

Independent Study Guide

You will conduct an independent study in which you will document the range and depth of ancient Greek influence.

Options for an independent study may include:

- a formal research paper.
- a formal oral presentational student prepared "lesson" in which you will instruct members of the class to inductively uncover specifics ways an ancient Greece source has been used as the centerpiece of a chosen topic.
- the development of a film or CD.
- a "live" performance.
- the development of a design for a Web "interactive" or the actual development of a Web "interactive."

Suggested Topics For Research

Operas based on ancient Greek myths and legends, for example, C.W. Gluck's (18th century) and Richard Strauss' operas (20th century)

- identification of the myth in a selected opera(s)
- explanation of the structural development of the myth in the opera
- comparative analysis of how the articulation of the narrative of the basic myth, the nature of the characterization, and the tone quality of the music and lyrics reflect the cultural tone of the two different centuries (linear? non-linear? harmonious? discordant?)

Balanchine's choreographic "masterpiece"—his ballet, *Apollo*

- identification of the specific Apollo myth Balanchine develops
- an account of Balanchine's structural development of the myth
- a student performance of a vignette of the choreography (could be adapted from watching a video or CD performance of the original ballet)
- an explanation of the implication of Balanchine often being referred to as "Ballet's Apollo"

Greek myths and legends as inspiration for Modern Dance choreography

- research on the wide range of Isadora Duncan's use of Greek sources as inspiration for her choreography; an account of how she closely studied figures on vase paintings, statues, friezes, etc. to help her craft innovative movements; her dance roles in Gluck's operas, particularly *Orpheus*
- research on Martha Graham's use of themes and narratives of Greek tragedies, such as *Oedipus Rex* and *Clytemnestra*, to develop her choreographs, especially her psychological profiles such as that of Jocasta, (she called these profiles "interior landscapes")
- a student performance of a vignette of one of Graham's "interior landscapes" (adapted from a study of a video or CD of *Night Journey* and/or *Clytemnestra*)

Intellectual origins of the Founding Fathers

- an overview of the content of Thomas Jefferson's library (as a student in Williamsburg, Virginia, and in his original collection at Monticello; relationship of Jefferson's Library to the Library of Congress)
- a survey of titles of ancient Greek sources in the Harvard Classics
- an account of ancient Greek sources in curriculum based on the "Great Books"

Background on the Hippocratic Oath that doctors take

- the content of the oath
- background of Hippocrates
- some analysis of the central mission of the Oath

The concept of "polis" as a system of governing

- explanation of the basic concept (all individuals in community involved; rule of the majority; rule by law)
- some historical background of the concept (Plato; Aristotle)
- the idea of law as an extension of ideal divine will
- an analysis of how the concept of "polis" is reflected in the American system of government (possible responses: Federalism-"two-pronged" units, state and national, with discrete powers; "grass-roots" political activity and organization (councils, supervising boards, etc.); a nation of laws "under God"; leaders selected through the election process; the processes of political parties (primaries; nominating conventions))

Greek influence in visual art

- a study of examples of a work(s), by master painters, in which the central focus is based on an ancient Greek myth, legend, deity, or a celebrated figure: as example, the paintings of Poussin; Michelangelo; Raphael; Botticelli (Note: Isadora Duncan built a famous choreograph based on Botticelli's *La Primavera*); El Greco; Goya

Horatio Greenough's sculpture of George Washington

- the basic nature, detailed description of the sculpture
- the history behind why the sculpture was crafted in that mode
- an account of where, when, when not and why not there has been a display of the sculpture

Evidence of Greek influence in architecture

- of ancient Greek architecture, for example, Washington, D. C.; Philadelphia
- a "virtual" (or actual) trip through a city in which numerous central buildings are replicas; a visit to a hometown building—for instance, an old post office, courthouse, or civic center building—that reveals strong evidence of ancient Greek influence in the architectural design
- a specific analysis of the ancient Greek influence on the design of the building

An exploration of the mythical and historical "roots" of the modern Olympics

(http://courses.dce.harvard.edu/~clase116/dial11_notes.html {Sections 12c and 12d} are excellent sources for helping students gather information on this topic)

- relationship of the myths of Herakles and Hera to the Olympics
- an account of Herakles as the "founder" and the first participant in all Olympic events
- background, including political implication of The Peloponnese (Olympia) as site of the ancient "Festival of the Olympics"
- ancient Greek perception of an Olympic "hero" (athlos)
- explanation of specific rituals observed in the ancient Olympics, for example, background of the stadion (stadium run); details of the nature of the libation (sacrifice); the lighting of the fire at the Altar of Zeus

a tracing of the evolution of the torch runner from the contest in Plato's Academy through to the present-day Olympic ritual