Analytical Assignment #3 (Art Gallery)

Instructions
This assignment has three parts, in which you will:

a) Post to Bb a response to the prompt – due by midnight on Thursday, 9/29 (10 pts)
b) Participate in a conversation in class on Friday, 9/30 (5 pts)
c) Turn in your writing assignment (a blog entry) via SafeAssign by Monday, 10/3 (35 pts)

The focus of this assignment is comparison among visual representations of some aspect of mythology (in this case, the murder of Agamemnon). We have read (at least) two versions of Agamemnon’s death upon his return from Troy, in Homer’s *Odyssey* and Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon*. Vases, paintings, sculpture, and other arts are similarly diverse in the way they structure the story and which details they find relevant. This assignment moves toward understanding that every representation, in any medium, of a myth is an interpretation of the myth.

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

1) situate Greek and Roman myths in the cultural framework of the people who told them
2) understand and use a technical vocabulary for ancient literature and art
3) discern among and evaluate competing claims or approaches to myths or to the problems they explore
4) understand myth’s context in and dependence on the culture and individual who tell it
5) be able to cite properly ancient texts, ancient artworks and material remains, and secondary sources

Strategies
Please read through the whole assignment before you begin the first part. When it comes to looking at the art, spend some time just looking at it – focusing on different details, the overall composition, what is emphasized, what emotions are depicted and through what means, etc.

Part 1: Online
By midnight on Thursday, Sept 29, post on BB in your small group a response to the following prompt:

*Odyssey* and *Agamemnon* portray Clytemnestra’s involvement in the death of Agamemnon differently. Please choose one passage from each text from the possibilities listed below, and write 3-4 sentences on how that passage functions in the text. Whose point of view is it? How does this point of view affect the way the story is told there?

Next, look at a vase painted by the Dokimasia Painter that shows Agamemnon’s death (linked below). In 3-4 sentences, explore what interpretation of Agamemnon’s death is offered there (and Clytemnestra’s role in it), and what the details convey toward that interpretation.

*Odyssey* passages: Book 3: 282-347, or Book 11: 407-474
Agamemnon passages: Lines 1227-1263, or 1372-1392

Part 2: In class
In class on Friday, Sept 30, in your small group, discuss your responses to the online prompt. The Dokimasia Painter’s image will be on screen, as will two other images pertaining to Clytemnestra. Discuss these two images as interpretations as well.

http://cartelfr.louvre.fr/cartelfr/visite?srv=car_not_frame&idNotice=22514
http://metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/173560

Part 3: Turn in
Sometime on Monday, Oct 3, turn in via SafeAssign a blog entry (in MS Word form) on these three visual images of Clytemnestra, a sort of “virtual exhibit” that includes the images with captions (see below) and text that teaches the visitor how to “read” those images as complex interpretations of or responses to this mythic queen (sort of like “wall text” in a museum). Your blog should assume an audience who is intelligent but not necessarily familiar with all the details and sources for this character. Your blog should be 600-700 words plus captions (and images).

The captions for your artwork should include the name of the work, or its subject if not named; the artist if known; the medium (oil painting, bronze sculpture, pencil drawing, etc.), the current location of the artwork, and a proper citation for it (Museums always have a reference number for each work).

Here is an example of a good blog “virtual gallery.” https://blogs.lt.vt.edu/classicaltradition/
Note that each blog entry in this example is around 400-500 words, plus images. Note also that we wish you to provide fuller citations and captions than this blog example.