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Office Hours: Thursdays, 1:30-4:30pm
or by appointment

Oberlin College
Department of History
Spring 2013

History 299
Enlightenment and Counter Enlightenment
MW, 2:30-3:45pm

Course Description:

Perhaps the key intellectual movement to signal the dawn of modernity, the European Enlightenment is known as an “age of reason” that spanned the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and dismantled religion as the dominant force in European societies. But by no means did the Enlightenment spell the end of belief or superstition. Predominantly through sources from the period, we examine the ideas of both the philosophes and their often outspoken opponents.

While this course centers on developments taking place in Europe, we also will also devote some attention to contemporary histories of European colonies in the Americas.

Course Objectives:

- Content
 - o Obtain familiarity with the origins of Enlightenment thought and with ideas proposed by key Enlightenment figures and their opponents
 - o Evaluate the extent to which “enlightened” ideas had an impact not only in philosophy but also in education, religion, and politics
 - o Reflect upon the extent to which the Enlightenment period shaped the modern world

- Skills
 - o Read complex primary sources and extract the arguments, as well as the evidence and methods used by the authors to construct their arguments
 - o Produce written work that provides an accurate, concise summary as well as critical analysis of an assigned text
 - o Present one’s reflections effectively in and outside of class
 - o Synthesize a range of readings, identifying similarities and differences

Required Texts:

Maria Gaetana Agnesi, et al. *The Contest for Knowledge: Debates over Women's Learning in Eighteenth-Century Italy*. Edited and translated by Rebecca Messbarger and Paula Findlen. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005.

María de Guevara. *Warnings to the Kings and Advice on Restoring Spain*. Edited and translated by Nieves Romero-Díaz. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

Margaret C. Jacob. *The Enlightenment: A Brief History with Documents*. Boston: Bedford / St. Martin's, 2001.

Jacqueline Pascal, *A Rule for Children and Other Writings*. Edited and translated by John J. Conley, S.J. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003.

Assigned Readings:

All readings (except the four books listed above) are online on Blackboard. Because we often will read texts in the public domain (i.e., free and online!), I chose not to ask you to buy your own copies of Descartes, Locke, Rousseau, etc. You may, however, wish to purchase your own copies of these books anyway since they are well worth reading in full and can be obtained very cheaply through online used-book retailers. Whether you choose to purchase a personal copy, print the texts from Blackboard, or make copies from a library book, ***I ask that everyone bring a hard copy of the assigned readings to each class discussion.*** No laptops, cell phones, or other electronic devices in class.

Optional Reference Works:

While Wikipedia serves as a useful first reference to learn about things unfamiliar to us, we cannot cite it within formal papers. Please feel free to use Wikipedia for your own edification, BUT if you need to provide a citation for a paper, check the following sources instead:

Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment, edited by Alan Charles Kors. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002. Also available online through OBIS.

Europe 1450-1789: Encyclopedia of the Early Modern World, edited by Jonathan DeWald. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2004.

The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, edited by Edward N. Zalta.
<http://plato.stanford.edu/>

Prerequisite:

All I expect in this class is a willingness to be diligent. Students need not have taken any history course prior to this one.

Special Needs:

Oberlin College abides by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 that stipulates no student shall be denied the benefits of an education "solely by reason of a handicap." Disabilities

covered by law include, but are not limited to, learning disabilities and hearing, sight or mobility impairments.

If you have a documented disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, please see me as early as possible (ideally no later than the second week of the term). You should also contact the Office of Disability Services in Peters G-27/G-28 so that the necessary accommodations may be arranged.

Honor Code:

Our Honor Code provides the foundation for the intellectual freedom that is encouraged and shared by all members of the academic community, and it embodies the belief that true academic freedom and discourse can only exist within a framework of honesty, integrity, and responsibility. With the privilege of attending Oberlin comes the responsibility of supporting both the expectations and the spirit of the Honor Code, which calls for submitting work of your own creation and giving proper credit to the ideas and work of others.

This requires each individual to respect all fellow members of the Oberlin College community and to vigorously support the protected nature of intellectual property. We emphasize personal responsibility and expect everyone will adopt, uphold, and adhere to the core values inherent to the Honor Code. As an example, professors do not proctor exams; rather, they trust students will follow the Honor Code.

We encourage you to be accountable to other students and pledge to not cheat, plagiarize, fabricate, or falsify information, nor assist others in these actions.

Grading and Requirements:

The instructor will evaluate students' performance based upon the following factors:

- **Attendance and Presentation of Ideas** constitute 20% of the student's grade.
 - o Attendance alone does not produce a strong grade; students are expected to attend class and present their ideas actively and effectively; in addition to contributing to class, I also encourage students to present their ideas through e-mail consultations and office hours
 - o In preparing for each class, I encourage students to think about questions that will be relevant throughout the course:
 - How does this reading contribute to my understanding of the Enlightenment?
 - What or whom does this writer view as authoritative?
 - What or whom does this author seek to challenge or change?
 - How does this reading compare to others we've read so far?
 - o **Group project:** At the beginning of the semester, each student will select a class meeting in which s/he will collaborate with one or two classmates to introduce the readings and begin the discussion
 - o Students will sign an attendance sheet upon arrival in class; unexcused absences will detract from a student's grade, as will late arrivals to class

- Students who demonstrate the appropriate documentation (e.g., a doctor's letter) may bring laptop computers or other necessary devices to class; otherwise, no laptop computers, cell phones, or other electronic devices are allowed in class; students will bring hard copies of the required readings to class
- **Two Short Essays (600-750 words each)** constitute 40% of the student's grade (20% each).
 - Essays address the assigned reading for a given class. Students should dedicate approximately the first half of the assignment to crafting a concise summary of one of the readings. The second half of the assignment offers a critical analysis of the reading. The instructor will provide a sheet with guidance on completing this assignment.
 - Due to the instructor before the class in which the given reading is assigned (either via e-mail or hard copy in person). Students can choose to write about a reading for any meeting in the semester. Given the flexibility of this assignment, there will be no extensions. In order to avoid leaving these papers for the semester's end, students will **complete at least one paper before spring break and (if necessary) another by the end of April.**
 - Students may and are encouraged to seek the assistance of the instructor; they may submit one essay draft to the instructor (at least 72 hours before the deadline)
 - I encourage all students to rewrite their papers and resubmit them; should the re-written essay receive a higher grade, it will replace the original grade
- **One Portfolio (2,000 to 2,500 words)** constitutes 10% of the student's grade
 - For each of the four questions that organize the course (i.e., What developments made an "Age of Reason" possible? What did enlightenment mean and who could attain it? Were religion and enlightenment exclusive? What constituted an enlightened government?), the student will draw on the unit's assigned readings and material from class meetings to write a response
 - Students will work on this portfolio in stages throughout the semester. No later than one week after completing a given unit, students will submit a response of 500-600 words to the instructor
 - The final version (compiling the responses from each of the four units) is due to the instructor before the final class of the term, either via e-mail or hard copy in person
- **One Final Project** constitutes 30% of the student's grade
 - Option 1 (Take-home essay: 3,000-4,000 words): Two weeks prior to the end of the term, the instructor will circulate a set of essay prompts; with instructor approval, students may also write about a different topic
 - In answering the essay prompts, students will draw upon several topics covered over the course of the term
 - Students may and are encouraged to seek the assistance of the instructor; they may submit a draft to the instructor (at least one week before the deadline)

- Option 2 (Wikipedia entry & analytical essay: 1,500-2,000 words): No less than three weeks prior to the end of the term, the student will approach the instructor to discuss a Wikipedia entry (or a portion of one) that s/he would like to edit or create
 - Because this project involves independent research (with the instructor's guidance), the length of this option is less than the take-home essay; the 1,500-2,000 words include both the new text of the entry and an essay explaining changes/additions in content
 - Due to the instructor by Saturday, May 18 at 9pm (either via e-mail or hard copy under my office door)
- **Late Assignments** will receive 1/3 less of a grade per day (e.g., an 'A-' paper turned in 2 days late will be recorded as a B+)

****PRELIMINARY** Schedule of Classes:**

The class meetings consist of both lecture and discussion, with the bulk of class time dedicated to the latter. If students wish to have additional background, I encourage them to begin by consulting the preliminary list of reference works listed above.

Wk. 1: Introduction

- Monday, 2/4: Intro & Syllabus Review
 - Kant, *What is Enlightenment?* (in Jacob, *The Enlightenment*, pp. 202-207)
- Wednesday, 2/6: The Range of the Enlightenment
 - Margaret C. Jacob, *The Enlightenment*, pp. 1-71

Wks. 2-3: What developments made an "Age of Reason" possible?

- Monday, 2/11: Antiquity
 - Epicurus, *Letters* (BB)
- Wednesday, 2/13: Middle Ages
 - Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* (BB)
- Monday, 2/18: Renaissance & Reformation
 - Erasmus, *Paraclesis* (BB)
 - Luther, *Letter to Leo X* (BB)
- Wednesday, 2/20: Scientific Revolution
 - Galilei, *Letter to the Grand Duchess Christina* (BB)
 - Newton, *Principia Mathematica*, Preface and Rules of Reasoning (BB)

Wks. 4-6: What did enlightenment mean and who could attain it?

- ☐ Monday, 2/25: Enlightened Education, part. 1
 - Locke, *Thoughts Concerning Education* (in Jacob, *Enlightenment*, pp. 73-93)
 - Diderot, *Encyclopedie* (in Jacob, *Enlightenment*, pp. 156-159)
- ☐ Wednesday, 2/27: Enlightened Education, part. 2
 - Voltaire, *Candide* (BB)
 - Johnson, *Rasselas* (BB)
- ☐ Monday, 3/4: Witchcraft & Inquisition (Mexico)
 - *The Inquisition in New Spain* (BB)
 - *The Witchcraft Sourcebook* (BB)
- Wednesday, 3/6: Education for Women, part 1
 - Pascal, *A Rule for Children* (pp. 69-120)
- ☐ Monday, 3/11: Education for Women, part 2
 - Agnesi et al., *The Contest for Knowledge* (pp. 67-140)
- Wednesday, 3/13: Debate

Wks. 7-8: Were religion and enlightenment exclusive?

- Monday
 - Descartes, *Discourse on Method* (BB)
 - Pascal, *Pensées* (BB)
- ☐ Wednesday
 - Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise* (BB)
 - Locke, *The Reasonableness of Christianity* (BB)
- ☐ Monday
 - *Treatise of the Three Impostors* (in Jacob, *Enlightenment*, pp. 94-113)
 - Moses Mendelssohn, *Jerusalem* (in Jacob, *Enlightenment*, pp. 208-220)
- Wednesday
 - The Jefferson Bible (BB)
 - Paine, *Deism Compared with the Christian Religion* (BB)

Wks. 9-12: What constituted an enlightened government?

- ☐ Monday: Decline of Spain
 - Guevara, *Treatise and Warnings by a Woman*
- ☐ Wednesday: Enlightened Political Theory, part 1
 - Locke, *Two Treatises* (BB)
 - Montesquieu, *Spirit of the Laws* (BB)

- Monday: American Revolution
 - o *Declaration of Independence* (BB)
 - o *Federalist Papers*, no. 10, 51, 70 (BB)

- Wednesday: Enlightened Political Theory, part 2
 - o Voltaire, *Letters Concerning the English* (in Jacob, *Enlightenment*, pp. 114-136)
 - o Rousseau, *Social Contract* (in Jacob, *Enlightenment*, pp. 177-201)

- Monday: On the Eve of the French Revolution
 - o *Proceedings from the Assembly of Notables* (BB)
 - o Sieyès, *What is the Third Estate* (BB)

- Wednesday: Revolution in France
 - o *The Constitution of 1791* (BB)
 - o *The King's Trial* (BB)

- Monday: Reflecting on/against the Revolution, part 1
 - o Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (BB)
 - o Maistre, *Considerations on France* (BB)

- Wednesday: Reflecting on/against the Revolution, part 2
 - o Barruel, *Memoirs Illustrating the History of Jacobinism* (BB)
 - o Chateaubriand, *On Bonaparte and the Bourbons* (BB)