

## THE ENLIGHTENMENT

History 314, Spring 2024

Professor Michael Kwass (he, him, his)

Gilman 338A ([kwass@jhu.edu](mailto:kwass@jhu.edu)): Office Hours By Appointment

TA: Jai Bishop (they, them, theirs); [jbisho34@jhu.edu](mailto:jbisho34@jhu.edu); Office Hours Tuesdays, 1:30-2:30pm in the Gilman Atrium

### 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 broad social, cultural, and political contexts. Thus, we will not only analyze the work of important thinkers but consider themes such as eighteenth-century print culture and popular reading practices; gender and sociability; the advent of social scientific thought; 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/or on e-reserve at the JHU Library)

Montesquieu, *Persian Letters* (not available on e-reserve so buy at bookstore)

Rousseau, *Politics and the Arts* (not available on e-reserve so buy at bookstore)

Kramnick, *The Portable Enlightenment Reader* (not available on e-reserve so buy at bookstore)

Graffigny, *Letters from a Peruvian Woman* (not available on e-reserve so buy at bookstore)

Darnton, *The Forbidden Best-Sellers of Pre-Revolutionary France*

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 lectures providing historical background on readings, but the class will mainly be oriented to discussion. By 10am on the day of, students are expected to post via Canvas at least one question on the reading that is designed to prompt class discussion. Students should post both the question and a short statement (one to three sentences) that explains why this question is significant and how it might provoke productive debate. Posted questions should be specific and derive from a close analysis of at least one primary source. After each lecture, students will be divided into small break-out discussion groups, pool their questions, and select two questions (one principal question and one back-up) 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, to be formatted as a Word document in 12-point Times New Roman with 1-inch margins. The papers will be due on February 22 (with an opportunity to revise, due on March 14), April 2, and May 9. Each paper is worth 25% of your grade. Papers should be sent by email attachment to me and Jai by 10:00pm on the day they are due. For the first paper (and only the first paper), students 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) Claiming authorship of ideas and/or written text from AI programs is plagiarism and is strictly prohibited.

3) JHU provides students with mental health services and counseling. I encourage you to make use of them. For information, visit the [Counseling Center](#) (or call 410-516-8278, open 24/7) and [Student Well-being](#).

4) Other useful resources include: [Writing Center](#); [ESL Consulting](#); [Research & Library Assistance](#); [Office of Academic Support](#); [Center for Student Success](#); [Student Disability Services](#); [Citation sources \(JHU library\)](#); [Purdue Online Writing Lab \(OWL\)](#)

5) **Finally, please don't forget to register to vote if you're eligible.** Democracies are fragile and depend on the active participation of citizens like you.

**Course Schedule**

**I. Foundational Texts**

Week 1 (Jan 23 and 25): 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. **Go buy your books at the JHU bookstore.**

Th: Kant, "What Is Enlightenment" (Kramnick Reader, pp. 1-7). **Schedule discussion leaders: everyone must lead discussion at least once.**

Week 2 (Jan 30 and Feb 1): Science and Religion in the Enlightenment

Tue: d'Alembert, "The Human Mind Emerged from Barbarism"; and Voltaire, Franklin, and La Mettrie (Reader, pp. 7-15, 55-60, 73-4, 202-9).

Th: Bayle, Locke, Hume, Voltaire (Reader, pp. 75-90, 109-115, 117-119, 132-133). Discuss paper assignment and hand out essay guidelines.

Week 3 (Feb 6 and 8): 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 the library's rare book room to see the *Encyclopedia*. **Distribute Essay Questions for First Essay, Writing Guidelines, and Frank Bruni editorial (on e-reserves)**

**II. Print Culture and Popular Literature**Week 4 (Feb 13 and 15): *The Encyclopedia*

Tue: Diderot, "Encyclopedia" in Diderot, *Rameau's Nephew and Other Works*.

Th: Meet in library's rare book room to see the *Encyclopedia*.

Week 5 (Feb 20 and 22): *The Encyclopedia*

Tue: Selections from the *Encyclopedia*. Read "Happiness," "Humanity (ethics)," "Jew," "Lesbian," "Negroes (vol. 11, pp. 80-83, not vol. 11, 79-80), "Paternal Authority," "Philosopher," "Prejudice," "Virginity" online at: [www.hti.umich.edu/d/did/](http://www.hti.umich.edu/d/did/) and on e-reserves.

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

Week 6: (Feb 27 and 29): Science Fiction / Pornography

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

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

Week 7 (March 5 and 7): 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 12 and 14): Rousseau: A Republican Enlightenment?

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

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

Week 9 (March 19 and 21): Spring Break

No Class

Week 10 (March 26 and 28): Gender and Sociability

Tue: Paine and Macaulay Graham (Reader, pp. 586-591 and 591-601).

Th: Wollstonecraft (Reader, pp. 618-29).

Week 11 (April 2 and 4): The Rise of Political Economy

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

Th: Mandeville (Reader, pp. 242-55); Hume, “Of Refinements in the Arts” (on e-reserve).

Week 12 (April 9 and 11): Political Economy / Criminal Law

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, p. 540, and Vol. II, 626-630, 715, 781-786.

Th: Beccaria, *On Crimes and Punishments*, chaps. 6, 12, 16, 21, 23, and 28.

Week 13 (April 16 and 18): Race, Slavery, and Colonialism

Tue: Munck, *The Enlightenment*, pp. 186-93; Hume (in Reader, pp. 629); and Jefferson (in Reader, pp. 657-669); 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).

Th: Diderot, “Supplement,” in Diderot, *Rameau’s Nephew and Other Works*.

Week 14 (April 23 and 25): Critiques of the Enlightenment

Tue: Darrin McMahon, *Enemies of the Enlightenment*, chap. 1 (on e-reserve).

Th: John Robertson, *The Enlightenment: A Very Short Introduction*, chapter 5 (“The Enlightenment in Philosophy and History”), pp. 119-130. **Handout essay questions for final paper.**

**Third paper due on May 9 at 4:00pm**