

University of Wisconsin-Madison

**History 512**  
**IDEAS AND CONFLICT IN EUROPE, 1600-1815**

Fall 2015  
Tues & Thurs, 1:00-2:15 p.m., 2637 Mosse Humanities

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European history between the wars of religion and the French Revolution marks a transition to a world we recognize as modern. Many of the ways people in the West today think about such topics as religion, politics, nature, ethics, economics, and the self were molded by conflicts and debates in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. No less than the era's political revolutions (English, American, and French) and social transformations, the intellectual revolutions of the day created new conditions for human experience and reflection. At the same time, many aspects of thinking and cultural life remained deeply rooted in Europe's past.

In this course we will explore some of the fascinating problems raised by European intellectual history in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. We will probe the cutting-edge thinking of the era, including the movement now labeled the Enlightenment, as well as challenges and reactions to new ideas. We will think about how mentalities change over time and what causes such shifts. We will consider ways in which modern thinking differs from what came before. In the process you will gain practice in the transferable skills of reasoning from evidence, critical analysis of texts and arguments, and clear and persuasive writing.

**Course Requirements**

1. Participate in class meetings and in-class exercises. In opting to take this course you are committing yourself to attend class sessions regularly. I will take attendance throughout the semester. If an illness or emergency forces you to miss a class, please email me in advance. A pattern of unexcused absences will lower your final grade in the course.

Every meeting will include some class discussion of assigned readings, and on a few days we will spend the whole class period discussing a text. The reading load for this course is moderately heavy; some weeks we will read over 100 pages, though other weeks much less. You are expected to have read all texts closely before the class session in which they will be discussed and to come ready to voice your insights and questions and to engage with those of your classmates.

To help focus your reading, you will write a number short analyses of assigned texts (see #2 below). At times you will also be asked do brief in-class writing exercises about readings or other class materials as a way to spur thought and discussion. Not all of these informal assignments will be collected, but those that are will be graded on a credit/no credit basis. Attendance and class participation (including in-class writing exercises) count for 20% of your final grade.

2. Write seven brief analytical responses of 250-300 words each answering a specific question about assigned readings. Questions will be posted on Learn@UW at least two days before the due date, often earlier. You will have the option of writing on most assigned texts and may choose which readings you respond to. The due dates noted in the class schedule below indicate the last day on which you may submit each paper. Response paper will be due by September 15, September 24, October 8, October 29, November 12, December 1, and December 10. To get credit for a response paper, you must submit an electronic copy in the Dropbox on Learn@UW *before* the start of the class period when the reading is due; the Dropbox closes at 1:00 p.m. sharp. Together, the response papers make up 15% of your final grade.

3. Write two analytical papers of 1400-1600 words (about 5 pages) each, due in both hard and electronic copy at the beginning of class on October 22 and November 19, respectively. Each paper will address a question based on texts and themes that we will have discussed in class. Late papers will be lowered one grade for each day they are late (e.g., a B paper becomes a BC if turned in a day late, a C the next day, etc.). The first paper is worth 15% and the second paper 20% of your final grade.

4. Write a take-home final exam of 1800-2000 words (about 6 pages), due in the Learn@UW Dropbox by 12:00 noon on Thursday, December 17. The exam questions will be handed out during the second-last week of class. The final counts for 30% of your final grade.

### **Disabilities and McBurney Students**

If you are a McBurney student or have a disability that requires special accommodations, please let me know at the beginning of the semester and I will be happy to make arrangements.

### **Classroom Conduct**

Please arrive to class meetings on time and silence any cell phones and electronic devices before the session begins. Be sure to bring a copy of the relevant texts, including those from the course reader and Learn@UW, to each meeting. If you wish, you may access electronic versions of readings on a laptop or tablet. Computers are also allowed for note-taking, but not for web surfing, using social media, playing games, or other purposes unrelated to class.

### **Communication and Office Hours**

I welcome meeting with students outside of class time. You are strongly encouraged to come to office hours at any time during the semester, whether to discuss a question or problem you've encountered in the course, to get help on a paper, to explore an idea, or simply to chat. I hold regular office hours on Tuesdays, 11-12 and Wednesdays, 8:30-9:30, but if you have a schedule conflict during those times, let me know and we can arrange another time to meet. Generally the best way to reach me is via email ([eric.carlsson@wisc.edu](mailto:eric.carlsson@wisc.edu)). I check email regularly and will try to respond within 24 hours. Often I can reply sooner than that, but on weekends response time may be up to 48 hours.

### **Academic Integrity**

Plagiarism—representing somebody else's work as your own—violates ethical and academic standards. You must turn in your own work and cite sources carefully, whether you repeat someone else's exact words or if you paraphrase or draw on her or his ideas. If you have specific questions about plagiarism and how to avoid it, please speak with me or consult





## V. Themes in the French Enlightenment

- Oct 29      From England to France      **Response 4 due**  
Voltaire, *Letters Concerning the English Nation*, 5-66, 116-21
- Nov 3      Reordering Knowledge: The *Encyclopédie*  
Jean Le Rond D’Alembert, “Preliminary Discourse to the Encyclopedia”  
and “Reflections on the Present State of the Republic of Letters”  
Denis Diderot, “Encyclopédie”  
Cesar Chesneau Dumarsais, “Philosopher”
- Nov 5      Rousseau: *Philosophe* with a Difference  
Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on Arts and Sciences; Discourse on the  
Origins of Inequality*; and *Émile*

## VI. Virtue, Commerce, and Progress

- Nov 10      Wealth and Virtue  
Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees, or Private Vices, Public Benefits*
- Nov 12      *Doux Commerce* and the Civilizing Process      **Response 5 due**  
David Hume, “Of Luxury” and “Of Commerce”
- Nov 17      Money, Markets, and Progress  
Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*

## VII. Religion, Enlightenment, and Counter-Enlightenment: Germany

- Nov 19      The Religious *Aufklärung*      **PAPER 2 DUE**  
David Sorkin, *The Religious Enlightenment: Protestants, Jews, and Catholics  
from London to Vienna*
- Nov 24      Jews, Christians, and Toleration  
Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Nathan the Wise* (entire)
- Dec 1      Storm and Stress: Counter-Enlightenment      **Response 6 due**  
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (entire)

## VIII. To Remake the World: Ideas in the French Revolution

- Dec 3      Ideas and Revolution  
Jonathan Israel, *Revolutionary Ideas: An Intellectual History of the French  
Revolution from The Rights of Man to Robespierre*
- Dec 8      The Rights of Man and Woman  
*Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen*  
Olympe de Gouges, *Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen*  
Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*
- Dec 10      Counter-Revolution and Conservatism      **Response 7 due**  
Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*

Darrin M. McMahon, *Enemies of the Enlightenment: The French Counter-Enlightenment and the Making of Modernity*

Dec 15 Conclusion

Dec 17 **Take-home final due in Learn@UW Dropbox by 12:00 noon**