

University of Wisconsin-Madison

History 512
EUROPEAN CULTURAL AND INTELLECTUAL HISTORY, c. 1600-1815

Fall 2012

Tues & Thurs, 1:00-2:15 p.m., 1217 Mosse Humanities

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European thought in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries marks a watershed in Western—indeed, world—history. In this age of political and religious turmoil, intellectual ferment, and expanding horizons, norms that had shaped European life for a millennium and more came under unprecedented scrutiny and criticism. Long-held ideas about knowledge, nature, religion, politics, ethics, economics, and how societies should be ordered were challenged by bold new visions. Through their debates with each other and with tradition, European thinkers in this period, for better or worse, laid the intellectual foundations of the modern world.

This course focuses on key aspects of these fascinating changes. We will devote much of our attention to the Enlightenment, the age's cutting-edge movement in thought and culture. We will consider what it was, its origins, its development and spread, and the diverse ways in which some of its leading thinkers construed the world and called for change. But the Enlightenment was not the only vital movement of the period, and we will also look at how some contemporaries challenged and rejected its stances and values. Our aim is to equip you to think in more informed and probing ways about what it means to be modern. In the process you will gain practice in the skills of historical reasoning, critical analysis of texts and arguments, and effective communication, both oral and written.

Course Requirements

1. Attend and participate in class. Most meetings will include both lecture and class discussion. In opting to take this course you are committing yourself to attend all sessions and to participate actively in our discussions. If an illness or emergency requires you to miss a class, please email me in advance. Three or more unexcused absences will lower your final grade in the course.

2. Read all assigned texts closely and thoughtfully *before* the class session in which they will be discussed. Come ready to voice your insights, to engage with those of your classmates, and to raise questions about what you find in the readings. To help focus your thinking, readings will sometimes be accompanied by a set of questions, posted on Learn@UW. At other times you may be asked to devise your own discussion questions or complete other preparatory exercises. Be sure to bring a copy of the relevant texts, including those posted on Learn@UW, to each meeting. If you wish, you may bring an electronic version of posted texts on a tablet or laptop. Attendance and class participation count for 15% of your final grade.

3. Write five one-page papers (about 300 words each) responding to a specific question about assigned readings. You will have the opportunity to write on most of the readings. Questions will be posted on Learn@UW. You may choose which readings you respond to, but the first paper must be turned in by September 25, the second by October 9, the third by November 6, the fourth by November 20, and the fifth by December 11. 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. No late papers accepted. Together the five responses make up 15% of your final grade.

4. Write two analytical papers of 1600-1800 words (5-6 pages) each, due in both hard and electronic copy at the beginning of class on October 16 and November 15, respectively. Each paper will address a question based on assigned 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.). Each paper is worth 20% of your final grade.

5. Write a take-home final exam of 2100-2400 words (about 7 pages), due in the Learn@UW dropbox by 12:00 noon on Saturday, December 22. The exam questions will be handed out during the last week of class. The final counts for 30% of your final grade.

Communication

I enjoy teaching and I enjoy talking with students. If you have questions relating to any aspect of the course or if you just want to explore an idea, please don't hesitate to speak with me after class or come to office hours. I have set aside time for drop-in appointments on Tuesdays, 9-10 and Thursdays, 11-12 but am in my office at other times and am happy to arrange a different time to meet if you aren't able to come to the regular office hours. Generally the best way to reach me is via email (ewcarlss@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.

Classroom Conduct

Please arrive to our meetings on time and silence cell phones before the session begins. Once class has started, please refrain from texting, reading newspapers, etc., and give your full attention to matters at hand. You may use a computer to take notes or access documents used in class. You may not use it to surf the web, check Facebook, play games, or for other purposes unrelated to class. You are encouraged to ask questions and make relevant comments during lecture. As noted above, you are expected to participate actively in class discussions.

Academic Honesty

You are expected to do your own academic work in this course and to cite sources as necessary. Failing to do so is academic dishonesty. Penalties for scholastic misconduct, including plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration, range from failing a course to being expelled from the university. For university policies concerning academic misconduct, see <http://students.wisc.edu/saja/misconduct/UWS14.html>. If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it, please speak with me or consult http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/QPA_plagiarism.html.

Required Course Texts

Required books are available for purchase at the University Bookstore as well as at other 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:

Isaac Kramnick, ed., *The Portable Enlightenment Reader* (Penguin, 1995)
John Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, ed. James Tully (Hackett, 1983)
Voltaire, *Philosophical Letters*, ed. John Leigh, trans. Prudence L. Steiner (Hackett, 2007)
Denis Diderot, *Rameau's Nephew* and *D'Alembert's Dream*, trans. Leonard Tancock (Penguin, 1966)
Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, ed. Laurence Dickey (Hackett, 1993)
Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Nathan the Wise, with Related Documents*, trans. and ed. Ronald Schechter (Bedford/St. Martin's, 2004)

Many readings will also be posted on Learn@UW. See the schedule below for details.

COURSE SCHEDULE

NOTE: *PER* refers to Isaac Kramnick, *The Portable Enlightenment Reader*. Readings marked with an asterisk (*) are posted on our Learn @UW course page.

I. Introduction: Enlightenment, Modernity, and Secularization

- Sep 4 Course Introduction
- Sep 6 The Enlightenment and Narratives of Modernity
Immanuel Kant, "What Is Enlightenment?" (1784) [*PER*, 1-7]
Jonathan I. Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650-1750* (2001), 1-13*
- Sep 11 Modernity and Secularization
Brad S. Gregory, *The Unintended Reformation: How a Religious Revolution Secularized Society* (2012), 74-128*

II. Nature and Knowledge

- Sep 13 Assault on the Ancients
Galileo Galilei, *Letter to the Grand Duchess Christina* (1615)*
Francis Bacon, *Novum Organum* (1620) [*PER*, 39-42]
- Sep 18 How Do We Know?
René Descartes, *Discourse on Method* (1637) [*PER*, 181-5]
John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690) [*PER*, 185-8]
- Sep 20 The Newtonian Revolution

Isaac Newton, *Principia, Opticks, and Letter to Richard Bentley* [PER, 43-7, 96-100]
Margaret C. Jacob, *The Radical Enlightenment: Pantheists, Freemasons and Republicans*,
2d ed (2006), 59-79*

Sep 25 Reason's Limits RESPONSE 1 DUE
Blaise Pascal, *Pensées* (1660s)*
Pierre Bayle, *Historical and Critical Dictionary* (1702 ed.)*

III. The Great Separation: Politics and Religion

Sep 27 Theorizing the State
Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (1651)*
John Locke, *The Second Treatise on Government* (1680s) [PER, 395-405]
Mark Lilla, *The Stillborn God: Religion, Politics, and the Modern West* (2007), 55-103*

Oct 2 Inventing "Religion"
Peter Harrison, *'Religion' and the Religions in the English Enlightenment* (1990), 61-98*

Oct 4 Radical Enlightenment
Baruch Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise* (1670)*
Jonathan Israel, *Enlightenment Contested: Philosophy, Modernity and the Emancipation of
Man 1670-1752* (2006), 43-51*

Oct 9 Toleration: Practice and Theory RESPONSE 2 DUE
John Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (1689) (entire)

IV. The Rise of the Public

Oct 11 Books, Readers, and the Press
James Van Horn Melton, *The Rise of the Public in Enlightenment Europe* (2001), 1-15*
Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *Print Culture and Enlightenment Thought* (1986), 3-11, 13-4, 19-
21*

Oct 16 Venues of Sociability PAPER 1 DUE
"The Character of a Coffee-House" and "Coffee-Houses Vindicated" (1670s)*
Documents on Salon Life in 18th-Century Paris*
Dena Goodman, "Enlightenment Salons: The Convergence of Female and
Philosophic Ambitions" (1989)*

Oct 18 Academies, Societies, and Secret Societies
Margaret C. Jacob, *Living the Enlightenment: Freemasonry and Politics in Eighteenth-
Century Europe* (1991), 143-61, 215-24*

V. Themes in the French Enlightenment

Oct 23 From England to France
Voltaire, *Philosophical Letters* (1733), 1-50, 96-122

