Short Essay

Prompt: Analyze and explain the portrayal of foreigners or barbarians in the Histories of Herodotus. Which model or models (Normative, Racist, Idealizing, etc.) does he use? If he uses more than one model, how do you explain this (for example, does he associate one model with some foreigners and not with others)? In summary, what is the author’s overall view of foreign peoples?

Length: 1000 words
Draft Due: Wednesday, May 3rd (in class)
Essay Due: Friday, May 12th (in class)

Goals
The purpose of this assignment is to help you develop the skills of reading a work of literature attentively, and of arguing carefully from that work. The essay should therefore show that you have read and thought about the work as a whole -- not just sections that might support your thesis, but those that might contradict it as well.

Strategy
The best method is to start with the details. Read and take notes on the relevant passages, then start to generalize: how do they portray foreigners? how are they similar and/or different from one another? These steps involve gathering and organizing data; the next step is to draw up a preliminary thesis: what is the overall view of foreigners?

As you are reading, organizing and thinking, you will want to make outlines (on paper or in your head). Once you have a preliminary thesis, you will need to test it: do the examples you give really support your thesis? Have you omitted examples that help to prove or disprove your thesis? Do you need to modify the thesis to take account of all the data?

Mechanics
• Make sure your writing is clear and grammatical.
• Limit quotations to those that are really necessary to prove your point.
• Refer to the text, by citing page numbers from the assigned translation: “Herodotus says (Histories, page 63) that… .”
• The essay should be your own thoughts in your own words; anything else is plagiarism, and consequences include expulsion from the university.

Questions or Help
Professor Dunn and Tracy Jamison will be glad to help you revise the rough draft.
Monday, 2-4 pm, or by appointment    Mon. & Wed., 10-11 am, or by appointment

Please don’t wait until the last minute to ask for help!