

Essay #2: *The Clouds*

DUE: WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 16

May be handed in in class or submitted by email in a DOC or RTF format. Note: Your email submission only “counts” if you receive a reply back from me saying I got it. As stated in the syllabus, any late submissions are marked down 10 points per class meeting.

Please format your essay as follows. Your essay should

- ▶ Be typed, double-spaced, in 12 pt. Times or Arial, with one-inch margins. Please spellcheck and, if you’re not sure about your writing, have a friend read it. I will not mark down for grammar, but clarity is vital.
- ▶ Have a cover page with the title, your name, my name, and the date, and have page numbers on each page after the cover page.
- ▶ Run 3–4 full pages, plus the cover page. Start with an introduction stating your opinion; then give your evidence in the main body; followed by a conclusion summarizing how the evidence supports your opinion.
- ▶ Have all direct quotations, indirect quotations, and ideas from other sources footnoted according to a standard citation style. This is extremely important and failure to do this will seriously affect your grade.
 - In this case your source will be the play itself. You may — but are not required to — use secondary sources that discuss this story. Whether you use additional sources will have no effect on your grade, since I am interested in your interpretations and how well you support them with evidence.
- ▶ **Optional draft due: Monday, Nov. 7.** I will not grade it, but I will provide feedback.

ASSIGNMENT

Choose one of the following topics:

1. Discuss in detail *one of the major ideas* being presented in *The Clouds* and relate it to the transformations of Classical Athens or Greek society. Exactly what argument is Aristophanes making, and on what grounds? What specific changes in the Greek world will have led Aristophanes to respond by writing this play? What specific moments in the play best reflect these responses to the changes in society?
2. *The Clouds* (423 BCE) is a fairly early play in Aristophanes’s surviving works. Choose either (a) or (b):
 - a. Examine one of his later plays and discuss whether you can identify a change in the playwright’s attitude toward society. Compare specific moments as commentary, and look at the events that befall the main character of the two plays.
 - b. Or compare *The Clouds* with any other Greek comedy and contrast the messages being given about Athenian society by discussing specific moments in each play.

In both cases: How do the ideas, their presentation, or both, differ between the two plays?

Your conclusion should be the last one-third or so of your essay and relate to the following: What, in the end, is Aristophanes trying to say, and how does he support his argument?