Analytical Assignment #1: Website Review

Instructions
This assignment has three parts, in which you will:
   a) Post to Bb a response to the prompt – due by midnight on Thursday, 9/1 (10 pts)
   b) Participate in a conversation in class on Friday, 9/2 (4 pts)
   c) Complete and return the attached worksheet via SafeAssign by Wednesday, 9/7 (36 pts)

The focus of this assignment is reading and evaluating two websites that pertain to Greek and Roman mythology. By assessing online resources about myth, you will evaluate what sorts of information web authors choose to include on their websites, and the way they compose and arrange that information to promote a certain understanding (their understanding) of mythology. This exploration of modern uses and presentations of myth reinforces a central course lesson: that myths are not universal or absolute but are told, constructed, mobilized, and meaningful in specific cultural and personal contexts.

For each website, don’t restrict yourself to the given page only. If links on that page send you to related pages, please explore them as well so that you get a sense of the site. Thank you.

Goals
This worksheet addresses four of the intellectual goals listed on the syllabus:

   1) discern among and evaluate competing claims or approaches to myths or to the problems they explore
   2) read critical scholarly literature, identifying and assessing the shape and agenda of a scholarly argument and interrelating it to other texts/readings
   3) understand myth’s context in and dependence on the cultural and individual who tell it
   4) recognize myths at work and play in your own culture and life

Strategies
Please read through the questions before you complete the worksheet, even before you visit the websites. Then spend some time browsing the websites before you begin to fill out the worksheet. Browse thoroughly – go beyond the landing point, please. Please check the hyperlinks at the start, so that, if one of the links does not work (which occasionally happens, though we checked them recently), you can contact us for alternatives.

Website pair
a) http://www.theoi.com/
b) http://onespiritx.tripod.com/gods10.htm

Part 1: Online post
By midnight on Thursday, Sept 1, please post a response to the following prompt on Bb in your discussion group.
Visit http://onespiritx.tripod.com/gods00.htm and click down until you find Demeter. The first two lines of her entry offer epithets (nicknames) for her. Choose one epithet that fits the goddess we meet in the Homeric Hymn to Demeter; and describe how it fits. Then choose one that does not seem particularly relevant to the Demeter in the Homeric Hymn, and say why not. This part of your response should be 3-5 sentences.

Now go to http://www.theoi.com/ and click down to Demeter (via “Olympian gods”). Scan her landing page, then scroll down to the hyperlink on the left of the page to “Part 9: Titles and Epithets.” Compare the list of epithets here to the one on onespirit; how do the websites differ in their presentation of the epithets? Which seems more credible? This part of your response should be 3-4 sentences.

Part 2: In-class
In your small group on Friday, Sept 2, discuss your answers to the online post and your impressions of the website. Explore also how the websites’ domain names (“onespirit” and “theoi”; the latter means “gods” in ancient Greek) reveal the creators’ motives in writing about Demeter. Time permitting, begin discussing the organization of the webpages and how this relates/furthers/supports the motives.

Part 3: Turn in
Sometime on Wednesday, Sept 7, turn in (via SafeAssign) the worksheet that begins on the next page. Download it, delete these initial pages, fill it in, and upload it.
Website a

1. Describe: What is the title of this website? Please list it as you would for a bibliography. The Chicago Manual of Style suggests that, when you cite a website, it should follow this format:
   Author. “Title.” Last modified date OR date accessed. URL. (1 pts)

2. Describe: What mythic material does the website (not just the landing page) cover? You need not be specific – an overview will suffice (gods, gods and heroes, texts, women, many cultures, only Greek and Roman, etc.). Please elaborate. (2 pts)

3. Describe: How is the content of the website (not just the landing page) organized? (e.g. by culture, historical period, character, text, etc.). Is it primarily hierarchical, or are there lateral (side-to-side) connections or some other organizational scheme? (3 pts)

4. Analyze: What does this organization suggest about the author’s perspective on ancient mythology? How does this organization direct their audience through the material? How effective is that guidance? (3 pts)
5. Describe: What sort of evidence do the authors use to make their points? (ancient texts and/or artworks, dictionaries of mythology, no evidence given, etc.)? (3 pts)

6. Analyze: Who is the target audience for this website? How can you tell? (3 pts)

7. Analyze: What overall argument are the authors making about myth? Put another way, what is the agenda or bias of the website’s creators? (3 pts)
Website b

1. Describe: What is the title of this website? Please list it as you would for a bibliography. The Chicago Manual of Style suggests that, when you cite a website, it should follow this format:
   Author. “Title.” Last modified date OR date accessed. URL. (1 pts)

2. Describe: What mythic material does the website (not just the landing page) cover? You need not be specific – an overview will suffice (gods, gods and heroes, texts, women, many cultures, only Greek and Roman, etc.). Please elaborate. (2 pts)

3. Describe: How is the content of the website (not just the landing page) organized? (e.g. by culture, historical period, character, text, etc.). Is it primarily hierarchical, or are there lateral (side-to-side) connections or some other organizational scheme? (3 pts)

4. Analyze: What does this organization suggest about the author’s perspective on ancient mythology? How does this organization direct their audience through the material? How effective is that guidance? (3 pts)
5. Describe: What sort of evidence do the authors use to make their points? (ancient texts and/or artworks, dictionaries of mythology, no evidence given, etc.)? (3 pts)

6. Analyze: Who is the target audience for this website? How can you tell? (3 pts)

7. Analyze: What overall argument are the authors making about myth? Put another way, what is the agenda or bias of the website’s creators? (3 pts)