

**THE ENLIGHTENMENT**  
**History 314, Spring 2022**  
**Professor Michael Kwass (he, him, his)**  
**Gilman 338A ([kwass@jhu.edu](mailto:kwass@jhu.edu))**  
**Office Hours: By Appointment**  
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**Office Hours: Monday, 9-11am by zoom**

**Course Objectives**

The Enlightenment was an intellectual movement that swept eighteenth-century Europe to shape the modern world. This course examines the ideas of the Enlightenment and places them in their proper social, cultural, and political context. Thus, we will not only read the works of great thinkers, but will also consider broader themes such as the book trade and popular reading practices; gender and sociability; the advent of social sciences such as political economy; and race, slavery, and colonialism in the Atlantic and Pacific worlds. By the end of the semester, I hope students will have gained a critical appreciation of the age of Enlightenment and a deeper understanding of the promises – and problems -- of modernity.

**Required Readings (available for purchase at the JHU bookstore and on e-reserve at the JHU Library)**

Montesquieu, *Persian Letters*  
Darnton, *The Forbidden Best-Sellers of Pre-Revolutionary France*  
Rousseau, *Politics and the Arts*  
Kramnick, *The Portable Enlightenment Reader*  
Graffigny, *Letters from a Peruvian Woman*  
Diderot, *Rameau's Nephew and Other Works*  
Beccaria, *On Crimes and Punishments*

**PLEASE NOTE: Several additional required readings have been placed on e-reserve at the JHU library.**

**Course Requirements**

This seminar is designed to impart the skills of reading, writing, and discussing history in a critical fashion. I will give short lectures providing historical background on readings, but the class will mainly be oriented to discussion. The day before discussion (by 6pm EST), students are expected to post via Blackboard at least one question on the reading that is designed to prompt class discussion. Students should post the question and a short statement (one or two sentences should suffice) that explains why this question is significant and how it might provoke useful debate. The questions can be specific or general, but they should stem from at least one primary source and be conceived with discussion in mind. After each lecture, students will be divided into small break-out discussion groups, pool their questions, and select one question (and one back-up question) to be put on the board for the class to consider. Students will then reunite as a class, and a designated student and I will use the questions on the board in addition to our

own questions to co-lead class discussion. **Everyone is expected to contribute to discussion. Class participation is worth 25% of your grade.**

Students are also expected to write three double-spaced 6-7-page papers based on class readings. The papers will be due on February 24, April 5, and May 10. Each paper is worth 25% of your grade. Papers are to be formatted as Word documents and sent to me and Nir via email attachment by 4:00 pm on the day they are due. For the first paper (and only the first paper), students will receive a grade on the paper and will be given the opportunity to revise and resubmit the paper based on our comments. In cases of resubmission, the grade for the paper will be the average of the first draft and the revision.

**Please Note:**

1) The strength of the university depends on academic and personal integrity. In this course, you must be honest and truthful. Ethical violations include plagiarism, reuse of assignments, improper use of the Internet and electronic devices, unauthorized collaboration, alteration of graded assignments, forgery and falsification, lying, facilitating academic dishonesty, and unfair competition. Please report any violations you witness to the instructor. For more information, see <https://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/policies-guidelines/undergrad-ethics/>.

2) JHU provides students with mental health services and counseling. I encourage you to make use of them. For information, visit <https://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/counselingcenter/>

3) Please don't forget to register to vote. Democracies are fragile and depend on the active participation of citizens like you.

**Course Schedule**

**I. Foundational Texts**

Week 1 (Jan 25 and 27): Introduction to Class: What is Enlightenment?

Tue: Review syllabus. Explain how discussion works: be prepared to contribute to discussion; bring questions; collaborative effort; don't raise hands; speak to each other and not just me; will schedule discussion leaders next class. Introduction to Enlightenment.

Th: Kant, "What Is Enlightenment"; and Dumarsais, "Definition of a Philosophe," (both in Kramnick Reader, pp. 1-7 and 21-23). **Schedule discussion leaders: everyone must lead discussion at least once.**

Week 2 (Feb 1 and 3): Science and Religion in the Enlightenment

Tue: d'Alembert, "The Human Mind Emerged from Barbarism"; and Voltaire, Franklin, and La Mettrie (Reader, pp. 7-17, 51-60, 73-4, 202-9).

Th: Bayle, Locke, Hume, Voltaire (Reader, pp. 75-90, 109-115, 117-119). Discuss paper assignment and hand out essay guidelines.

Week 3 (Feb 8 and 10): An Enlightenment Masterpiece: *The Persian Letters*

Tue: Montesquieu, *Persian Letters* (Introduction and letters 1-3, 10-14, 23-24, 26-38, 46, 48, 52, 54-56). Please note that the assignment numbers refer to letter numbers, not page numbers.

Th: Montesquieu, *Persian Letters* (letters 80, 82, 85, 97, 99-100, 102-104, 106, 141). Announce visit to rare book room to see the *Encyclopedia*. **Distribute Essay Questions for First Essay and Writing Guidelines.**

Week 4 (Feb 15 and 17): *The Encyclopedia*

Tue: Darnton, "Philosophers Trim the Tree of Knowledge" (on e-reserve).

Th: Diderot, "Encyclopedia" in Diderot, *Rameau's Nephew and Other Works*. Meet in rare book room to see the *Encyclopedia* and discuss Diderot.

Week 5 (Feb 22 and 24): *The Encyclopedia*

Tue: Selections from the Encyclopedia. Read "Happiness," "Humanity (ethics)," "Jew," "Lesbian," "Paternal Authority," "Prejudice," "Virginity") on line at: [www.hti.umich.edu/d/did/](http://www.hti.umich.edu/d/did/)

Th: No Class: **First Paper Due (with the opportunity for revision)**

**II. Popular Literature**Week 6: (March 1 and 3): Science Fiction / Pornography

Tue: Mercier, *The Year 2440*, in Darnton, pp. 300-36.

Th: *Thérèse Philosophe*, in Darnton, pp. 249-299.

Week 7 (March 8 and 10): The Novel

Tue: Graffigny, *Letters from a Peruvian Woman*, 3-89.

Th: Graffigny, *Letters from a Peruvian Woman*, 89-174.

**III. New Perspectives**Week 8 (March 15 and 17): Rousseau: A Republican Enlightenment?

Tue: Rousseau, *Politics and the Arts*, pp. 3-65.

Th: Rousseau, *Politics and the Arts*, pp. 65-137. **Distribute Essay Questions for Second Paper**

Week 9 (March 22 and 24): Spring Break

No Class

Week 10 (March 29 and 31): Gender and Sociability

Tue: Outram, *The Enlightenment*, chap. 6 (on e-reserve); and Macaulay Graham (Reader, pp. 591-601).

Th: Paine and Wollstonecraft (Reader, pp. 586-591, 618-29).

Week 11 (April 5 and 7): The Rise of Political Economy

Tue: No class. **Second Paper Due**

Th: Mandeville (Reader, pp. 242-55); Rousseau, "First Discourse" (on e-reserve); Hume, "Of Refinements in the Arts" (on e-reserve);

Week 12 (April 12 and 14): Political Economy / Race, Slavery, and Colonialism

Tue: Forbonnais, "Colony" in [www.hti.umich.edu/d/did/](http://www.hti.umich.edu/d/did/); and Adam Smith, *Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, ed. R.H. Campbell and A.S. Skinner (Indianapolis, 1981), Vol. 1, pp. 25-30, 180-181, 338-349, 540, and Vol. II, 673-674, 715, 781-786; Beccaria, *On Crimes and Punishments*, chaps. 6, 12, 16, 21, 23, and 28.

Th: Munck, *The Enlightenment*, pp. 186-93; Joyce Chaplin, "Race," in David Armitage, *The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800* (on e-reserve); Hume (in Reader, pp. 629)

Week 13 (April 19 and 21): Race, Slavery, and Colonialism

Tue: Abbé Raynal, "From the Philosophical and Political History," in *The French Revolution and Human Rights: A Brief Documentary History*, ed. Lynn Hunt, pp. 51-55 (on e-reserve); and Jefferson (in Reader, pp. 657-669).

Th: Diderot, "Supplement," in Diderot, *Rameau's Nephew and Other Works*.

Week 14 (April 26 and 28): Critiques of the Enlightenment

Tue: Darrin McMahon, *Enemies of the Enlightenment*, chap. 1 (on e-reserve); and Edmund Burke, "Reflections on the Revolution in France," in The Old Regime and the French Revolution, ed. Keith Michael Baker (Chicago, 1987), pp. 428-445.

Th: Dena Goodman, *The Enlightenment*, pp. 205-209 (introduction), 218-225 (Flax), and 229-240 (Hulme). **Handout essay questions for final paper.**

**Third paper due on May 10 at 4:00pm**