

ENLIGHTENMENT, REVOLUTION AND DEMOCRACY SPRING 2017

BLHS-108

Mondays: 6:30 to 10:05

Class Location: MASS AVE Campus

Professor:

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PLEASE NOTE: THIS SYLLABUS IS SUBJECT TO REVISION/MODIFICATION

Course Description

Kant suggested “Dare to Know” as the motto that best described the Enlightenment, but he may just as well have suggested “Dare to Critique,” for knowledge during this period mapped onto critique and vice versa. 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 through examining literature and philosophy in the Enlightenment context.

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. Explain the Enlightenment concept of progress.
11. Apply Enlightenment ideas to our current world and evaluate the validity of Enlightenment ideas today as well as explain how Enlightenment ideas were both created in and reflected in literary works of the period.
12. Analyze Enlightenment literature and its relationship to Enlightenment thought. Identify generic conventions of various works of literature and relate them to Enlightenment thought.

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 major Enlightenment figures.
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 critique particular conceptions of concepts such as freedom, authority, individuality, and rights.

Required Texts

(TEXTS THAT ARE NOT LISTED HERE WILL BE AVAILABLE ON BLACKBOARD. YOU ARE REQUIRED TO PRINT THOSE TEXTS OUT AND BRING THEM TO CLASS IN HARD COPY. YOU MUST HAVE HARD COPY TO PARTICIPATE IN OUR CLASSROOM DISCUSSIONS.)

Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko*. Ed. Catherine Gallagher. ISBN-10: 0312-10813-3 // ISBN-13: 2900312108136

Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*. Ed. Michael Shinagel. ISBN-10: 0393-96452-3 // ISBN-13: 978-0393964523

Voltaire, *Candide*. Trans. Ed. Robert M. Adams. ISBN-10: 0393960587 // ISBN-13: 978-0393960587

Mary Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Woman and the Wrongs of Woman, or Maria*. Eds. Anne K. Mellor and Noelle Chao. ISBN-13: 978-0321182739

Requirements and Grading

Formal Assignments:

Blackboard Postings: Each student will post on Blackboard **five** times. 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 five times before the end of the semester. Late posts or multiple posts offered in a single week will not count towards this requirement. Posts should be between 350 and 500 words long and adhere to

standard methods of composition. An interdisciplinary approach is welcomed (connecting philosophical topics/ideas with literary works, for instance). I especially welcome posts that advance discussions in class and/or from other Blackboard entries themselves. **15 percent** of grade (150 points: 30 points each post).

Two Essays: Two five-page papers. Prompts to be emailed. Your paper may consist of a revision and expansion of a Blackboard posting. **Each paper** is worth **20 percent** of your grade (200 points each).

Rock Stars of the Enlightenment (Teachback): A “teachback” which introduces us to a major Enlightenment figure. The teachback should represent considerable research on the work assigned and the student should be prepared to present us with biographical details, a summary of major works and their content, and an appraisal of the figure’s impact on Enlightenment thought. 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 25 minutes, excluding discussion. Everything in your presentation should be cited as per the honor code. **10 percent** of grade (100 points).

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. **15 percent** of grade (75 points in quizzes; 75 points contribution to discussion).

Final Examination: Precise format/content TBA. **20 percent** of grade (200 points)

Total number of points for course: 1,000

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.).

Attendance

Your attendance is vital to your learning and the learning of your classmates. You are expected to attend every class meeting. I understand that, on rare occasions, there are reasons beyond

your control that might prevent you from attending a session (e.g., illness or a family emergency). If you know in advance that you must miss class for a valid reason, you **must** discuss it with me 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.**

Policy on incompletes

Incompletes will be granted only in exceptional circumstances, such as a family or medical emergency. Students must contact me in advance regarding incompletes.

Essay Preparation

Documentation for your essays must follow the MLA guidelines. Please note that the professor is not your personal editor 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 encouraged to meet with the professor as needed and to make full use of the Writing Center. There will be **one mandatory writing workshop** during the semester, held on a Saturday in early March. Exact date is TBD.

LAPTOP AND SMART PHONE POLICY:

No electronics should be used in class without the professor's approval. Phones should be silenced and put away; laptops should be closed. Although we may occasionally consult our laptops for information or use them in presentations, any unauthorized usage will be construed as one absence from class. Additionally, laptops or phones used without prior approval will be banished from the class for the remainder of the semester.

NOTE-TAKING POLICY

Learning to take class notes is an important college-level skill. Students should expect to take notes in every class and to keep their notes and other materials in a well-organized notebook. The best note-taking does not end in class, but occurs when students return to their notes, organize and review them. To encourage this, you may substitute your class notes for the relevant class for a blackboard posting **once** during the course of the semester.

Office Hours

By appointment and before or after class. I will typically arrive NLT 6:00pm and will remain after class for up to 15 minutes, as needed.

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. I 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.

Turnitin.com

Students acknowledge that by taking this course all required papers can be submitted for a Textual Similarity Review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the terms of use agreement posted on the Turnitin.com site.

Plagiarism

In accord with university policy, all incidents of suspected plagiarism or other Honor Code violations will be reported to the Honor Council without fail.

If the Honor Council finds that a student has plagiarized or has violated the Honor Code in any other way, the student will receive a grade of F for the course.

Policy Accommodating Students' Religious Observances

The following is university policy:

Georgetown University promotes respect for all religions. Any student who is unable to attend classes or to participate in any examination, presentation, or assignment on a given day because of the observance of a major religious holiday or related travel shall be excused and provided with the opportunity to make up, without unreasonable burden, any work that has been missed for this reason and shall not in any other way be penalized for the absence or rescheduled work. Students will remain responsible for all assigned work. Students should notify professors in writing at the beginning of the semester of religious observances that conflict with their classes.

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:

11 Jan: Class One: Course Introduction Please read the Kramnick “Introduction” to the *Portable Enlightenment Reader* prior to class and Kant’s “Dare to Know,” both available on Blackboard. Be prepared to write about what you have read.

16 Jan: NO CLASS: MLK DAY (during the week, view online lecture re: *Oroonoko*)

23 Jan: Class Two: Read Aphra Behn’s *Oroonoko* and the Introduction to the text by Catherine Gallagher. You should read the novel carefully, noting scenes that take up any of the Enlightenment issues we discussed in the previous class, particularly those of the importance of education, experience, progress, slavery and freedom, and gender, race and class destabilization.

30 Jan: Class Three: Philosophical Foundations. This class will consider competing, foundational views of the social contract. Read brief excerpts from Thomas Hobbes’s *Leviathan*, John Locke’s *Second Treatise on Government*, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s *The Social Contract*. Consider the ways in which these thinkers differ from one another in their concepts of the social contract. Read first half of *Robinson Crusoe*. We will discuss the contribution that social contract theory makes to Enlightenment thought and to democratic society.

6 Feb: Class Four: Finish *Robinson Crusoe* and read either Richetti’s or Novak’s critical essay from the supplementary material in Shinagel’s edition. How is *Crusoe* an Enlightenment text? What kind of world does it depict? Hobbesian? Lockean? Consider emerging conceptions of the modern self.

13 Feb: Class Five: The Scottish Enlightenment, Virtue Ethics, and Moral Sensibility. This class will address the moral theories advanced by Scottish Enlightenment thinkers. Read excerpts from David Hume’s *A Treatise on Human Nature* and his essay “On Miracles,” Francis Hutcheson’s *An Inquiry Concerning our Ideas of Virtue or Moral Good*, and Adam Smith’s *Theory of Moral Sentiments*. Read two poems: Frances Greville’s “A Prayer for Indifference” and Helen Maria Williams’s “To Sensibility.”

20 Feb: Presidents Day: NO CLASS. View online lectures for The Scottish Enlightenment.

27 Feb: Class Six: Introduction to the modern novel. **Read selections of Richardson’s *Pamela* and Fielding’s *Shamela*, available on Blackboard.** The novel and novella will introduce us to the “birth of the novel” and to ideas of individualism and literary realism. Note how novelistic

techniques expand our understanding of the meaning of “experience” during this period. Important issues include **education** (What constitutes the best education? How do we learn? What is the role of the “authorities”? When and why should we obey?), **sincerity** (How do we know that someone is being sincere?), and **satire**.

SPRING BREAK: 3-10 March

13 March: Class Seven (TENTATIVE): We will meet at Lauinger Library on the Main Campus for an introduction to rare books related to our course. **NOTE: First Paper Due at NOON. Please post your paper on Blackboard and email it to me.**

20 March: Class Eight: Read Voltaire’s *Candide* and selections from the edition’s background and critical responses (pages 79-89; 181-88). Read selection from Voltaire’s *Philosophical Dictionary* (Democracy, Equality, Fatherland, and Liberty of the Press)—available on Blackboard. Consider the rhetorical aims of satire in the context of the Enlightenment.

27 March: Class Nine: Gathering Knowledge. Read excerpts from the following: D’Alembert’s Preliminary Discourse to the *Encyclopaedia* of Diderot; Thomas Jefferson’s *Notes on the State of Virginia*; Ben Franklin’s *Autobiography*. How are conceptions of self-knowledge tied to broader conceptions of knowledge (of the world)? What problems emerge in the taxonomic pursuit of knowledge? Read excerpt from Michel Foucault’s *The Order of Things*.

1 April: (SATURDAY, 9:00am – 4:00pm): Writing Workshop at SCS Building (640 Mass Ave). There will be two sessions, morning and afternoon. Lunch (pizza) at noon. Approximately half of the class will attend in the morning, the other half in the afternoon. All welcome for lunch.

3 April: Class Ten: Abolition and Religious Dissent. Read from debates in British parliament over the abolition of slavery, excerpts from *The Interesting Life of Olaudah Equiano*, selected poems by Phillis Wheatley, Anna Barbauld’s “Epistle to William Wilberforce,” and “Dialogue between a Master and Slave.” Read abolitionist poems (TBA). Read excerpts from Anna Barbauld’s political pamphlet *Address to the Opposers of the Corporation and Test Acts* (1790). Visit NYPL website on abolition: <http://abolition.nypl.org/>

10 April: Class Eleven: The American Revolution. Read excerpts from Thomas Paine’s *Common Sense*, *The Age of Reason*, and the *Federalist Papers*. Read excerpts from Danielle Allen’s *Our Declaration: A Reading of the Declaration of Independence in Defense of Equality*. We will discuss the role of Enlightenment ideals in forming the ideological basis for the American Revolution. Consider especially the impact of John Locke and social contract theory on natural rights, equality, personal freedom, and resistance to oppressive autocratic rule. How do we reconcile the founding fathers’ views on slavery in light of the Declaration and Enlightenment thought?

12-17 APRIL: EASTER BREAK (NO CLASS ON 17 APRIL)

21 April: (ESSAY #2 DUE AT NOON – Post to Blackboard and email to me)

24 April: Class Twelve: The French Revolution. Read excerpts from Richard Price's sermon *A Discourse on the Love of Our Country*, The National Assembly's "Declaration of the Rights of Man," Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, Paine's *Rights of Man*, and Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindications of the Rights of Men*. Read from Robespierre's "Justification of the Use of Terror." What went wrong with the French Revolution? How were the teachings of Rousseau used and abused? How did the Terror evolve and what is its legacy? We will consider society's reaction to the prolonged wars between England and France.

1 May: Class Thirteen: Wollstonecraft and Social Revolution: Successes and Failures. Read *The Wrongs of Woman; or, Maria* and consider issues of revolution and rebellion in light of Wollstonecraft's prose style and methods. Be alert to representations of power and authority, to gender issues and to the advantages and disadvantages of new knowledge in Wollstonecraft. When is revolution justified? When does authority become despotism? Using Wollstonecraft's work as a touchstone, we will discuss the successes and failures of the Enlightenment.

8 MAY: FINAL EXAM: This take-home exam will be open book and open notes. Please use your laptops to write your responses which must be emailed and posted on Blackboard by a time TBA.