HST 275:
The Enlightenment and its Discontents, 1750-1871
Oberlin College, Spring 2015
MWF. 1:30-2:30pm, King 325

Instructor: Dr. Rebecca Mitchell
Office Hours: M/W 11:00-12:00 or by appointment
Office Location: 208 Rice Hall
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Course Description: This class explores the intellectual revolution of the Enlightenment, together with the cultural, political and social transformation of European society that followed. With emphasis on theoretical and philosophical underpinnings (such as writings by the French *philosophes*, Kant, Herder, Hegel, Kierkegaard, Marx, Bakunin, Wagner and others), key 19th-century trends that will be examined include Romanticism, Conservatism, Liberalism, Radicalism, and Nationalism. Attention will be given to visual, literary and musical sources as well as the more traditional text-based sources of intellectual history. Important questions to be discussed in their historical context include: what is the relationship between philosophical ideals, social structures and artistic expression? How do we construct an ideal society? How should we understand human nature? In what ways did the Enlightenment (and responses to it) give rise to the ideals of democracy and individualism that are still valued in society today? Do ideas, social context or economic necessity shape history?

Learning Outcomes:
By the end of the course you will have developed the ability to:

1) Critically engage in discussion of the leading political, social and philosophical questions of the Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment eras.
2) Place leading intellectual figures into their broader historical context and assess the interrelationship between ideas and social developments.
3) Critically engage with high-level philosophical texts and consider the expression of ideas across various expressive media.
4) Synthesize course readings in analytical writing.

**Required Texts:**
Friedrich Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man* (Dover Books on Western Philosophy, 2004)

**Recommended Text:**

**Recommended Website:**
Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (http://plato.stanford.edu)

**Grading Schema:**
*Response Papers (4): 10% each*

*Enlightenment (2):* Select any TWO of the following: “The True” (Feb. 16), “The Good” (Feb. 27), and “The Beautiful” (March 9) and write a 2-3 page response paper based on readings. These are both due before fall break (specific deadlines are noted in the course schedule).

*Post-Enlightenment (2):* Select any TWO of the following: “The True” (April 6), “The Good” (April 17), and “The Beautiful” (May 1) and write a 2-3 page response paper based on readings. These are both due after fall break (specific deadlines are noted in the course schedule).

*First Take-Home Essay (Due March 20): 15%*
Short (3-4 page) analysis of EITHER *The Marriage of Figaro* OR *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*. Details will be circulated in class.

*Second Take-Home Essay (Due May 6): 15%*
Short (3-4 page) analysis of EITHER Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling* OR Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*. Details will be circulated in class.

*Final Reflection Paper (Due May 13): 15%*
Over the course of the semester, you will be engaging with heated historical debates over topics such as politics, history, religious belief, freedom justice (to name a few). In your final paper, you will select any ONE topic that you are particularly interested in and prepare a comparative analysis of how this concept developed historically across the writings of at least three authors in both Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment periods.

*Participation and Attendance: 15%*
Much of this course will include active discussion of texts, images, sounds and ideas. Both your presence and your active engagement in these conversations is an essential part of the learning process, and will be graded accordingly.

*Late work* will be penalized by a reduction of 1/3 a letter grade per day late. Thus, an “A” paper received two days late will be downgraded to a “B+”. Be sure to look over the schedule and plan accordingly! Late work will also affect your ability to participate actively, causing your participation grade to suffer.

*All* course work must be received by May 13, 2015 at 11:00am. Please note that you must complete *all* assignments in order to pass the class.

**Attendance Policy:** I expect all students to be present and prepared for each class session. Be sure to inform me if there are extenuating circumstances that force you to miss class (sickness, family, etc). I reserve the right to fail any student with three (3) or more unexcused absences.

**Class Etiquette:**
1) Be sure to turn off ALL cell phones prior to class – this is a sign of respect for myself, your colleagues, and the atmosphere of learning in the classroom.
2) Please do NOT surf the internet during class time. Laptop computers are useful tools for learning and note-taking, but must be used responsibly. Internet surfing distracts both yourself and your colleagues and hinders classroom discussion. Offenders will be requested not to bring their computers to future classes.
3) When you send an email, be sure to clearly identify yourself, the course in which you are registered, and the intent of your message. Remember that this is a professional written exchange and part of your scholarly persona!
4) This classroom is a space for respectful discussion of concepts, ideas and events. Everyone has the right to express their ideas, pose questions, and engage in productive conversation. While differences of opinion will certainly arise, it is our collective responsibility to create an open, respectful and cordial atmosphere.

**Plagiarism and the Honor Code:**
“The word plagiarism derives from Latin roots: *plagiarius*, an abductor, and *plagiare*, to steal. The expropriation of another author’s work and the presentation of it as one's own, constitutes plagiarism and is a serious violation of the ethics of scholarship.” [American Historical Association, Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct]. Presenting the work of others as one's own goes against everything that a liberal education is about. It is a serious affront to the other students in the course, to me as a member of the course, and to the plagiariser him/herself. The College requires that students sign an “Honor Code” for all assignments. This pledge states: “I affirm that I have adhered to the Honor Code in this assignment.” For further information, see the student Honor Code which you can access via Blackboard>Lookup/Directories>Honor Code. If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism please see me or raise it in class.

**Class Schedule:**
*Please Note: I reserve the right to change the syllabus over the course of the semester. Any changes that are introduced will be discussed in class at least one week prior to their implementation.*
Week One: The Spirit of the Enlightenment
Session One (Feb. 2, 2015): Snow Day!
Session Two (Feb. 4, 2015): What is Intellectual History and Why is it Important?
   Reading Assignment: Kant, “What is Enlightenment?”
Session Three (Feb. 6, 2015): What was “the Enlightenment”? What were the main concepts raised at this time?
   Reading Assignment: Kramnik, 7-22

Week Two: The Spirit of the Enlightenment
What is “true”? How do we assess the reliability of our knowledge of the world? Of ourselves? How should we relate to traditionally established authorities?
Session Four (Feb. 9): Enlightenment Spirit: An Overview
   Reading Assignment: Kramnik, 7-22, 26-38
Session Five (Feb. 11): Defining “The True”: The Natural World
   Reading Assignment: Kramnik, 39-74 (excerpts)
Session Six (Feb. 13): Defining “The True”: Epistemology
   Reading Assignment: Kramnik, 181-221 (excerpts); Kant, Critique of Pure Reason (excerpt)

Week Three: Reason and Humanity
Session Seven (Feb. 16): Defining “The True”: Religion
   Reading Assignment: Kramnik, 75-180 (excerpt)
   RESPONSE PAPER DUE (“THE TRUE”)
Session Eight (Feb. 18): Defining “The Good”: Politics
   Reading Assignment: Kramnik, 395-479 (excerpts)
Session Nine (Feb. 20): Defining “The Good”: Politics (con’t)
   Reading Assignment: Kramnik, 395-479 (excerpts)

Week Four: Defining “The Good”
How should we best structure society? What is required for a “just” society?
   Reading Assignment: Kramnik, 480-514
Session Eleven (Feb. 25): NO CLASS; READ Beaumarchais, The Marriage of Figaro
Session Twelve (Feb. 27): Defining “The Good”: Morality and Ethics
   Reading Assignment: The Marriage of Figaro; Kant, Critique of Practical Reason (excerpt)
   RESPONSE PAPER DUE (“THE GOOD”)

Week Five: From Enlightenment to its Critique
What is the place of art in human existence? What role does it play in society? Is it possible to offer a universal definition of “beauty”?
Session Thirteen (Mar. 2): Defining “The Beautiful”
   Reading Assignment: Kramnik, 314-350 (excerpts); Kant, Critique of Judgement (excerpt)
Session Fourteen (Mar. 4): ALLEN MEMORIAL ART MUSEUM
Session Fifteen (Mar. 6): Music and the Enlightenment
   Listening Assignment: Mozart, The Marriage of Figaro

Week Six: From Enlightenment to its Critique
Session Sixteen (Mar. 9): NO CLASS; RESPONSE PAPER DUE (“THE BEAUTIFUL”)
Session Seventeen (Mar. 11) The Enlightenment and its Limitations (Class, Race, Gender)
   Reading Assignment: Kramnik, 560-660 (excerpts); Thomas Malthus, An Essay on the Principle of Population (1798)
Session Eighteen (Mar. 13) The French Revolution
   Reading Assignment: Edmund Burke, Reflections on the Revolution in France (excerpt); Schiller, On the Aesthetic Education of Man
   Visual Assignment: Goya, “The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters”

Week Seven: From Enlightenment to its Critique
Session Nineteen (Mar. 16): Discussion – Intellectual Responses to the French Revolution
   Reading Assignment: Burke, Schiller
Session Twenty (Mar. 18): ALLEN MEMORIAL ART MUSEUM
Session Twenty-One (Mar. 20): NO CLASS; FIRST TAKE-HOME ESSAY DUE

SPRING BREAK (March 21-29)

Week Nine: Revolution and Transformation
Session Twenty-Two (Mar. 30): New Definitions of “The True”: Nationalism
   Reading Assignment: Fichte, Herder, Grimms Brothers
   Listening Assignment: Beethoven, Eroica
   Visual Assignment: Goya, Executions of the Third of May (1814)
Session Twenty-Three (Apr. 1): New Definitions of “The True”: The Individual
   Reading Assignment: Schiller (excerpt); Wordsworth (excerpt); Goethe, Sorrows of Young Werther (excerpt)
   Visual Assignment: Caspar David Friedrich; Joseph Turner
Session Twenty-Four (Apr. 3): New Definitions of “The True”: Religion
   Reading Assignment: Feuerbach, The Essence of Christianity (excerpt)

Week Ten: Revolution and Transformation
Session Twenty-Five (Apr. 6): New Definitions of “The True”: Hegel
   Reading Assignment: Hegel, (excerpts)
   RESPONSE PAPER (“THE TRUE”) DUE
Session Twenty-Six (Apr. 8): The Enlightenment versus the 19th Century
Session Twenty-Seven (Apr. 10): New Definitions of “The Good”: Politics after the Enlightenment
   Reading Assignment: John Stuart Mill, On Liberty; Fourier, Theory of Social Organization (1820); Proudhon, What is Property? (1840); Jeremy Bentham (excerpt)
   Visual Assignment: Eugene Delacroix

Week Eleven: Revolution and Transformation
Session Twenty-Eight (Apr. 13): New Definitions of “The Good”: Politics after 1848
   Reading Assignment: Marx and Engels, The Communist Manifesto
Session Twenty-Nine (Apr. 15): New Definitions of “The Good”: Politics after 1848 (con’t)
   Reading Assignment: Bakunin, Principles of International Brotherhood (1876)
Session Thirty (Apr. 17): New Definitions of “The Good”: Gender, Race and Class after the Enlightenment

Listening Assignment: Verdi, *La Traviata* (excerpt)

RESPONSE PAPER (“THE GOOD”) DUE

**Week Twelve: Revolution and Transformation**

Session Thirty-One (Apr. 20): New Definitions of “The Beautiful”

Reading Assignment: Hegel (*On Aesthetics*)

Visual Assignment: Joseph Turner

Listening Assignment: Schubert, *Erlkönig*

Session Thirty-Two (Apr. 22): New Definitions of “The Beautiful” (con’t)

Reading Assignment: Schopenhauer (*On Art*)


**Week Thirteen**


Session Thirty-Five (Apr. 29): Discussion – Artistic Expression in the mid-19th century

Reading Assignment: Wagner, *The Artwork of the Future* (excerpt)

Session Thirty-Six (May 1): Artistic Expression in the mid-19th century

Reading Assignment: Wagner, *The Artwork of the Future* (excerpt); Hanslick (excerpt)

Listening Assignment: Brahms, *Second Symphony*

RESPONSE PAPER (“THE BEAUTIFUL”) DUE

**Week Fourteen**

Session Thirty-Seven (May 4): Religion and Ethics in the Age of Individualism

Reading Assignment: Darwin, *Origin of the Species* (1859); Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*

Session Thirty-Eight (May 6): Religion and Ethics in the Age of Individualism

Reading Assignment: Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*

SECOND TAKE-HOME ESSAY DUE

Session Thirty-Nine (May 8): Final Discussion: From Universalism to Nationalism

FINAL PAPER AND PRIMARY SOURCE JOURNAL DUE Wednesday, May 13th at 11:00 am. TURN IN HARD COPY TO MY OFFICE (Rice 208)