

# Essay #2: *The Clouds*

## **DUE: MONDAY, NOVEMBER 15**

---

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 on all sides. 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 3–3½ full pages, not including the cover page. Start with an introduction stating your opinion, then give your evidence in the body of the paper, 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 as additional resources if you want. 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.
- ▶ **Due at 11.a.m., Monday, Nov. 15.** After that it will be counted late.

## **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 Athens or Greek society in the sixth and fifth centuries. 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. 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.

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?

- ▶ Remember to think of the play as a kind of primary source, in which the author is giving evidence of ideas they want to communicate. What their main points in this document, and how is your character being used to communicate them?

Remember that, as always, I am looking for your opinion and how well you support it with evidence; this essay is less about “right answers” than it is about well-supported ideas. Feel free to praise or complain about the author’s style, techniques, or attitude, as long as you cover the points of the assignment described above.