For the most part, I believe that Odysseus is telling the truth, but he is probably exaggerating the truth more than it needs to be. He talks about all of the terrible nights he had suffered through his trip home, such as Calypso, the sirens, and many other things. When he is telling his story, he makes himself out to be the most important man of the war, and he just has a huge ego. It's almost like he wants to make himself look like the strongest, and most important, man from the war to the Phaeacians.

Throughout Odysseus' telling of the story, he always seems to make the other men look weaker and get themselves into more trouble compared to Odysseus. It seems like he is continuously trying to make himself look the best to the Phaeacians by putting the other men down. In book 9, Odysseus yells to the Cyclops, "'Cyclops, if anyone, any mortal man, Asks you how you got your eye put out, Tell him that Odysseus the marauder did it, Son of Laertes, whose home is on Ithaca'" (Odyssey 12.500-503). Odysseus let his arrogance get the best of him, and he rubbed it in the Cyclops face that he stabbed him in the eye and was able to get out of the cave by tricking him. He started this chain of events by tricking the Cyclops, and he put himself and his men in danger.

This post answers the prompt, but not with particular nuance. Student A presents the thesis that Odysseus exaggerates, but doesn’t suggest what the truth might be behind his fantastic adventures. Student A further suggests he does so in order to look more heroic. His boasting to the Cyclops does show his eagerness for credit, but Student A’s final two sentences veer away from Odysseus as a fibber and his reasons for fibbing to talk about the results of his actions. In short, the post is solid but not focused.
In the *Odyssey*, it accomplishes many purposes. It can be read for pleasure purposes or even strengthen fame for the subject. Throughout Odysseus’ journey, this exhibits many purposes. The one that stands out the most though, is that it strengthens bonds among people, such as the guest-host relationship. The guest-host relationships are shown multiple times throughout the story. By reading the *Odyssey*, it helped shine some light on the relationships between the guest and the host, and they showed what to do and what not to do. As Odysseus was making his way home, he was treated very nicely, for the most part, by the people he came across, whether it was the Phaeacians or Calypso. The Phaeacians are a good example of how a host should treat all of their guests. They gave him all of the necessities that he needed in order to make the rest of his journey back to Ithaca. They bathed him, gave him new clothing, an ox, and bronze. It is custom that the guest can stay as long as he/she wants, and the host has to allow them to leave, and give them a gift as they depart their home. One of the gifts that Odysseus received was a silver-studded sword from Lord Alcinous. As he handed it to Odysseus, he said, “Lord Alcinous, renowned above all men, I will indeed apologize to our guest, as you bid. And I will give him this sword, all bronze And with a silver hilt. It comes with a scabbard Of newly sawn ivory, and will be worth much to him” (*Odyssey* 8.434-438). After Odysseus told his story, Lord Alcinous and the Phaeacians made sure that he had everything he needed and supplied everything for him in his ship, and they prayed to Lord Zeus that Odysseus is sent back to Ithaca. This host-guest relationship shows how a guest should be treated, by receiving gifts and getting the needed help and supplies you need in order to get to your next destination. The Cyclops was a prime example of how not to treat a guest. He held Odysseus and the other crewmen hostage in his cave by blocking the opening with a large boulder that only the Cyclops could move. He also ate many of the men, which is definitely not acceptable at all. When Odysseus was talking about his journey to the Phaeacians, he talked about how the Cyclops killed his crewmen. In gruesome detail, he said, “His hands Reached out, seized two of them, and smashed them To the ground like puppies. Their brains spattered out and oozed into the dirt. He tore them limb from limb to make his supper, gulping them down Like a mountain lion, leaving nothing behind guts, flesh, or marrowy bones” (*Odyssey* 9.280-286). The Cyclops is a monster, and a true host does not eat his guests.

This paper is weak on argument and mechanics. It neglects the focus of the prompt, which was to explore Odysseus’ storytelling in terms of the guest-host relationship. Student A only talked about the guest-host relationship. Student A did use evidence and incorporated it appropriately, but it was in the service of the wrong question. Also, some of the mechanical errors resulted from the conversion of the PDF, but many others – repetitive and/or vague phrases, grammatical errors, etc. – are original to the writing.
Each of the images shown below show different perspectives in the killing of Agamemnon. All of them show different ways of Clytemnestra’s roles in killing Agamemnon.

The image of the dress, it depicts what Clytemnestra wore. This dress looks as if it was meant for a funeral. It is a long black dress made of silk, and it shows that it is meant for the upper class to wear. This dress is a mysterious styled dress, and it looks like a dress in which one would not want to be seen. The gold on the dress shows the upper class status, and the black shows the mysteriousness of the death, and maybe even the sadness of the death of Agamemnon. The drape part of the dress could be used as a scarf maybe, or it could be used to maybe shield her face.

Figure 1: “Clytemnestra”, Mme. Eta Hentz, 1943-44, Silk. Brooklyn Museum Costume Collection at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2009.300.6553a, b.
This picture is of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus about to kill Agamemnon, whom is sleeping in his bed. Aegisthus looks like he is forcing Clytemnestra to kill Agamemnon based on her position. She looks as if she is trying to lean back and force herself backwards, but Aegisthus is pushing her forward. Aegisthus almost looks like he cannot take on Agamemnon, because he looks like he is cowering and trying to stay hidden behind Clytemnestra. Agamemnon looks like he is sleeping, and he even looks really strong. His arms are kind of in a position like he is flexing his arms. Even when he is sleeping, he doesn’t look like he is in his most vulnerable state. For all we know, he could have Cassandra or some other girl next to him, but the picture does not show enough of that to be able to see.

This vase depicts the image of Aegisthus killing Agamemnon. It looks like Aegisthus already stabbed him once, and he is about to stab him again. He shows no remorse in what he is doing, and he is not looking Agamemnon in the eyes while he is getting ready to stab Agamemnon again. Aegisthus looks like he is stronger than Agamemnon, and Agamemnon looks smaller. Aegisthus almost looks like he is a god-like figure. Agamemnon is in a vulnerable state, so he is not standing tall and acting confident. The chorus is right behind them, and it looks like they are not helping him at all, and they are just singing about it. On the vase, you can see that Clytemnestra is holding an axe, but she is right behind Aegisthus.

This is following more of the story in the Odyssey. In the Odyssey, Clytemnestra just aided in helping Aegisthus kill Agamemnon, as opposed to the story told in Agamemnon, where Clytemnestra killed Agamemnon herself.
Each of these pieces of artwork show different stories that had to do with the killing of Agamemnon. The dress maybe represented the kind of dress that Clytemnestra wore when Agamemnon was being killed. The painting shows that maybe Clytemnestra was being forced into killing Agamemnon. It is almost as if she did not want to kill him, and maybe she was still in love with him. The mixing bowl is almost exactly like the scene that was talked about in the Odyssey, which consisted of Aegisthus killing Agamemnon, and Clytemenstra aiding in helping kill him. Although all of these pieces of art have different storylines, they all have the same results; Agamemnon being killed, regardless of who is the one killing him.

This paper is solid; Student A uses concrete details (the fabric in the dress, the posture of Clytemnestra in the painting, the position of Clytemnestra on the vase) in the service of interpretation. The argument itself doesn’t show much depth however; the student fails to ask or wonder why there would be such differences, or what the context of each artwork might be. As in 2.3, the grammar and style are insufficient for a college course.
I agree and disagree with the statement, said by Douglas Cairns, which says, “Euripides’ Medea does not subvert Athenian male stereotypes. It revels in them.” There are several instances throughout the play where Medea is seen as stronger than most of the men, but women are also seen as how they normally are seen. She shows her strength when she talks to Creon and when she talks to Jason, and she talks about how women are treated in their society. Medea goes outside of the cultural norms of how a woman should act within society, and she has certain actions that prove this.

I disagree with this statement, because it is showed that Medea is viewed as a stronger person than most men. This is shown when she is begging Creon to let her stay one more day. Creon is frightened that Medea will kill him and his daughter, which is the ultimate reason as to why he wants Medea gone immediately. Her strength was shown as she was begging him. As she begged, it was almost implied that she would not take no for an answer, and she would continue begging until she got her way. At one point, she started crushing his hand. Ultimately, he takes pity on her because she has to make arrangements for shelter for her sons and herself. He says, “Woman, I realize this is all wrong, but you shall have your wish. I warn you, though: is the sun god’s lamp should find you and your children still within our borders at first rising, it means your death” (Medea 359-363). He may have warned her to get out of the country, but she had a plan in set already. She would not have begged and kissed up to Creon so much if she did not get something out of the deal, which was to kill Creon, his daughter, and Jason.

The second example that is shown in Medea is when she has a conversation with Jason, and tries to offer her money. Usually, the men are the ones who provide for the women, and the women are usually extremely dependent on the men for their way of life. Medea is not like most women though. When she is offered the money, she refuses it. “I wouldn’t stay with your friends, and I would never accept a thing from you. Don’t even offer. There is no profit in a bad man’s gift” (Medea 641-642). Most men think that they have a responsibility to continue to pay for the woman and his children, even if he is no longer her husband. Medea comes off as a very independent, and she is not one to be defined from a man’s actions, let alone Jason’s actions. While most women would continue to be with Jason while he is married to another woman, Medea will not associate, and she makes plans for her exile to go live where Aegeus does.

I agree with this statement, because Medea talks about the hardships of being a woman in Athenian society in the beginning of the play. She says, “Of all the living creatures with a soul and mind, we women are the most pathetic” (Medea 231-232). She talks about how the women have to pay large amounts of money to even be married just to even get a man to marry them, and they normally have no say on the man they actually do marry. If the man turns out to be a bad husband, they can’t divorce because that makes the woman look bad. Women are restricted to only stay in their home, and mainly only allowed to talk to their husbands, while the mean get to go and leave the house. Women have very few rights in Athenian society, and the men hold that power over them.

In Medea, there are many examples of how the stereotypes of Athenian men are proven to not be that strong. There are also other examples as to how the women are seen as the inferior gender. I agree and disagree with the statement made by Douglas Cairns, because Medea is seen as a woman who does not need a man to define who she is, but she also talks about how women are treated as an inferior gender.
This paper embraces a complex topic, but wanders around a thesis and doesn’t offer a clear or focused idea. At least the student recognizes this by asserting at the beginning that the play does and does not fit the quotation. Student A’s language and grammar are cleaner than in earlier assignments, and as before, solid evidence was used from the text (though I remain unsure what Student A is trying to argue with the first quotation, by Creon). I think this paper shows good depth of thought but lack of clarity.
6.3

In the story Aeneid, by Virgil, one of the most memorable moments is when Aeneas is forced to flee Troy. This moment definitely shows his strength as a hero, due to the fact that he is carrying a tremendous amount of weight. A normal human being would be over-encumbered with the task of carrying a grown adult, leading a child, as well as carrying the trophy, Palladium. All the while being armored and in some contexts, carrying a spear. Aeneas is prophesized to not marry anyone during the course of his adventure, however a woman named Dido believes he is meant to marry her. Upon realizing that he is leaving (an instruction from Jupiter through Mercury, she goes into a craze. She confesses her love for him in attempts to get him to stay, only to be replied with a heartbreaking response. Aeneas basically says, you are not the one for me. Dido then commits suicide with the sword she gives to Aeneas when they first were met. Aeneas leaves in her wake, carrying his father Anchises, and young Ascanius.

In this oil painting, Aeneas is shown with having actual human characteristics. His face is worried, and he seems to be struggling with carrying Anchises, using both arms. In most depictions, he simply has his father resting on his bicep, or shoulder. Ascanius seems oblivious of what is happening around him; however the rest of the characters, including the woman seem to be distressed. There is no sign of Palladium in this painting. Regardless of showing that Aeneas has to use two hands to carry his father, one can still see that he is quite the specimen, showing rather large muscles.

This piece is an oil painting on canvas, capturing how Aeneas struggles while carrying his father, fleeing Rome. His son is also holding onto his tunic. In the background Troy seems to be under siege due to the flames and the distress on the characters’ faces. Located in the Sabauda Gallery, created in circa 1750.
Aside from the caption ‘Lessingimages.com,’ this vase is rather lovely. It shows the mythological side of Aeneas, how he is ultimately a tank, which will not be stopped. He is moving forward, and nothing will get in his way. His body, compared to all other figures is a lot larger, showing details in his muscles and armor. His thigh is the same size as his son’s entire torso. Being the child of his father, one would think that he would be roughly the same size as Anchises. He is carrying a spear instead of Palladium, as well as carrying his father. Ascanius is running ahead of them, and there are other figures in the vase. All of which are all moving in the same direction however looking behind them, as if there is a threat they are moving from (ransacking of Troy). Aeneas not distracted like the others. By having all characters moving in one general direction, it created followability or movement in the piece of work.

This black-figured vase shows Aeneas moving forward, with his son under foot. Aeneas is also carrying both his father and weapons while being armored as well. Located in the Chateau-Musee, Boulogne-sur-Mer, France. Created around 520 BCE.

This minted coin was created in Rome, around 140 AD. It shows great detail for being a tiny coin. Such details can be viewed in the muscles, and clothes of Aeneas. This coin, unlike the painting, shows Aeneas effortlessly carrying his father on his shoulder, and leading his son with the other hand. He seems to be looking back toward Troy, as if he is longing for something there (Perhaps Dido). This piece does not show that he carries Palladium, despite the stories in the Aeneid. It does show the heroic physical build of Aeneas though.

This coin shows Aeneas effortlessly carrying his father, and holding his son’s hand with the other hand. The coin was minted in Rome, around 140 AD. It is currently located in Stack’s Golden Horn collection 2303.

These are nuanced ideas stemming from little details such as Aeneas’ direction, the direction of his gaze, and what he is carrying. Student A does not get correct what the Palladium is (a small statue group), and leaves out a consideration of the different contexts in which these images would be seen (dinner, home, transaction), but overall the quality of this paper is vastly superior to the first one.
The first idea that Ovid explores is the idea of present absence. Pygmalion spends all this time sculpting what can be depicted as the "perfect woman." He acts as though the sculpture is an actual woman, rather than just an ivory sculpture. "He often touches the statue to find out whether it is ivory or flesh, and is unwilling to admit That it is ivory" (Metamorphoses 10.278-280). Pygmalion treats the statue as if she is alive. He talks to it, gives it kisses, and gives gifts to it. Overall, he basically falls in love with this statue that he created. He dresses it up, and puts jewelry on her neck and fingers. He lays it down in a bed and covers it up, and it is used as his bedmate as if she were actually a human. Present absence is related to this, because Pygmalion seems to think that the ivory girl is there, but in all reality, it is just a statue. He formed a fake relationship with it, and he seems to think that the sculpture is returning his kisses. He also seems to think that the sculpture has feelings towards him, but there is just no relationship at all. Pygmalion prayed to Venus asking for her to give him a wife. This can imply that the ivory statue is how he envisions his wife to be.

Another idea that Ovid explores is the idea of the role of the artist. Pygmalion becomes engrossed in the statue that he creates, and creates it to become almost life-like. The idea of this statue was to create his idea of what a perfect woman looks like, and this became his life work. He shows, through the statue, how an artist truly feels about their artwork. He sculpted this beautiful woman, and ended up falling in love with it. "With marvelous skill a figure in ivory, Giving it a beauty no woman could be born with, and he fell in love with what he had made" (Metamorphoses 10.270-272). He made this statue come to life by giving it gifts and acting as though it was a human, and he received pleasure from this statue. She was given a flirtatious expression on her face, and she is perceived as comfortable and happy. He shows adoration towards his piece of art, and it gets to the point where he believes that she is showing emotions toward him. This could be because of how life-like he created the statue. He spent so much time giving a lot of details to the sculpture to create his perfect ivory woman. He put his heart into what he was creating, and put so much detail into it that he adored it and love it as if it were a human.

This post shows Student A’s growth over the semester; where the first discussion post (2.1) was unfocused, this one is tightly focused, detailed, and responsive to the prompt. Student A is careful to explain what is meant by “present absence” and why this applies to the Pygmalion story, and she keenly notices that Pygmalion and his ivory girl are particular instances of any artist and his creation. Student A chooses fitting evidence to demonstrate her points and quotes and cites it appropriately and skillfully.
In the story of Pygmalion, Pygmalion falls in love with this sculpture that he made, which calls his ivory girl. I believe that present absence is a big theme throughout the story. The idea that Ovid explores is the idea of present absence. Pygmalion spends all this time sculpting what can be depicted as the "perfect woman." He acts as though the sculpture is an actual woman, rather than just an ivory sculpture. "He often touches the statue to find out whether it is ivory or flesh, and is unwilling to admit that it is ivory" (Metamorphoses 10.278-280). Pygmalion treats the statue as if she is alive. He talks to it, gives it kisses, and gives gifts to it. Overall, he basically falls in love with this statue that he created. He dresses it up, and puts jewelry on her neck and fingers. He lays it down in a bed and covers it up, and it is used as his bedmate as if she were actually a human. Present absence is related to this, because Pygmalion seems to think that the ivory girl is there, but in all reality, it is just a statue. He formed a fake relationship with it, and he seems to think that the sculpture is returning his kisses. He also seems to think that the sculpture has feelings towards him, but there is just no relationship at all. Pygmalion prayed to Venus asking for her to give him a wife. This can imply that the ivory statue is how he envisions his wife to be. Venus uses her powers to turn the statue into a real-life woman, and she makes it so that there is no longer an absence whenever he kisses her. She is made into this silent woman that conforms to what Pygmalion wants her to be. This ends up taking on a new form of present absence in the story.

In the painting created by Jean-Léon Gérôme, the image of the statue and Pygmalion is shown. This painting shows a mix of the ideas present absence. This painting is interesting, because it looks like her legs are statue-like, while her top half is basically real. You can see that he is making out with this statue, and he is imagining that she is actually real. By the bottom of the statue, you can see the tools that were used to sculpt his perfect woman. In the back of the painting, you can see Cupid pointing his bow and arrow at the statue and Pygmalion. It kind of looks like he shot Pygmalion with his arrow and made him fall in love with the statue. Cupid is the child of Venus, so it looks as if she sent Cupid to make him fall in love with the statue. In the story, Ovid says “But golden Venus, who of course was present at her own festival, knew what his prayer meant, and as an omen of her divinity’s favor the flame on the altar flared up three times” (Metamorphoses 306-309). In the story, Venus answered Pygmalion’s prayer by bringing the statue to life. Pygmalion did not necessarily want the statue to come to life, he just wanted a woman like his ivory girl. Of course, Venus being the sneaky one she is, actually turns this statue into a human. You can see that the statue in the painting is slowly becoming human, and she is actually returning Pygmalion’s kiss and actually embracing him. I believe that Venus probably sent Cupid to make the sculpture come to life by shooting his arrow at it. This is a little bit different from what was in the actual story. In the story, Venus does it herself instead of having someone else do it for her.
The painting and the story are similar in the ways that Pygmalion fell in love with a statue in both of them. His idea of a perfect woman is depicted in both of the stories, and they are both analyzed in kind of the same way. In both of these stories, Pygmalion is almost obsessed with this statue that he created, and he gives her everything that she could ever want. He makes this statue into what he believes is the perfect woman by basing it off of the women around him. He makes his sculpture have traits that are common in many women, such as beauty and femininity. He awards her with gifts, jewelry, and other items in turn of her being his lover, even though she is not actually. When she comes to life, Pygmalion wants her all to himself. He wants to be all that she could ever want in life, and he does not want her to leave him. He does not want her to have any personal pleasures; he just wants her all to himself and to be at his beck and call. Venus likes to cause chaos in people’s lives, and she does this by bringing the statue to life, and this is depicted in both the painting and the story. The way it is done in the painting and story is a little different. In the painting, it looks as if Venus sent Cupid to turn the statue into an actual human. In the story, Venus answered Pygmalion’s prayer by lighting a flame on the altar three times at her festival.

This paper, like the last one, shows clear and solid progress over Student A’s initial work. Her thesis is solid (that both art and text show the theme of “present absence”), responds to the prompt; and she notes details in both representations of the story. For the latter, her choice of details for the painting is particularly strong; she notes the carver’s tools, which prove the statue is marble; the statue’s material in the painting, half-flesh and half-marble; and the presence of Cupid, whose arrow is aimed at the pair to show the gods’ influence. Student A wasn’t quite as effective choosing textual details (quotations) to support the theme of present absence (her first quotation does, her second does not), but the paper as a whole reflects close reading, subtle thinking, and careful organization.

She also wrote this final entry with appropriate language, relatively free of errors.