GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY
BLHS 108-01
Enlightenment, Revolution, and Democracy
Wednesdays, 6.00 – 10.00 PM at 640 Massachusetts Avenue NW

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Office Hours: TBA and by appointment

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Office Hours: TBA and by appointment

Syllabus

In a true state of nature, indeed, all men are born equal, but they cannot continue in this equality. Society makes them lose it, and they recover it only by the protection of laws.

Montesquieu, The Spirit of Laws, 1748

I. Course Objectives

Between 1600 and 1800, the Atlantic world experienced a series of changes that each had long-lasting implications for the people of the early modern world. In particular, the eras of the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment changed the way people viewed themselves and the world around them. Scientific thinkers, who relied on the empirical method to help understand and contemplate the world, overturned established doctrines and traditional world views. Following this trend, Enlightenment
philosophers applied the scientific method to human society in order to reveal the laws that govern society just as it discovered the laws governing the natural world. Individuals were urged to “dare to know”, meaning that people should have the courage to use their own intellectual capacity for understanding. In the course of “daring to know”, Enlightenment thinkers challenged the traditional authorities, institutions and beliefs, and developed ideological concepts that would ultimately provide the foundation for new attitudes towards society and for new ways to govern.

During this semester we will examine important aspects as well as repercussions of both the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment that would ultimately usher in the modern era. Intellectual shifts brought forth reform movements that spawned political revolutions in the Americas as well as in France. We will analyze how the quest for human progress and the complex reform movements of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries affected economic-, religious-, and political life in Europe and North America.

Emphasis will be placed on writing skills, critical reading, and thoughtful analysis. Course assignments are designed to develop historical-, art historical-, and literary critical thinking. Students will be assessed on a combination of in-class discussion participation, two short essays, and a longer term paper. The term paper, based on critical analysis and comparisons of multiple texts, will be created in distinct stages using checkpoints to allow the professors to guide students in the analytical and writing process. All student work should reflect a solid and contextualized understanding of assigned texts and thematic material.

II. Learning Goals
   After this class, students should be able to
   1. Understand and comprehend the basic historical chronology and historical analysis of the period covered.
   2. Explain historical cause and effect as it relates to the issues of the Age of Reason and later part of the 18th century, especially the importance of ideology.
   3. Relate the historical trends of the early modern period to the modern era.
   4. Comprehend the differences in historical interpretation in major schools of historical thought
   5. Understand the legacy of the Scientific Revolution, the Enlightenment, and the early liberal revolutions.
   6. Link political and social developments to the parallel developments in the arts, literature and philosophy.
   7. Analyze and contextualize primary source readings.
   8. Develop and defend their arguments using textual and factual evidence.
   9. Compare and understand the differences between macro and micro history.
   10. Develop an arguable thesis and thoughtful written analysis, using clear & concise language.

III. Format

The class will meet on Wednesday evenings from 6:00-10:00 PM for lecture and discussion
Professors Stefan Zimmers and Henriette Rahusen will split the teaching- and grading responsibilities.
IV. Discussion Readings

Galileo, *Discoveries and Opinions of Galileo* ISBN 0385092393
Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative* ISBN 9780142437162
Dena Goodman, *Enlightenment Salons* on Blackboard
Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay, *The Federalist Papers* online selections TBA

V. Requirements and Grading

**Discussions, Participation, Reading comments - 25% of total grade**

Your *active* participation in the weekly discussion of a primary source document or scholarly article is mandatory. Students will be required to submit between 2-3 comments/questions that analyze the assigned reading. These contributions must be posted onto Blackboard by Tuesday evening. Students must read the questions and comments posted by the other students before the class meets, and must be ready to discuss the assigned text as well as the posted reactions during the weekly classes. The value of each class ultimately rests on your commitment to attend class and to be prepared to engage in a lively intellectual exchange.

Attendance and participation is *Mandatory* for all students. One *unexcused absence* will result in a corresponding reduction of 5% of your total grade. Two *unexcused absences* will result in 2 x 5% = 10% reduction of your total grade, significantly increasing your chances of failing the course. In accordance with BALS program policy, 3 absences for any reason may result in a failing grade for the course.

Excessive Tardiness (defined as more than 20 minutes) will be counted as an absence. Repeated Tardiness (defined as being tardy between 5-20 minutes) for more than 2 classes will count as an absence.

Please note that work obligations are NOT EXCUSED.

**Written Assignments**

**TWO REACTION PAPERS** (4-5 pages), due Feb. 25th and April 1, will each be worth 20% of your total grade. The two short papers will consist of your reactions to one of the assigned primary source readings; they cannot be mere book reports. Instead of a final exam, a **TERM PAPER** of between 10-12 pages in length will be worth 35% of your grade. The term paper will require research on a topic covered during the semester. Students will select their own topics following a consultation with the instructors. The term paper should incorporate research that uses both primary and secondary sources. All papers will follow either the MLA or 'Chicago Manual of Style' format. All papers should be typed and original in conception, containing a clearly argued thesis. They should present your analysis of a given issue based on evidence from the text and sound reasoning. Specific instructions will be handed out well in advance. 

**Failure to complete ANY of these assignments will result in failure of the course.**
Late Work and Incompletes
You are responsible for submitting all work on time. The two reaction papers are due in hard copy at the beginning of the designated class; the term paper (final) must be submitted as an email attachment. **The papers will be penalized by a 1/3 grade reduction for each day they are late.**

**Incompletes** are granted by the professors only in the most extreme situations (medical or family emergencies), and only when approved by the Dean. In consultation with the professors, it is your responsibility to submit the appropriate paper work –including a mutually agreed upon final date for submission of any assignment still outstanding- and **obtain the Dean’s approval** for an incomplete. Work-related deadlines / problems do not merit the granting of an incomplete.

**Grades** will be calculated according to the scale below:

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**Georgetown Honor Code:**

**Honor Pledge:**

*In the pursuit of 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.*

All students are expected to follow Georgetown’s honor code unconditionally. Should you have questions, please refer to the honor code material available at [www.georgetown.edu/honor](http://www.georgetown.edu/honor) or talk to one of the professors. All or some papers written for this course will be submitted to turnitin.com in order to verify that students have handed in original work.

Any case of plagiarism upheld by the Honor Council **WILL** result in a failure for the assignment and/or for the course as decided by the professors.

**Statement of Disability**

- If you have a disability, you should contact the Academic Resource Center (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. Website: [http://www2.georgetown.edu/studentaffairs/arc/disability/](http://www2.georgetown.edu/studentaffairs/arc/disability/)
VI. Lecture schedule and Discussion topics

Note on the Syllabus and Instructional Continuity. If in the case of a school closure due to an unforeseen event, we will hold class in the virtual environment. Once Georgetown has made a decision to cancel in-person classes, you should check Blackboard under announcements. You will find information there about material to read/view that will take the place of the lecture. We will then shift the classroom discussion to the Blackboard discussion board. You will need to be an active participant on this discussion board by posting comments and engaging in discourse with your fellow students. Rather than one single class period, we will have a 2 day asynchronous discussion on the course content which will require (at a minimum) of 4-5 posts and class engagement.

Week One: 1/14
Introduction to the Course
Language & History

Instructor: R

Week Two: 1/21
The Scientific Revolution
Read Galileo, Discoveries and Opinions of Galileo - selected pages, see Blackboard

Week Three 1/28
The “New World”
Read

Week Four 2/4
Introduction to the Enlightenment
Read Roy Porter, The Enlightenment

Week Five 2/11
The Enlightenment and Society
Read John Locke, Second Treatise of Government - see Blackboard

Week Six 2/18
The American Revolution Part I
Read Thomas Paine, Common Sense

Week Seven 2/25
Reaction paper 1 due
The American Revolution Part II
Read Hamilton, Madison, and Jay, The Federalist Papers online selections - see Blackboard announcement for specifics

Week Eight 3/4
Background to the French Revolution
Read Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Discourse on the Origin of Inequality
Week Nine 3/11          SPRING BREAK

Week Ten 3/18
Term Paper Proposal (1 paragraph) due
The French Revolution II Z
Read Lynn Hunt, The French Revolution and Human Rights

Week Eleven 3/25
The Slave Trade and Slavery R
Read Olaudah Equiano, The Interesting Narrative – pages TBA

Week Twelve 4/1
Reaction paper 2 due
The Philosophes Z
Read Voltaire, Candide

Week Thirteen 4/8
Individual Term Paper Conferences R & Z

Week Fourteen 4/15
Salons and the Public Sphere Z
Read Dena Goodman, Enlightenment Salons - see Blackboard

Week Fifteen 4/22
The Enlightenment and the Arts R
Slide Lecture
no discussion readings - do research and read sources for your term paper instead

Final Exam XXXX
Final Exam = Term Paper, due on the date assigned by the registrar’s office no later than 6:30 PM (the date & time assigned for the final exam by the Registrar’s office) Please EMAIL the term paper as a Word doc attachment to BOTH Prof. Zimmers and Prof. Rahusen.
Please note: It is your responsibility to verify that you have attached the correct file, and that the email was indeed sent. The professors will confirm receipt by return email.

Instead of - or in addition to - the electronic option, you may also leave a hard copy of your paper in Professor Zimmers’ mailbox at the front desk of the History Department in ICC 600 – Main Campus, but absolutely no later than 5.00 PM on the proper date.
NB: The front door of the History Department is locked after 5.00 PM weekdays and on weekends/holidays.