

ENLIGHTENMENT, REVOLUTION AND DEMOCRACY

BLHS-108

Mondays, 5:40-10:15

Location: New North 311

Georgetown University, Liberal Studies, Summer 2012

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Course Description

Kant suggested “Dare to Know” as the motto that best described the Enlightenment. Different Enlightenment thinkers have different understandings of knowledge and are concerned with understanding and critiquing different aspects of society, but they hold in common the “daring” conviction that they could come to understand society through their own faculties. In this course, we will explore the ideas and attitudes of the Enlightenment by examining Enlightenment political philosophy and literature.

In examining Enlightenment political philosophy, we will explore Enlightenment conceptions of freedom, authority, community, equality, self-government, and individual rights. The course will consider the most important philosophical articulations of these ideas as well as their political articulation in the American and French Revolutions. We will examine variations within Enlightenment political thought as well as critical reactions to Enlightenment thought.

In examining Enlightenment literature, we will explore the relationship between literature and culture, including the culture of political philosophy. How do “literary” texts differ from political philosophy texts? How are they similar? How do they contribute to Enlightenment thought whether through reflecting Enlightenment ideas, critiquing them, or perhaps constructing them in alignment with texts from other disciplines?

Learning Objectives

This course is intended to give students a strong understanding of Enlightenment thought. Specifically, by the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Explain the different meanings and modalities of “enlightenment,” as well as identify commonalities and differences among different thinkers’ conceptions of “enlightenment.”
2. Discuss how Enlightenment thought is similar to and different from pre-Enlightenment thought.
3. Articulate Enlightenment conceptions of freedom and authority and identify the differing relationships between these two concepts in different authors’ works.
4. Articulate and analyze Enlightenment conceptions of reason, knowledge, and critique.

5. Describe modes of subjectivity that emerged during the Enlightenment, specifically forms of subjectivity arising from a democratic context.
6. Understand Enlightenment accounts of democratic self-government and the relationship of these accounts to the American and French Revolutions.
7. Discuss changes in conceptions of affective and domestic life during the Enlightenment, as well as the relationship of these changes to changing understandings of equality, freedom, and authority in the political community.
8. Explain the role of “universal rights” in justifying social and political revolutions.
9. Describe Counter-Enlightenment reactions to Enlightenment ideas.
10. Apply Enlightenment ideas to our current world and evaluate the validity of Enlightenment ideas today.

In addition to these substantive goals, students will further develop their research, writing, oral communication, and analytical skills. Specifically, students will be expected to:

1. Conduct research on the historical context in which texts were written and on the history of texts’ reception.
2. Present this research before the class in a clear, well-structured oral presentation.
3. Write clear, precise papers that develop rigorous arguments and provide solid evidence for their claims.
4. In writing and discussion, offer compelling arguments for particular interpretations of texts, evaluate the validity and soundness of authors’ arguments, and defend particular conceptions of concepts such as freedom, authority, individuality, and rights.

Required Texts

(TEXTS NOT LISTED HERE WILL BE AVAILABLE ON BLACKBOARD. YOU ARE REQUIRED TO PRINT THESE TEXTS OUT AND BRING THEM TO CLASS IN HARD COPY.)

Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko* ISBN-10: 019953876X ISBN-13 978-0199538768

Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (Oxford edition) ISBN-10: 0199539022 ISBN-13: 978-0199539024

John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, edited by C. B. Macpherson (Hackett edition) ISBN-10: 0915144867 ISBN-13: 978-0915144860

Thomas Paine, *Common Sense* (Dover edition) ISBN-10: 0486296024 ISBN-13: 978-0486296029

Alexander Pope, *Rape of the Lock* ISBN-10: 0312115695 ISBN-13: 978-0312115692

Roy Porter, *The Enlightenment* ISBN-10: 0333945050 ISBN-13: 978-0333945056

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Basic Political Writings*, trans. Donald A. Cress (Hackett edition) ISBN-10: 0872200477 ISBN-13: 978-0872200470

Mary Wollstonecraft, *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway and Denmark* ISBN-10:0199230633 ISBN-13: 978-0199230631

Requirements and Grading

Formal Assignments:

Blackboard Postings: Each student will post on Blackboard six times in response to prompts offered by the professor. Students should split their posts evenly between political philosophy and literary topics. An interdisciplinary approach is welcomed. Posts should appear 24 hours before the class to which they relate and should take up issues from the readings for that class. Please consider carefully your plans for posting so that you are able to post six times before the end of the class. Late posts or multiple posts offered in a single week will not count towards this requirement. Posts should be between 250 and 500 words long and adhere to standard methods of composition. We welcome posts that advance discussions in class and/or discussions on the Blackboard page themselves. **25 percent** of grade

Short Paper (due July 2): A 5 page paper devoted to a topic chosen by the professors. **20 percent** of grade

Long Paper (due August 10): A 7 to 10 page paper devoted to a topic chosen by the professors and preceded by a one-page proposal. **30 percent** of grade

Presentation: A “teachback” which introduces us to one of the texts covered in class. The teachback should represent considerable research on the work assigned and the student should be prepared to present us with the historical context for the work, information about its author, a history of reception, and coverage of the major themes and issues that critics have felt are important in discussing it. A bibliography should be included. The “teachback” should end with discussion questions that invite other students to interact with the presenter. Your “teachback” presentation should not be less than 20 minutes or more than 30 minutes, excluding discussion. **15 percent** of grade

Class Participation: Students are expected to participate fully in the class, demonstrating their engagement with the class materials and with the ongoing discussion. Discussion should advance and deepen our level of thought about the materials. Generally, discussion points should be drawn directly from the texts or lectures and students should be able to move fluidly from text to discussion point and back again. **10 percent** of grade

Grades will be calculated as follows:

93% – 100% = A	90% – 92% = A-	
87% – 89% = B+	83% – 86% = B	80% – 82% = B-
77% – 79% = C+	73% – 76% = C	70% – 72% = C-
67% – 69% = D+	60% – 66% = D	
Below 60% = F		

Policy on late paper submissions

One step of a letter grade will be deducted for each day a paper is late (e.g., from an A- to a B+, from a B+ to a B, etc.).

Policy on incompletes

Incompletes will be granted only in exceptional circumstances, such as a family or medical emergency. If an incomplete is granted, all work must be completed by September 15, 2012.

Attendance

Your attendance is vital to your learning and the learning of your classmates. You are expected to attend every class meeting. We understand that, on rare occasion, there are reasons beyond your control that might prevent you from attending a session (e.g., illness or a family emergency). If you know ahead of time that you must miss class for a valid reason, you **must** discuss it with us beforehand, or it will be considered an unexcused absence. If you miss class unexpectedly due to an emergency, you must obtain a note from a dean to excuse the absence.

Unexcused absences will result in a deduction of one step of a letter grade from your final grade (e.g., from a B to a B-). If you miss two classes for any reason, you may be dropped from the course involuntarily for failing to satisfy the requirements of the course.

Essay Preparation

Documentation for your essays must follow the MLA guidelines. Please note that neither the TA nor the professor will serve as your personal editors and that this is not a remedial course. All writing submitted for review or posted on line should be checked for grammatical and stylistic issues and written in standard English. Papers with notable errors will be given an F and returned for revision without further comment.

Students are expected to meet with the professor during office hours at least once and as needed thereafter, to meet with the TA at least once and otherwise as needed, and to make full use of the Writing Center.

LAPTOP AND SMART PHONE POLICY:

Please feel free to bring these to class and use them as appropriate when related to the work we are doing as a class. Any use for any other purpose will result in the laptop or phone being banned from the class for the duration of the semester. Additionally, the student will incur one unexcused absence for that day.

Office Hours

Professor Temple is available by appointment.
Professor Volmert is available by appointment.

Georgetown's Honor System

All students are expected to follow Georgetown's honor code unconditionally. Plagiarism violates the purpose and undermines the integrity of intellectual inquiry and will not be tolerated under any circumstances. We assume you have read the honor code material located at www.georgetown.edu/honor, and in particular have read the following documents: *Honor Council Pamphlet*, "What Is Plagiarism?," "Sanctioning Guidelines," and "Expedited Sanctioning Process."

Submitting material in fulfillment of the requirements of this course means that you have abided by the Georgetown honor pledge:

In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown Honor System: To be honest in any academic endeavor, and to conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together.

Any confirmed case of academic misconduct will, at minimum, result in failure on and zero credit for that assignment. Honor code violations will also be referred to the Honor Council and your dean.

Accommodating Disabilities

If you believe you have a disability, then you should contact the Academic Resource Center at 202-687-8354 (arc@georgetown.edu) for further information. The Center is located in the Leavey Center, Suite 335. The Academic Resource Center is the campus office responsible for reviewing documentation provided by students with disabilities and for determining reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and University policies.

Course schedule:

May 21: Course Introduction READ ROY PORTER *The Enlightenment* BEFORE THIS CLASS. Your work in this class will be related to that reading. Research session. (Temple and Volmert)

May 28: Freedom and Authority (Temple)

Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko*

Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe* Selections

June 4: Authority and Freedom (Volmert)

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (selections)

John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government* (selections)

June 11: The Literature of Reason, Knowledge and Critique (Temple)

Alexander Pope, *Rape of the Lock*

Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary* (Excerpts)

Samuel Johnson's *Vanity of Human Wishes* (Available on Blackboard)

Samuel Johnson, Excerpts from *Prayers and Meditations*

June 18: Reason, Knowledge, and Critique (Volmert)

Immanuel Kant, "What Is Enlightenment?"

Jean le Rond d'Alembert, "Preliminary Discourse," *Encyclopedia* (selections)

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* (in *Basic Political Writings*)

June 25: The Democratic Subject (What kind of people emerge in a democratic context?)
(Temple)

Johnson, *Rasselas*

Samuel Richardson, *Pamela* (selections)

Henry Fielding, *Shamela*; selections from *Tom Jones*

July 2: Democratic Self-Government (Volmert)

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, Books I, II, III, and Book IV, chaps. 1–3 (in *Basic Political Writings*)

SHORT PAPERS DUE: PLEASE POST TO BLACKBOARD, EMAIL TO BOTH PROFESSORS AND TURN IN A HARD COPY VERSION IN CLASS.

July 9: *Politics and the Domestic, Affective Revolution* (Temple)

Thomas Sheridan, *School for Scandal*

Mary Wollstonecraft, *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway and Denmark*

William Blake, *Songs of Innocence and Experience* Selections

July 16: *The American Revolution: Independence and Republican Government* (Volmert)

“Declaration of Independence”

Thomas Paine, *Common Sense*

The Federalist (selections)

July 23: *English Contributions to Revolution* (Temple)

Mary Wollstonecraft, *Maria*

William Godwin, *Caleb Williams* (selections)

July 30: *The French Revolution: Equality and Universal Rights* (Volmert)

Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès, “What Is the Third Estate?”

“Declaration of the Rights of Man”

Olympe de Gouges, “Declaration of the Rights of Woman”

Robert Darnton, “What Was Revolutionary about the French Revolution?”

PROPOSALS FOR FINAL PAPERS DUE: Proposals should be one to two pages that explain your subject area, your general approach or argument, and include a short bibliography. PLEASE POST TO BLACKBOARD, EMAIL TO BOTH PROFESSORS AND TURN IN A HARD COPY VERSION IN CLASS.

August 6: *Enlightenment and Counter-Enlightenment: Conservatism and Romanticism*
(Temple and Volmert)

Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (selections)

William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Lyrical Ballads* (selections)

Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (selections)

AUGUST 10: FINAL PAPERS DUE. PLEASE POST TO BLACKBOARD, EMAIL TO BOTH PROFESSORS AND TURN IN A HARD COPY VERSION IN CLASS.