

Literature 203
Professor Lewis

Response Paper 17

Choose *one* of the following areas as the focus of your response paper:

1. Compare and contrast **Aeneas' descent into the underworld** in Book VI with Odysseus' experience in Book XI of the *Odyssey*. What does Odysseus learn from the dead? What does he talk about with the dead? What does Aeneas learn from the dead? What does he talk about with the dead? What do we learn about Virgil's values based on the similarities and differences between his poem and the *Odyssey*? (And keep all of this in mind for when we get to Dante later in the course, who also takes a trip through the underworld and learns from the dead.)
2. In Book VIII, the focus seems to be **the city of Rome**. Evander is, as Virgil says, "founder unaware / Of Rome's great citadel" (Book VIII, lines 413-414). So, what is the image of the city of Rome that we get from Book VIII? We see both the countryside that will one day be crowded with Rome's buildings, and we see Rome's future history depicted on the shield that Vulcan makes for Aeneas. What do we learn about Virgil's attitude toward his city in Book VIII? What buildings of the city and what events of Rome's history does Virgil emphasize? Why? What do those buildings and events seem to mean to Virgil and his Roman readers?