

Hum 2
Essay 2
Summer 2010

Overview. This essay asks you to develop a thesis/argument based upon your own close reading of the assigned texts. You will be answering a question, but your response should be based upon your close reading of the text(s). Your essay should demonstrate your ability to develop a reasonable, arguable, and sophisticated interpretation of some text or issue, relating it to the larger work from which it is taken.

3-5 pages, typed and double-spaced.
Use MLA format.

Topics:

- A. Socrates. Write an essay in which you explain the differences in the ways Socrates is portrayed in *The Clouds* with the ways Socrates is portrayed in *The Republic*. Is there any validity to Aristophanes' critique, or is he biased and/or ignorant?
- B. Several of the plays we have read, both comic and tragic, present strong female characters. Should we understand these presentations to be "liberating" or "equalizing" in some way, or do they serve to reinforce a patriarchal, even misogynistic social order?
- C. How do the plays we have read, both tragic and comic, understand the relationship between women and the public and private space?
- D. Explain, analyze, and evaluate ONE of the following arguments:
 1. Plato, *Republic* I.343b-344c (Thrasymachus' argument against justice).
 2. Plato, *Republic* X.605a-606b (Socrates' argument against the imitative poets).
 3. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* X.2 (What is 'choice'?).
 4. Cicero, *Laws* II.25-27 (On religious practice).

Tips:

- Make sure you answer the question.
- Make sure you present sufficient textual evidence to support your points, integrating those quotes, paraphrases, and allusions into YOUR OWN argument. DO NOT USE DROP QUOTES.
- Make sure you have a clear, arguable, sophisticated, and complex thesis. Make sure your first paragraph introduces that thesis.
- Make sure every paragraph is coherent, supporting one specific point that serves to develop, explain, and/or support your thesis.
- Make sure your essay contains NO EXTRANEIOUS INFORMATION.
- Make sure it is easy to follow your argument. If I have to struggle to figure what you're talking about, or how the texts support your argument . . . your grade starts to plummet.