

DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICAL STUDIES

C. G. Brown
LAH 3223
pindar@uwo.ca

Greek 9903B
Aristophanes' Knights
Course Outline

Winter 2027

A study of Aristophanes' *Knights*, a play first performed with conspicuous success at the Lenaia in 424 BCE. This is the first play that the young poet produced in his own name, and it immediately established him as a leading comic poet. It is also that the first known play of Old Comedy that is built around the sustained attack on a living figure, the demagogue Cleon, who is presented as a conniving and self-aggrandizing Paphlagonian slave in the household of Demos. Aristophanes sees Cleon and similar politicians as low-lives who built their political careers through blackmail and malicious prosecutions; who deceived the people into approving reckless military enterprises that served solely to enrich themselves by criminal means; who corrupted the morals of the young, and degraded the glory of Athens and posed a threat to the future of the democracy. The political satire of *Knights* has continued to be relevant, and may especially be so today: a modern produced would be strongly tempted to present the Paphlagon in a bad blonde wig and an orange mask.

The play will be read closely with a view to style, dramaturgy, metre, and its place in the Greek poetic tradition.

Course Requirements:

- | | |
|--|------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mid-term test (end of 24 February 2027) | 20 % |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Research Paper: | |
| • Abstract and Preliminary Bibliography (due by Reading Week) | 10 % |
| • Class Presentation | 10 % |
| • Essay (due end of term) | 30% |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Final exam (during the April exam period) | 30% |

Prescribed Texts:

C. A. Anderson and T. K. Dix, *A Commentary on Aristophanes' Knights* (University of Michigan Press 2020) [ISBN 978-0-472-05455-9] Price: \$41.14.

[There is a major new critical edition with detailed introduction and commentary by Z. P. Biles and S. D. Olson (Cambridge 2025) (692 pp.). This edition, with its full bibliography, will be the obvious starting point for serious research.]

Important Policies for all Western Courses

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage of text from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see [Scholastic Offence Policy](#) in the Western Academic Calendar).

Policy on Accommodation

If academic accommodation should become necessary at any point, students should contact their course instructor(s) and/or supervisor, as appropriate. Students should also contact the Graduate Chair in most cases, and especially if accommodation is needed for:

- - more than one course
- - more than one week
- - any tests, exams, and/or assignments worth 10% or more of a final grade
- - any program milestone (comprehensive exams, thesis, etc.)

In these cases, the Graduate Chair may request that a student work with Student Accessibility Services (<http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd/>) to arrange a plan for accommodation (see SGPS Regulation 14: http://www.grad.uwo.ca/current_students/regulations/14.html).

Staying healthy – physically and mentally – is an essential part of achieving your academic goals. There are many resources on campus available to help you maintain your health and wellness (start here: <http://wec.uwo.ca/> and <https://www.uwo.ca/health/>). Please contact the Graduate Chair if you have any concerns about health or wellness interfering with your studies.

Accessibility Policy

Western has many services and programs that support the personal, physical, social, and academic needs of students with disabilities. For more information and links to these services: <http://accessibility.uwo.ca/students/index.htm>