Response Paper Assignments
ENGL 3305, Ancient and Medieval World Literature
Dr. Brian McFadden
Fall 2023

Due dates: 10:00 PM on September 29, November 3, December 4, emailed to me at brian.mcfadden@ttu.edu

The response papers should be short 1.5-2 page (450-600 word) expository essays on some aspect of any work that we have read in class. You should not merely express your emotional reaction to the piece ("I liked/hated/was shaken by X") but should argue why you found something significant in terms of what we are looking at in the class (e.g. "I was struck by the way Boethius treated the Muses as pariahs because…..") If you have an emotional reaction based on an intellectual or literary component of the text, that's fine, but be sure to frame your emotional response as a critical argument. The due dates are in place to ensure that you spread out the papers over the semester, but you may turn a paper in at any time before the due dates. You are also free to look at any other medieval English texts (either Old English or Anglo-Latin) or classical philosophy/history texts not covered in class if you can link them to a work or theme covered in class; see me for suggestions.

Requirements:
- 1.5 to 2 pages, double-spaced, twelve-point type, one-inch margins, quoted properly, with textual evidence (and in a paper this short, use concise quotations so that you have room to argue your point)
- a well-defined thesis and concise support for it
- serious reflection on the text
- grammatically and mechanically correct prose
- academic honesty

Remember that you are trying to argue a point here; impressionistic, vague aesthetic judgments are not what we are after, but an explanation of what you found striking about how the author (whether known or anonymous) is trying to make his or her point (i.e. not how good the work is, but how good it is at saying what you think the author is trying to say with it). In a paper of this length, the tighter the focus the better – you really will have to read for detail in these assignments! Go for depth rather than breadth.

I will post an example on the course website.