

Dr. Gray's original prompt for a class essay assignment

One of the oldest theories that claims to explain why audiences enjoy comedy is called the “theory of superiority.” According to this theory, we delight in seeing ourselves as superior to, or less unfortunate than, the characters on stage. Assuming that you are a Roman in the audience of *MILES GLoriosus* or *PSEUDOLUS*, would you feel superior to the characters on stage? Why? Why not? Does Plautus employ any techniques that seem deliberately aimed at enhancing the audience’s sense of superiority? Explain. Cite specific examples to support your argument.

Dr. Gray's revised prompt for a class essay assignment

For first paper based on the critical thinking rubric:

One of the oldest theories of humor that claims to explain why audiences enjoy comedy is called the “theory of superiority.” According to this **concept**, comedy plays to the audience’s **point of view** by creating situations in which the audience sees itself as superior to, or less unfortunate than, the characters on stage. **Assuming** the **point of view** of a Roman in the audience of *MILES GLoriosus* or *PSEUDOLUS*, would you feel superior to the characters on stage? Why? Why not? Explain. Does Plautus employ any techniques that seem deliberately aimed at enhancing the audience’s sense of superiority? Explain. To what extent, if any, might this theory be especially **relevant** to a Roman audience in the time of Plautus? Explain. Cite and evaluate specific examples to support your argument.

Students were asked to submit a completed Worksheet with their revised papers. Again the emphasis was on **purpose, key question, problem or issue, point of view, and information**.

Text in Red

Indicates the infusion of the
Elements of Reasoning

Text in Blue

Indicates the infusion of the
Intellectual Standards

Text in Green

Indicates the infusion of the
Intellectual Traits

[Bracketed Text]

Indicates the indirect use of
critical thinking **[Elements]**,
[Standards], or **[Traits]**

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Framework of Critical Thinking](#)