

Philosophy 337
The Enlightenment: A Movement and Its Critics
Spring 2006

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Office hours: 11:30 - 12:30 MW, 1:30 - 2:30 TTh and by appointment.

Catalog description: An examination of the philosophical and cultural movement that came to be called the Enlightenment. The course identifies the constellation of ideas around which the movement coalesced and the tensions and contradictions within that constellation. The arguments of those who directly opposed the enlighteners are considered. The course concludes with a survey of recent criticisms of Enlightenment ideals and of the significance of those ideals for our own time.

Goals:

- Enhanced ability to read and analyze philosophical texts.
- Familiarity with an important movement in the history of Western philosophy.
- Acquaintance with present day philosophical issues concerning the definition of reason and rationality.
- Enhanced proficiency in speaking and writing about philosophical issues.

Required texts:

1. Charles Louis de Secondat Montesquieu. Persian Letters. Penguin, 1973.
2. Voltaire. A Treatise on Toleration. Prometheus Books, 1994.
3. David Hume. Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion. World Classics, 1998.
4. Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Emile. Basic Books, 1979.
5. Darrin M. McMahon. Enemies of the Enlightenment. Oxford UP, 2002.
6. James Schmidt, Editor. What Is Enlightenment?: Eighteenth-Century Answers and Twentieth-Century Questions. University of California Press, 1996.
7. a course packet with book excerpts and journal articles.

Estimated Work load: two hours per day for reading assigned texts, additional time for paper-writing.

Writing requirements: 12 weekly quizzes, 2 papers of 1200-1500 words each, and a ten minute oral presentation with handout. Detailed directions for the papers and the oral presentation will be given out at the appropriate times during the semester.

Attendance policy: Anyone amassing more than four unexcused absences will fail the course. Absences will be excused only for good reason. I am the final judge of what constitutes a good reason. Athletes must make arrangements beforehand for

absences arising from their participation in official college-sanctioned athletic competitions. Alternative exercises will be required.

Grading: provided that you have met the attendance requirement, your course grade will be based on your written work in the following way: 25% for the quizzes, 25% for each of the papers and 25% for the oral presentation.

Grading Scale: 100-90%=A, 89-80%=B, 79-70%=C, 69-60%=D, less than 59%=F.

Schedule of readings:

1/26 Cassirer, "The Mind of the Enlightenment" (xerox).

1/31 Montesquieu, Persian Letters, pages 39-150.

2/2 Letters, pages 151-230.

2/7 Letters, pages 231-351.

2/9 Diderot, "Supplement to Bougainville's Voyage" (xerox).

2/14 Voltaire, Treatise on Toleration.

2/16 Toleration again.

2/21 Hume, Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion, pages 29-80.

2/23 McMahan, Enemies, Introduction and Chapter One.

2/28 Dialogues, pages 81-130 and "An Abstract to the Natural History of Religion" pages 194-196.

3/2 Enemies, Chapter Two.

3/7 Rousseau, Emile, Book One.

3/9 Emile, Book Two and McMahan, Chapter Three.

3/14 Emile, Book Three.

3/16 Enemies, Chapter Four.

Spring Break!

3/28 Emile, Book Four.

3/30 Enemies, Chapter Five and Conclusion.

4/4 Emile, Book Five.

4/6 Wieland, "What Is To Be Done?"; Kant, "What Is Enlightenment?"; Rheinhold, "Thoughts on Enlightenment" and Wieland, "A Couple of Gold Nuggets...." In Schmidt, " pages 49-52 and 58-83.

4/11 Riem, "On Enlightenment"; Jacobi, "On Something Lessing Said"; and Moser,

- "On True and False Political Enlightenment". In Schmidt pages 168-216.
- 4/13 Bittner, "What Is Enlightenment?" and Picht, "What Is Enlightened Thinking?"
In Schmidt pages 345-358 and 368-381, respectively.
- 4/18 Hinchman, "Autonomy, Individuality and Self-Determination" in Schmidt pages
488-516.
- 4/20 Kolakowski, "The Idolatry of Politics" (xerox) and Schott, "The Gender of
Enlightenment" in Schmidt pages 471-487.
- 4/25 Foucault, "What Is Critique" in Schmidt pages 382-398 and "What Is
Enlightenment?" (xerox).
- 4/27 Habermas, "The Unity of Reason in the Diversity of Voices" in Schmidt pages
399-425.
- 5/2 Horkheimer, "Reason Against Itself", in Schmidt pages 359-367 and
Horkheimer, "On the Concept of Philosophy" (xerox).

Final Examination Time: ???

Note:

- (1) Read actively. Mark your book as you read. Make careful notes. For a good account of the nature of active reading, of the why and how of marking your book, and of the things involved in good note-taking see **How To Read A Book** by Mortimer Adler and Charles van Doren (Revised and Updated Version, 1972), especially pages 45-58.
- (2) Bring both the book and your notes to class. The class time will often involve discussion of specific passages in the text. You need to have your text with you.
- (3) Instructor reserves the right to change this syllabus.

Accommodations for students with special needs: The standard procedures for meeting the responsibilities associated with this course can be modified for students with certain disabilities. To qualify for such accommodations, a student must provide the college with appropriate professional documentation that confirms the presence of the disability. To begin the confirmation process or for further information about it, contact our coordinator of disability services, Fayne Pearson, at 455-3246.