European history between the wars of religion and the French Revolution marks a transition to a world we recognize as modern. Many of the ways people in the West today think about such topics as religion, politics, nature, ethics, economics, and the self were molded by conflicts and debates in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. No less than the era’s political revolutions (English, American, and French) and social transformations, the intellectual revolutions of the day created new conditions for human experience and reflection. At the same time, many aspects of thinking and cultural life remained deeply rooted in Europe’s past.

In this course we will explore some of the fascinating problems raised by European intellectual history in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. We will probe the cutting-edge thinking of the era, including the movement now labeled the Enlightenment, as well as challenges and reactions to new ideas. We will think about how mentalities change over time and what causes such shifts. We will consider ways in which modern thinking differs from what came before. In the process you will gain practice in the transferable skills of reasoning from evidence, critical analysis of texts and arguments, and clear and persuasive writing.

**Course Requirements**

1. **Participate in class meetings and in-class exercises.** In opting to take this course you are committing yourself to attend class sessions regularly. I will take attendance throughout the semester. If an illness or emergency forces you to miss a class, please email me in advance. A pattern of unexcused absences will lower your final grade in the course.

   Every meeting will include some class discussion of assigned readings, and on a few days we will spend the whole class period discussing a text. The reading load for this course is moderately heavy; some weeks we will read over 100 pages, though other weeks much less. You are expected to have read all texts closely before the class session in which they will be discussed and to come ready to voice your insights and questions and to engage with those of your classmates.

   To help focus your reading, you will write a number short analyses of assigned texts (see #2 below). At times you will also be asked do brief in-class writing exercises about readings or other class materials as a way to spur thought and discussion. Not all of these informal assignments will be collected, but those that are will be graded on a credit/no credit basis. Attendance and class participation (including in-class writing exercises) count for 20% of your final grade.
2. Write seven brief analytical responses of 250-300 words each answering a specific question about assigned readings. Questions will be posted on Learn@UW at least two days before the due date, often earlier. You will have the option of writing on most assigned texts and may choose which readings you respond to. The due dates noted in the class schedule below indicate the last day on which you may submit each paper. Response paper will be due by September 15, September 24, October 8, October 29, November 12, December 1, and December 10. To get credit for a response paper, you must submit an electronic copy in the Dropbox on Learn@UW before the start of the class period when the reading is due; the Dropbox closes at 1:00 p.m. sharp. Together, the response papers make up 15% of your final grade.

3. Write two analytical papers of 1400-1600 words (about 5 pages) each, due in both hard and electronic copy at the beginning of class on October 22 and November 19, respectively. Each paper will address a question based on texts and themes that we will have discussed in class. Late papers will be lowered one grade for each day they are late (e.g., a B paper becomes a BC if turned in a day late, a C the next day, etc.). The first paper is worth 15% and the second paper 20% of your final grade.

4. Write a take-home final exam of 1800-2000 words (about 6 pages), due in the Learn@UW Dropbox by 12:00 noon on Thursday, December 17. The exam questions will be handed out during the second-last week of class. The final counts for 30% of your final grade.

Disabilities and McBurney Students

If you are a McBurney student or have a disability that requires special accommodations, please let me know at the beginning of the semester and I will be happy to make arrangements.

Classroom Conduct

Please arrive to class meetings on time and silence any cell phones and electronic devices before the session begins. Be sure to bring a copy of the relevant texts, including those from the course reader and Learn@UW, to each meeting. If you wish, you may access electronic versions of readings on a laptop or tablet. Computers are also allowed for note-taking, but not for web surfing, using social media, playing games, or other purposes unrelated to class.

Communication and Office Hours

I welcome meeting with students outside of class time. You are strongly encouraged to come to office hours at any time during the semester, whether to discuss a question or problem you’ve encountered in the course, to get help on a paper, to explore an idea, or simply to chat. I hold regular office hours on Tuesdays, 11-12 and Wednesdays, 8:30-9:30, but if you have a schedule conflict during those times, let me know and we can arrange another time to meet. Generally the best way to reach me is via email (eric.carlsson@wisc.edu). I check email regularly and will try to respond within 24 hours. Often I can reply sooner than that, but on weekends response time may be up to 48 hours.

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism—representing somebody else’s work as your own—violates ethical and academic standards. You must turn in your own work and cite sources carefully, whether you repeat someone else’s exact words or if you paraphrase or draw on her or his ideas. If you have specific questions about plagiarism and how to avoid it, please speak with me or consult
Penalties for plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and other forms of cheating at UW range from failing an assignment or a course to being expelled from the university. For university policies on academic misconduct, see http://students.wisc.edu/doso/acadintegrity.html.

The History Lab

New this semester, the History Lab is a resource center where experts (Ph.D. students) will assist you with your history papers. Regardless of your stage in the writing process—choosing a topic, conducting research, composing a thesis, developing your argument, revising your drafts—the History Lab will help you sharpen your skills and become a better writer. For a one-on-one consultation, sign up online at http://go.wisc.edu/hlab.

Required Course Texts

Required books are available for purchase at local and online stores. Copies of each text have also been placed on reserve at College Library. The primary sources come in multiple English versions; please use the following editions:

- Benjamin J. Kaplan, Divided By Faith: Religious Conflict and the Practice of Toleration in Early Modern Europe (Harvard University Press, 2007)
- Daniel Defoe, Robinson Crusoe, ed. John Richetti (Penguin, 2001)
- Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, Nathan the Wise, with Related Documents, trans. and ed. Ronald Schechter (Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2004)

COURSE SCHEDULE

All readings not from the required course texts are posted on Learn@UW.

I. Introduction

Sep 3  
Course Introduction  

Sep 8  
Narratives of Modernity  
Brad S. Gregory, The Unintended Reformation: How a Religious Revolution Secularized Society, ch. 2

Sep 10  
Life and Thought in Early Modern Europe  
Benjamin J. Kaplan, Divided by Faith: Religious Conflict and the Practice of Toleration in Early Modern Europe, 1-47

II. Confession, Conflict, and Toleration

Sep 15  
Sixteenth-Century Reformations  
Response 1 due
Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, 48-98

Sep 17  Wars of Religion: The Continent
Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, 99-171

Sep 22  Wars of Religion: The British Isles
Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, 172-234

Sep 24  Toleration: Practice and Theory
Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, 294-358

**Response 2 due**

### III. Revolutions of the Mind

Sep 29  **Assault on the Ancients**
Galileo Galilei, Letter to the Grand Duchess Christina
Francis Bacon, *Novum Organon*

Oct 1  **How Do We Know?**
René Descartes, *Discourse on Method*
John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*

Oct 6  **The Newtonian Revolution**
Isaac Newton, *Principia*, *Opticks*, and Letter to Richard Bentley
Margaret C. Jacob, *The Radical Enlightenment: Pantheists, Freemasons and Republicans*, ch. 3

Oct 8  **The Great Separation: Religion and Politics**
Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*
Steven Nadler, *A Book Forged in Hell: Spinoza’s Scandalous Treatise and the Birth of the Secular Age*, ch. 8

Oct 13  **Reason’s Limits**
Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*
Pierre Bayle, “David,” in *Historical and Critical Dictionary*

**Response 3 due**

### IV. The Transformation of Public Life

Oct 15  **Books, Readers, and the Press**
Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, 1-127

Oct 20  **The Novel: Robinson Crusoe**
Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, 128-241

Oct 22  **New Venues of Sociability**

**PAPER 1 DUE**

Oct 27  **An Age of Faith: Religious Renewal Movements**
James Van Horn Melton, “Pietism, Politics, and the Public Sphere in Germany”
V. Themes in the French Enlightenment

Oct 29  From England to France  Response 4 due
Voltaire, *Letters Concerning the English Nation*, 5-66, 116-21

Nov 3  Reordering Knowledge: The *Encyclopédie*
Jean Le Rond D’Alembert, “Preliminary Discourse to the Encyclopedia”
and “Reflections on the Present State of the Republic of Letters”
Denis Diderot, “Encyclopédie”
Cesar Chesneau Dumarsais, “Philosopher”

Nov 5  Rousseau: *Philosophe* with a Difference
Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on Arts and Sciences; Discourse on the Origins of Inequality;* and *Émile*

VI. Virtue, Commerce, and Progress

Nov 10  Wealth and Virtue
Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees, or Private Vices, Public Benefits*

Nov 12  *Doux Commerce* and the Civilizing Process  Response 5 due
David Hume, “Of Luxury” and “Of Commerce”

Nov 17  Money, Markets, and Progress
Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*

VII. Religion, Enlightenment, and Counter-Enlightenment: Germany

Nov 19  The Religious Aufklärung  PAPER 2 DUE
David Sorkin, *The Religious Enlightenment: Protestants, Jews, and Catholics from London to Vienna*

Nov 24  Jews, Christians, and Toleration
Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Nathan the Wise* (entire)

Dec 1  Storm and Stress: Counter-Enlightenment  Response 6 due
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (entire)

VIII. To Remake the World: Ideas in the French Revolution

Dec 3  Ideas and Revolution
Jonathan Israel, *Revolutionary Ideas: An Intellectual History of the French Revolution from The Rights of Man to Robespierre*

Dec 8  The Rights of Man and Woman
*Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen*
Olympe de Gouges, *Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen*
Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*

Dec 10  Counter-Revolution and Conservatism  Response 7 due
Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*
Darrin M. McMahon, *Enemies of the Enlightenment: The French Counter-Enlightenment and the Making of Modernity*

Dec 15  Conclusion

Dec 17  **Take-home final due in Learn@UW Dropbox by 12:00 noon**