

Aristophanes

CAMS 499
Pennsylvania State University at the Athens Centre
MW 4.30-6.30p
20 Jan – 14 Apr 2014

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Office Hours: by arrangement

Required Texts

Acharnians, Knights [Henderson, Loeb]
Birds, Lysistrata, Women at the Thesmophoria [Henderson, Loeb]
Clouds, Wasps, Peace [Henderson, Loeb]
Frogs, Assemblywomen, Wealth [Henderson, Loeb]

I recommend buying these used or new online (e.g., Amazon.com), unless you can find them at a large independent bookstore near home. Ensure you have the editions indicated.

Course

We will read and study all eleven of Aristophanes' (446-386 BCE) extant comedies, written and produced between 425 and 388 BCE for the Athenian dramatic festivals. We will study them as elements of civic, religious, and democratic life; carefully wrought literary productions; vehicles for insight into gender, class, and national relations; and reflections of intellectual trends in post-Periclean Athens. Of course, we will address them first as *funny*, and so we will always work to understand the ways their structure, characters, and vocabulary could be funny both to their contemporary audience and to us. This will allow us to understand the way the plays' humor contributes to their other functions—dramatic, political, and social.

We will read the plays in English, but our editions have the Greek text adjacent to the translation; this will allow us to talk efficiently about technical terminology, the language of slander, and interesting textual problems.

Our topic-related goals include appreciating, evaluating, and comparing the artistic value of these plays; recognizing their intended purposes in Athenian society of the Classical period; and determining the ways by which the plays reveal or obscure elements of Athenian society that would be worth knowing. Our other pedagogical goals include practicing public and dramatic speaking, coming to write cogently and authoritatively about literature, and imagining in life-size what we are only reading.

Class time

Classes will start with “Performances,” and move organically to conversation about the plays, working through a range of interpretative modalities and relying on our “Discussion Guides” as appropriate. We will seek out videos and field trips to sites relevant to our plays.

The plays

Acharnians, 425 BCE

Knights, 424

Wasps, 422

Peace, 421

Clouds, ca. 418

Birds, 414

Lysistrata, 411

Women at the Thesmophoria, 411

Frogs, 405

Assemblywomen, 392

Wealth, 388

Graded work

Performances [6 x 10pts]

Each class will begin with a five-minute performance, by a three-person group, of the dramatic passage that the group has judged to be the most significant of the day’s reading. Props, costumes, blocking, accents, and location-variety are all desirable. The performance group will then explain their reasoning in choosing this part of a scene, and the class will ask questions of the group. Each student will perform six (6) times. The grade will depend on the vividness of the performance, the significance of the passage, the explanation of reasoning, and ability to answer questions.

Discussion guide [11 x 10pts]

For each play you will prepare a discussion guide, to turn in at the end of class. Each discussion guide should include the following information; some may include additional information:

1. two-sentence description of narrative in half or complete play
2. most important character(s), and their dramatically important qualities
3. funniest passage (written out or paraphrased)
4. most devastating or intriguing criticism of Athens
5. most significant difference between this play and the others we’ve read
6. element for which this play is most memorable
7. three passages worth discussing (written out or paraphrased), with a brief explanation of the value in talking about them.

Exams [2 x 40pts]

There will be two in-class essay exams. They will test familiarity with the plays, attention to all classroom discussion and lecture, reflection on the themes described above in the syllabus, and thoughtfulness in general about Aristophanes’ plays.

Logistics

Grades

A 233-250	B 208-216	C 175-191
A- 225-232	B- 200-207	D 150-174
B+ 217-224	C+ 192-199	F 0-149

Technology

Please check class-related emails each weekday, and respond within a day. I will do the same. I will email you additional handouts if I do not distribute paper copies. Please check with fellow students to ensure you have not missed any handouts. At no point should you look or touch your cellphone unless asked to do so.

Accessibility

Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University's educational programs. If you have a disability-related need for reasonable academic adjustments in this course, contact the Office for Disability Services (ODS) at 814-863-1807. For further information regarding ODS, please visit their web site at www.equity.psu.edu/ods/. Please notify me as early in the semester as possible regarding the need for reasonable academic adjustments.

Cheating

Academic dishonesty in any portion of the academic work for this course shall be grounds for failing the entire course and communication of dishonesty to the College. This includes, but is not restricted to, any plagiarism on any homework, or cheating on any assignment or exam. Please ask about any case you're concerned about. For details on the PSU policy, see www.psu.edu/oue/aappm/G-9.html.

Topic, Reading, and Assignment Schedule

- Jan M 20 In class: read aloud complete play of *Acharnians*. Assign roles to (i) italic stage directions, (ii) footnotes, (iii) Dicaeopolis, (iv) Chorus Leader, (v) Chorus, (vi) Ambassador & Herald, (vii/viii) all other characters. (Take a 5-minute intermission.)
In any extra time, as a class list five hard questions to be addressed Wed.
Read: A&K pp. 1-52 [Intro. and Introductory Note to Acharnians]
- W 22 CLASS CANCELLED
Read: Bowie, 'The Parabasis in Aristophanes: Prolegomena, Acharnians.'
Write: Discussion guide for Acharnians.
- M 27 Organize "Performance" schedule. Discussion of *Acharnians*, including the five questions from Monday. Begin discussion of *Knights*.
Read: Knights, lines 1-690.
1. W 29 Performance 1 (AW, LP, RH).
Continue discussion of *Knights*.
Read: Knights, lines 691-1408.
Write: Discussion guide for Knights
- Feb M 03 Performance 2 (BW, KH, JP).
Read: Wasps 1-804.
Write: Discussion guide for Wasps
- W 05 Performance 3 (RH, KA, SK).
Read: Wasps 805-1537.
- M 10 Performance 4 (KH, AW, LP).
Read: Peace
Write: Discussion guide for Peace
- W 12 Performance 5 (KA, BW, JP).
Read: Birds
Write: Discussion guide for Birds
- M 17 Continue discussion of *Birds*.
Performance 6 (LP, RH, SK).
Read: Lysistrata 1-780
- W 19 Performance 7 (JP, KH, AW).
Discussion of *Lysistrata*.
Read: Lysistrata 781-1320
Write: Discussion guide for Lysistrata
- M 24 Performance 8 (SK, KA, BW).
Read: Thesmophoria 1-654
- W 26 Performance 9 (AW, KA, JP).
Read: Thesmophoria 655-1231
Write: Discussion guide for Themophoria

Mar M 03 NO CLASS (Clean Monday)
W 05 EXAM I

M 10 NO CLASS (Spring Break)
W 12 NO CLASS (Spring Break)

M 17 Performance 10 (BW, LP, SK).
 Socrates, Sophists, and *Sôphrosunê*.
Read: Clouds 1-887

W 19 EXTENDED CLASS: 4.30-8p (to make up for 03 March)
Read: Clouds 888-1511
Write: Discussion guide for Clouds

M 24 Performance 11 (RH, AW, JP).
Read: Frogs 1-814

W 26 Performance 12 (KH, BW, SK).
Read: Frogs 815-1533
Write: Discussion guide for Frogs

M 31 Performance 13 (KA, RH, AW).
Read: Assemblywomen 1-727

Apr W 02 Performance 14 (LP, KH, BW).
Read: Assemblywomen 728-1183
Write: Discussion guide for Assemblywomen

M 07 Performance 15 (JP, KA, RH).
Read: Wealth 1-626

W 09 Performance 16 (SK, KH, KP).
Read: Wealth 627-1209
Write: Discussion guide for Wealth

M 14 EXAM II