Textual Analysis Exercise

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History 1031: Western Civilizations from its Origins to ca. 1500

Second Textual Analysis Exercise

Choose one of the quotations provided by your teaching assistant and write a coherent essay of 2-3 pages, double-spaced, typed or word-processed. Please pay attention to spelling and usage. The paper should answer all four of the questions below, but not necessarily in the order given; these answers should be incorporated into a logically constructed argument. It should have an introduction which states your main point (thesis), a conclusion, and transitions from one point to another. This exercise is due in lecture on Thursday October 3.

In addition to analyzing carefully the passage you have chosen, you may also make use of information found in the textbooks, lectures, and discussion sections (without quoting extensively from them) to help answer these questions. For more detailed guidance consult the "Analyzing Primary Sources in a History Class" handout.

1. Identify the work from which this quotation has been taken: indicate the work's title, author, time and place of composition, broader historical period, and genre.
2. Summarize in your own words the main point(s) of the passage and describe how it fits into the larger text from which it has been excerpted.
3. Analyze the passage closely. Explain as carefully as you can the meaning of all significant words and how they work together to convey the ideas the author wishes to express. Consider the author's aims, methods, and intended audiences. You may have to refer to other parts of the text in order to explain something in the passage.
4. Relate this passage to its historical period. What in particular does it tell you about the time and place in which it was written? What is the historical significance of this passage? Be specific and base your contentions upon evidence drawn from the text.

Your grade will be based on the following criteria:

- Does it demonstrate a solid understanding of the text and its context?
- Is it organized to make a main point, supported by arguments and evidence?
- Does it answer all the questions?
- Does it flow logically from one point to another?
- Is it free from errors of grammar, usage, and spelling?

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