

Humanities 1
Winter 2014
Professor Cox

Writing Assignment No 4 (third graded assignment)

Write an essay about one of the following.

1. “*Prometheus Bound* and *Oedipus the King* present the problem of determinism versus free will in such an exaggerated, unrealistic way as to make them useless for deciding whether, in real life, people have a meaningful degree of free will.” To what degree, if any, is this statement true? You may answer with respect to both plays or with respect to only one.
2. In *Prometheus Bound* we see two revolutions, the revolution of Zeus and the revolution, or at least the planned or attempted or simmering revolt, of Prometheus against Zeus. In *The Clouds* there are also two revolutions, that of Socrates and his students against custom and previously accepted authority, and that of Socrates’ opponents against him. Rank these four revolts in order according to the degree of justification you think they have. To respond to this topic, you need to identify the factors that would justify or not justify the various revolts, and argue in favor of your opinion about which factors make a better or worse justification.
3. “No matter what Aeschylus thinks, any successful politician would need to treat Prometheus in the way in which Zeus treats him in the play.” To what degree, if any, is this true?
4. “Aristophanes is right in *The Clouds*: democracy automatically produces two classes of people--knaves and fools—and if it weren’t for the support it gets from knaves and fools, there would be no such thing as democracy.” To what degree, if any, is this true? In responding to this topic, be sure that you conceive of “democracy” in a way that is useful in considering Aristophanes’ play. Don’t just turn to dictionary definitions; they are merely places to start in thinking about the concepts you’re using. And notice: this topic is *about* the ideas presented in the play, having to do with a general concept of “democracy”; it is not *about* specific political issues in our modern “democratic” world. Some brief examples of them may be all right as illustrations, but don’t get carried away with discussing them.

Make your paper 4-5 pages long. Keep in mind what is in the writing handouts that have been passed out in section, especially the Thesis handout. Papers are due at the end of lecture on Friday, February 28.

Before turning in the hard copy, you must submit another copy to the antiplagiarism website Turnitin.com.