

Hum 110 (L. Leibman)
Thucydides I.1-I.146

1. Structure: Like Herodotus, Thucydides uses a ring composition. For book two, outline the different stages of his argument indicating when he tells us that he is going to digress and when he returns. What are the advantages and disadvantages of this structure? How does his use of it differ from Herodotus'?

2. Rhetoric: **Look up this term in the OCD.** What exactly is rhetoric? How is Thucydides' text "rhetorical"? Why is rhetoric associated with the rise of literacy and the polis? Does its presence in a text make that text automatically "democratic"?

3. Sophists: Sophists are the Greek philosophers of the 5th century B.C. who were masters of rhetoric and persuasion. As William Benet notes, "originally, *sophist* was the Greek term for any skilled craftsman or artist; however, it was later applied to anyone who devoted himself to wisdom. early Sophists such as Gorgias and Protagoras of Abdera were conservative: they affirmed things as they were and stood for the tile of law and order. The later Sophists, Hippias, Antiphon, Callicles, and Thrasymachus, were more radical; they opposed 'nature' or man's individual instincts and desires to law or convention, and were the first to set forth the doctrine, later criticized by Plato, Thucydides, and Aristotle, that might makes right. Because the Sophists were in the service of the rich, a class inimical to democracy and held in contempt by Plato and Aristotle, the word Sophist was given a pejorative sense by these two men: they thought the object of teachers was not genuine knowledge, and sophist in the general sense has come to mean anyone who makes the worst reason appear the better." In lecture, David Silverman argued that Thucydides was a Sophist--that is that he believed "might made right" (William Benet, *The Reader's Encyclopedia*). Do you agree? Support your position with evidence from the text, particularly Thucydides' comment on Pericles and Athenian Democracy (II.65). Do you agree with the Sophist position either morally or realistically?