentation (perhaps structured around ethical, associative, and predictive reasoning), and conclusion (restating thesis and summarizing argument). Prepare in-text references and reference page in APA style. Consider Shaw's play *Caesar and Cleopatra* and the way the play comments on the topic of self-image, military, and corruption. Create an original, fictional character who similarly presents and evaluates important aspects of the situation or event in a 3-page short story. Fictionalize researched details into a plot. Use rubric presented in class to help organize and revise both halves of essay project. More details and practice provided in class.

Essay #3: Metaphorical lessons from literature on today's world (6 pages total, half-done draft due on 8/14; complete final draft due 8/20)

Create and argue a thesis comparing the metaphoric lessons two different characters from Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* offer toward understanding the situation of the US' view of the rest of the world, borders or bureaucratic complexity. (Please, not similar or mirror-image to e2, so if self-image for e2, not view of world for e3; if corruption for e2, not complexity for e3). Develop a metaphor on your thesis in which the two Shakespearean characters are interpreted to represent better and worse arguments for action on the issue or event. Research a wide variety of editorials and news stories, and include analysis of at least 4 newspaper articles, editorials, or opinion columns published in the last six months and not previously used for essay #1 or #2. Prepare in-text references and reference page in APA style. Use rubric presented in class to help organize and revise essay. More details and practice provided in class.

Journal: scored weekly and averaged Class notes, students' ideas on discussion, responses to other students' ideas, and drafts of essays should be collected on an ongoing basis and presented as the journal for scoring in class on Thursdays. To help students organize their research and drafts of essays, the journal should also include three annotated bibliographic references for each week of class, presented in APA format (see examples at <http://www.library.cornell.edu/olinuris/ref/research/skill28.htm>). Students' journals should comprise at least one page combined of class notes, rough drafts, and annotated bibliography for each day of class.

Final exam: 8/21

Final exam will be a presentation of essay #3 to the class. More details and practice will be provided in class.

Grade weights and scales (all assignments' 4-point rubric scores are weighted to percentage of 100 possible)

Essay #1: 25% of course grade (4-point rubric score x 6.25 = students' weighted score of 25 possible)

Essay #2: 30% (4-point rubric score x 7.5 = students' weighted score of 30 possible)

Essay #3: 30% (4-point rubric score x 7.5 = students' weighted score of 30 possible)

Journal: 10% (4-point rubric score x 2.5 = students' weighted score of 10 possible)

Final exam: 5% (4-point rubric score x 1.25 = students' weighted score of 5 possible)

Total: 100% (100 weighted score points possible)

A = 90—100% (4-point scale scores 3.6—4.0)

B = 80—89% (4-point scale scores 3.2—3.59)

C = 70—79% (4-point scale scores 2.8—3.19)

D = 60—69% (4-point scale scores 2.4—2.79)

Calendar of readings and assignment due dates

Rome? 1, 2, 3, etc. refer to the chapters of Cullen Murphy's *Are we Rome?* LAPL has many copies. *Caesar* I, II, III, etc. refer to the acts of Shaw's play *Caesar and Cleopatra*. LAPL has a few copies of the book, but it's also available online (<http://www.gutenberg.org/dirs/etext02/candc10.txt>). *Antony* I, II, III, etc. refer to the acts of the play *Antony and Cleopatra*, by William Shakespeare. The Pelican paperback in the bookstore is good, but most libraries will have annotated Shakespeare texts that will serve as well, perhaps included in a volume of the collected works. Free online non-annotated versions in the public domain (for example at MIT's <http://shakespeare.mit.edu>) are also useful for searching with an edit->find computer function. Other reading assignments will be freely available online, particularly in newspaper editorials and opinion columns. Essays and due dates are indicated e1, e2, etc.

Week 1, 7/21—24

e1.1 due Wed 7/23; e1.2 due Thu 7/24

Rome? Prologue & 1; *Caesar* I

Week 2, 7/28—31

e1.3 due Mon 7/28; optional e1.b due Tue 7/29;

e2 half-done draft due Thu 7/31

Rome? 2 & 3; *Caesar* II & III

Week 3, 8/4—7

e2 final draft due Thur 8/7

Rome? 4 & 5; *Caesar* IV & V; *Antony* I

Week 4, 8/11—14

e3 half-done draft due Thur 8/14

Rome? 6; *Antony* II & III

Week 5, 8/18—21

e3 final draft due Wed 8/20

Antony IV & V