ENLIGHTENMENT, REVOLUTION AND DEMOCRACY FALL 2014
BLHS-108
Wednesdays: 6:30 to 9:30
NOTE: Required trip to Monticello Oct. 17, 8 a.m. until about 7 pm
Class Location: MASS AVE Campus

Professors: Kathryn Temple, J.D., PhD
Department of English
Chair and Associate Professor

templek@georgetown.edu
202/687-6765 (office)
703/216-5734 (cell)
Office: Main English Dept Office, NN 306

AND:

Col. Scott Krawczyk, PhD.
Scott.Krawczyk@usma.edu

PLEASE NOTE: THIS SYLLABUS IS PROVISIONAL AND SUBJECT TO REVISION.

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 in the context of political philosophy, scientific development and the history of major figures such as Voltaire and Kant.

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 and the “project.”
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.

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


Requirements and Grading

Formal Assignments:
Blackboard Postings: Each student will post on Blackboard six times in response to prompts offered by the professors. Students should respond to 3 prompts related to Professor Temple’s material and 3 prompts related to Professor Krawczyk’s material. 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. I especially welcome posts that advance discussions in class and/or discussions on the Blackboard page themselves. 20 percent of grade.

Two Essays: Two 5 page papers in response to the professors’ prompts. Your paper may consist of a revision of a Blackboard posting. 20 percent of grade.

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. 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. 15 percent of grade.

Final Examination: 30 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. Students must contact me in advance regarding incompletes.

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 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 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.

We will be traveling as a class to Monticello on Saturday Oct 17 with a makeup date possible. If you are unable to go either time, you will be required to visit two local eighteenth-century sites and prepare a written report on those visits.

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 online 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 (if assigned to class) at least once and otherwise as needed, and to make full use of the Writing Center.

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 twice during the course of the semester. We will also do note checks periodically throughout the semester.

Office Hours

By appointment and before and after class.

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:

Class One: Course Introduction Please read the Kramnick “Introduction” to the Portable Enlightenment Reader prior to class, Porter’s Introduction, and Kant’s “Dare to Know, all available on Blackboard. We will work with the syllabus and a preliminary writing exercise taking up this reading during the class.
Class Two: Introduction to Aphra Behn and the Restoration. Read Aphra Behn’s *Oroonoko*. You should read 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. Introduction to Daniel Defoe. Read selection from Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* on Blackboard. Again, you should be alert to the Enlightenment issues this text represents, taking note of passages that you find interesting or evocative of Enlightenment issues. Attend also to issues of genre. What different types of writing does Defoe include in this novel and why might that be important? There will be a content quiz on this material.

Class Three: Political Theory. This class will address major theories on the social contract. Read excerpts from Thomas Hobbes’s *Leviathan*, John Locke’s *Second Treatise on Government*, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s *The Social Contract*. Consider the significant differences in each of these theorists’ concepts of the social contract. We will discuss the tremendous contribution that social contract theory makes to Enlightenment thought and to American democracy while also considering the limitations of contract theory as a basis for governing our political and social lives.

Class Four: Introduction to Alexander Pope and to eighteenth-century poetry. Read the Introduction to the edition I have assigned for this class as well as Pope’s *Rape of the Lock*. You should note particularly issues related to secularization, to the expansion of mercantile culture, and to gender relations. There will be a content quiz on this material.

Class Five: The Scottish Enlightenment. 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,” Frances Hutcheson’s *An Inquiry Concerning our Ideas of Virtue or Moral Good*, and Adam Smith’s *Theory of Moral Sentiments*. How do the Scottish enlightenment thinkers explain the development of moral sense? How do the Scots separate morality from advantage, egotism, and self-interest? Can we reconcile the Smith who wrote the *Theory of Moral Sentiments* with the Smith who wrote *The Wealth of Nations*?

Class Six: PAPER DUE. Introduction to Samuel Richardson, Henry Fielding and to the modern novel. Read selections of Richardson’s *Pamela*, Fielding’s *Shamela* and Fielding’s *Tom Jones*, available on Blackboard. These novels/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 that of education (What constitutes the best education? How do we learn? What is the role of the “authorities”? When and why should we obey?) Expect a quiz on this material.

Class Seven: The French Enlightenment. Read selections from Voltaire’s *Philosophical Letters*, *Candide*, and writings on Deism, and Montesquieu’s *Persian Letters*. In what ways do the concerns of the French philosophes resemble those of British enlightenment thinkers and in what ways do they differ” Consider the contribution of French philosophes like Voltaire and Montesquieu in promoting relativism. How does Voltaire rationalize the existence of God? Why was Voltaire’s essay on the Quakers so scandalous?
Class Eight: Introduction to Samuel Johnson. Read Johnson’s *Vanity of Human Wishes*, available on Blackboard. What is the role of poetry in Johnson’s world? Note issues of imperial expansion, of human aptitude and limitations, of questions asked that cannot be answered. Read Samuel Johnson’s *Rasselas* also on Blackboard. Again, issues of education and experience are foregrounded here, but Johnson seems more interested in the limits and inadequacy of experience than in celebrating it as an Enlightenment good. Note scenes in which experience does and does not seem to be a good teacher. Note as well Johnson’s narrative technique. Do the characters make progress as they travel through the world Johnson has created? Expect a quiz on this material.

SATURDAY OCTOBER 17: Trip to Monticello

Class Nine: Problems and Challenges: important political and moral debates over crime and punishment, smallpox inoculation, and disability and deformity. Read essays on the execution of criminals—the “hanging tree at Tyburn”; Lady Sarah Montagu Scott’s *Turkish Embassy Letters* advocating inoculation for smallpox and sermons opposing inoculation; speeches in British parliament over the abolition of slavery; excerpts from *The Interesting Life of Olaudah Equiano*; selected poems by Phyllis Wheatley. Consider how ideas of capital punishment in the eighteenth century relate to and prefigure today’s debates on the death penalty. We will watch a film of John Gay’s *A Beggar’s Opera* in class.

Class Ten: Introduction to Richard Sheridan and to Enlightenment theater. Read Sheridan’s *School for Scandal*. Although the play claims to be about education, issues of authenticity and surface versus depth are foregrounded. Choose a scene that you would like to act out in class that reveals these issues at play. Expect a quiz on this material.

Class Eleven: PAPER DUE The American Revolution. Read excerpts from Thomas Paine’s *Common Sense*, Charles Inglis’s “The True Interest of America Impartially Stated,” “The Declaration of Independence,” excerpts from “The Federalist Papers,” excerpts from Ben Franklin’s *Autobiography*. In advance of class, watch Gordon Wood’s lecture on YouTube “What made the Founders different?” We will discuss the role of Enlightenment ideals in forming the ideological predicate of the American revolution. Consider the impact of John Locke and social contract theory on resistance to oppressive autocratic rule, emerging views on the natural rights of Englishmen, the valorization of equality and personal freedom, and insistence on the consent of the governed as a condition for legitimacy of the government. Are our views of the founding fathers diminished by their attitudes towards slavery?

Class Twelve: The French Revolution. Read Marie Antoinette’s “Letters to Her Mother,” De Sieyes’s “What is the Third Estate,” The National Assembly’s “Declaration of the Rights of Man,” Robespierre’s “Justification of the Use of Terror” and “The Cult of the Supreme Being, Olympia de Gouges’s “Letter to the Queen” and “Declaration of the Rights of Woman and Citizen” What went wrong with the Revolution? How were the teachings of Rousseau used and abused? How did the Terror evolve and what is its legacy?

Class Thirteen: Introduction to gothic motifs and gothic resistance. Read selections from Radcliffe’s novel The Italian on Blackboard. The late eighteenth-century gothic raises issues
related to what we might call the dark side of the Enlightenment. You should be alert to representations of power and authority, to gender issues and to the advantages and disadvantages of new knowledge. When is revolution justified? When does authority become despotism? Read the introduction and chapters 1, 2, 9 and 13 of the Vindication by Mary Wollstonecraft. Read Maria by Mary Wollstonecraft. Consider issues of revolution and rebellion in light of Wollstonecraft’s prose style and methods of argumentation in the Vindication. What are the roles of reason and experience here? How are these issues reframed in Maria? Expect a quiz on this material.

Thursday November 27: Happy Thanksgiving!

Class Fourteen: Conclusions and Questions

FINAL EXAM DATE TBD: Final Examination. This exam will be open book and open notes. Please use your laptops to write your responses which must be emailed to us at the end of the exam period.