Analytical Assignment #7 (Synthesis) - Pygmalion

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

- **Post to Bb a response to the prompt** – due by **midnight on Thursday, 12/01** (30 pts)
- **Participate in a conversation in class on Friday, 12/02** (15 pts)
- **Complete and return the required essay via SafeAssign by Tuesday, 12/6** (105 pts)

The focus of this assignment is deeper understanding of the portrayal of Pygmalion in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*. The Pygmalion story brings together many of Ovid’s core preoccupations in his work: the role of the artist, mirroring, present absence, patriarchy, and identity.

Please read through this whole assignment before beginning part 1. The final product is due via SafeAssign sometime on **Tuesday, December 6**. Thank you.

**Goals**
This assignment 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  
3) compare Greek and Roman myths to myths from other ancient cultures, and to modern myths  
4) situate Greek and Roman myths in the cultural framework of the people who told them  
5) discern among and evaluate competing claims or approaches to myths or to the problems they explore  
6) understand myth’s context in and dependence on the culture and individual who tell it  
7) recognize myths at work and play in your own culture and life  
8) be able to cite properly ancient texts, ancient artworks and material remains, and secondary sources

**Strategies**
Please read through the questions before you begin the first part. Then spend some time with Ovid’s Pygmalion story and the other sources. It’s short but dense.

**Part 1: Online**
Before **Thursday, 12/01**, post a response on Bb in your small group to this prompt:

How does Ovid’s Pygmalion story in Book 10 explore two of the following ideas: mirroring, the role of art or the artist, present absence, patriarchy, or identity? Your answer should consist of two parts (one for each idea). Each part has two parts – one or two quotations from the text, followed by the analysis. The total (for both ideas) should be around 500 words of analysis (the 500 words DOES NOT INCLUDE the quotations).

**Part 2: In class**
In your small group on **Friday, Dec 02**, discuss your answer to Part 1 and continue on to the following: Pygmalion wanted his girl to respond, but allowing her to do so risks her turning into
something he doesn’t want her to be. What do you think happens at the end of the story? (an aside: does Pygmalion’s ivory girl become like the woman Hippolytus or Jason wanted, or like a Phaedra or Medea?) Next: Consider a modern representation of the Pygmalion story – some suggestions will be on the screen. Are the essential questions the same, or is there something different, or culturally specific, about the questions raised by the “art come to life” theme?

Part 3: Turn in
Sometime on Tuesday, Dec 06, please turn in a short essay responding to this prompt:

Consider Ovid’s Pygmalion story and ONE of the following artistic representations of Pygmalion’s situation. The artworks are all by Jean-Léon Gérôme, a French artist from the late 1800s. The first link is his most famous version (a painting); the second is another painting, same scene but from a different angle and with a less polished look; the third is a sculpture that was the basis for the paintings.

Find a thematic point of intersection between the text and the artistic image, and explore it (note: this is NOT a plot intersection. We know they tell the same plot. We’re looking for a meaning or interpretation that is explored in both media).

Write an essay of c. 900-1000 words exploring this theme as it appears in both the literary and the visual work. Your essay should assume a reader who has read Ovid’s text, and so should not re-tell plot, except when a plot detail serves your argument. Your essay should include at least 2 distinct quotations from the text. You should also assume an audience that has seen the image (or, include one), so there’s no need to describe it, though you will no doubt draw our attention to details of its composition, subject, color, etc. Be sure to cite the image and the text properly (for an artwork, remember: museum and catalog number).

Finally, please dig deep on this one! We’ve been pushing you to do so for 6 assignments so far – show us what you can do! 😊

http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/436483

(click on collections, use the search box, search for Pygmalion, choose the Gerome painting)

http://www.museumcollections.parks.ca.gov/code/emuseum.asp?collection=5958&collectionname=Works%20of%20Jean-L%C3%A9on%20G%C3%A9r%C3%B4me%20at%20Hearst%20Castle&style=Browse&currentrecord=1&page=collection&profile=objects&searchdesc=Works%20of%20Jean-L%C3%A9on%20G%C3%A9r%C3%B4me%20at%20Hearst%20Castle&sessionId=2E25159D-312B-4CC0-AD13-249954027A19&action=collection&style=single&currentrecord=4