

THE GRADUATE CENTER
PH.D. PROGRAM IN HISTORY
FALL 2016

The 18th Century Enlightenment

History 71000

Professor Helena Rosenblatt

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Mondays 4:15-6:15

Office hours: by appointment

Course Description: It is a widely recognized fact that the modern Western world owes many of its fundamental ideas to the European Enlightenment. It is also true that since the mid-20th century, the Enlightenment has come under attack. It is accused of a variety of purported sins, including Euro-centrism, imperialism, racism, sexism, and proto-totalitarianism. In this course, we will read texts by some of the most important writers of the Enlightenment (Hume, Diderot, Locke, Montesquieu, Rousseau, and Wollstonecraft) with a focus on the following themes: the social contract and the role of government, property and commerce, religion, race and slavery, sex and gender. We will also read recent critiques and defenses of the Enlightenment, with a view to deciding for ourselves what we might still be able to learn from it.

Course Learning Objectives:

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to

- *Read texts more critically and effectively
- *Identify and summarize ideas in texts in an articulate and persuasive manner, verbally and in writing
- *Display a grasp of the key concepts associated with enlightenment
- *Display a grasp of the key criticisms levied at the enlightenment.

Course Requirements

Students are expected to come to all class meetings having carefully read the assigned text and prepared to engage in vigorous discussion, debate and textual analysis.

- *Regular and intelligent class participation demonstrating thorough reading of assigned readings: 20%
- *One 5-10 minute class presentation on one of the week's readings, explaining what you find interesting and important about it. Ask yourself: why was this text assigned? How does it illuminate what we call "The Enlightenment"? 20%
- *Two 10 pg analytical summaries of a week's readings. 30% each

Course Schedule with Required Readings:

August 29 Introduction.

September 12 Before the Enlightenment

Excerpts from:

Loyseau, *A Treatise on Orders*

Bossuet, *Politics Drawn from the Very Words of Holy Scripture*

Hobbes, *Leviathan*

Pufendorf, *On the Duty of Man and Citizen*

Filmer, *Patriarcha*

Find these readings at:

<http://enlightenment.common.gc.cuny.edu/>

September 19 An Age of Commerce and Refinement

Hume "Of Refinement in the Arts" (text will be provided)

Rousseau *First Discourse* (**Hackett edition**)

Please purchase or borrow this edition:

The Basic Political Writings, transl by Donald A. Cress, intro by Peter Gay

September 26 The Origins of Government according to Locke

John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*

Skim but **do not** skip the *First Treatise*; focus on the *Second*.

There are many good paperback editions of Locke's *Two Treatises* available on the market; but be sure to get a hard copy that you can bring to class.

October 3 NO CLASS

October 6. The Origins of Government according to Rousseau

Rousseau, *Social Contract* (**Hackett edition**)

October 10. NO CLASS

October 17 Empire

Sankar Muthu, *Enlightenment Against Empire* pages TBA

Diderot, *Supplement to the Bougainville's Voyage* text will be provided

October 24 Anthropology and Politics
Rousseau's *Second Discourse* (Hackett edition)

October 31 Montesquieu, *Persian Letters*
Special Guest: Professor Stuart Warner, Roosevelt University, editor of a forthcoming new edition of the *Persian Letters*.

Please purchase or borrow this edition:
Persian Letters: With Related Texts (Hackett Classics)
translated, with notes, by Raymond N. MacKenzie

Pay special attention to the following letters: 1-15; 20; 23; 24; 26-30; 32; 37-38; 44; 46; 47; 51; 53; 59-64; 67; 69; 70-71; 75; 79-81; 83; 85; 88-90; 93; 97; 105-06; 112-16; 127; 131-32; 141-42; 146-61.

Pay very special attention to
1-9; 20; 23-24; 26-28; 30; 32; 37; 44; 51; 53; 59-64; 67; 70-71; 83; 93; 105-06; 112-15; 127; 131-32; 141-142; 146-161.

Pay very, very special attention to
3; 6; 24; 30; 32; 44; 51; 53; 62; 67; 81; 127; 141.

November 7 Religion
Locke's *Letter on Toleration*, *Treatise of the Three Imposters* and
Rousseau's *Profession of Faith* Texts will be provided

November 14 Feminism
Rousseau's *Emile* (text will be provided),
Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*
Please purchase or borrow the Oxford World's Classics edition, Janet Todd editor (which contains also *A Vindication of the Rights of Men* and *An Historical and Moral View*)

November 21 Gender
Special Guest: Professor Rosanne Kennedy, NYU, and author of
***Rousseau in Drag: Deconstructing Gender* (Palgrave, 2012)**

Tom Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Harvard University Press, 1990) pages TBA and provided
Lieselotte Steinbrugge, *The Moral Sex* pages to be announced and provided

November 28. Legacies
Selections from

Daniel Gordon, ed., *Postmodernism and the Enlightenment: New Perspectives in Eighteenth-Century French Intellectual History*
and Keith Baker and Peter Reill, eds., *What's Left of the Enlightenment? A Postmodern Question*.
(articles will be provided)

December 5 Student Presentations