Perspectives on Human Values: The Age of Reason (9500)
Professor: Christopher Martin

Class Hours: MW 2:15-3:35
Classroom: MAC 219
Office Hours: Tu & Th 1:00-3:00 and by appt.

I hope that as a result of this course you will …

- Raise your awareness of the ideas and movements that drove the radical and moderate enlightenment
- Better understand certain issues at play in the world today by appreciating their origin in the radical and moderate enlightenments
- Sharpen your critical reading, speaking and writing skills
- Become more confident in your ability to identify, articulate and defend your own opinions about controversial issues in today’s world
- Become a more informed and aware member of your community by thinking about and contributing to the discussion on its defining issues of concern
- Be grateful that Spinoza had the audacity to so provoke the intellectual climate of his day

Overview:
In this class we'll explore from an interdisciplinary perspective some of the issues and questions raised by the early and late enlightenment. We’ll see that many of these issues are, in one form or another, still with us today. Questions about race, gender, the relation between the citizen and his/her state, knowledge, science, medicine and the church were of particular importance to enlightenment thinkers. But for all their progress on these issues, neither they nor their progeny (us) have yet arrived at any kind of consensus about these issues. My hope is that we can better understand these issues (and, therefore, our own opinions about them) by considering their origin in the radical and moderate enlightenments.

Requirements:
You are expected, first and foremost, to read carefully the material assigned for each day. It is my expectation that there will be a lot of discussion in this class. The various topics that we'll be reading about are of value only if we internalize them – only if we consider them from our own point of view. And since we cannot hold a decent discussion without your showing up to class having carefully read through the material, we will have random reading quizzes to encourage you to do so.

In addition, on various days (identified in the schedule below) you will be asked to turn in an exercise on the reading at the beginning of class. These must be typed, and will range anywhere from a single lengthy paragraph to a page with several paragraphs.

Random reading quizzes and your reading exercises will, together, account for 20 % of your final grade. Quizzes and exercises will be graded out of ten possible points, and your average (multiplied by ten) will be your grade for this portion of your grade. You cannot make up the quizzes and you cannot turn exercises in late. To account for days when you are ill or for some other reason cannot make it to class or do make it but did not do the reading and/or complete the exercise, I will drop your two lowest scores.

You will also be asked to write and submit to the Dropbox three position papers. These will be 3-4 page papers where you will draw upon your understanding of the readings discussed in class, other
readings in *The Portable Enlightenment Reader* and the *Theological-Political Treatise* and, most importantly, your own reflections on the issues in articulating and defending your own opinion on some one issue. I will be looking to see that you understand the material, can explain it succinctly and well, have thought long and hard about it (never never never go with your first or even second 'good idea'), can articulate your position well and, lastly, that you argue for it. I am looking, in short, for informed, thoughtful and defensible statements of your position on some issue. Each of these will be worth 10 % of your grade.

You will also have a take-home midterm and final exam. I'll give you four or five short-essay questions and you'll be asked to write on three of them. Each essay will have a strict word-limit, probably 700 words per question. If you struggle to fit your essay into this limit then you're probably doing alright. If you're well under then, well, you very likely have not yet explained yourself clearly enough. Each exam will be worth 20 % of your final grade.

Finally, during our last three class-periods we'll hold a mini-conference where each of you will briefly defend how you think some issue will look in the future given its present and past. You'll be required to read up on the current issue, investigate its origin in the enlightenment and, with these in hand, explain (using a powerpoint presentation) how it will look in the future. You'll have 3 minutes to make your case, after which you'll have two minutes of questions. Your presentation grade will be worth 10 % of your final grade.

**Grade Breakdown:**
- Exercises and Random Quizzes: 20%
- Position papers, 3 at 10 % each: 30%
- Midterm Exam: 20%
- Final Exam: 20%
- Whither the Future Presentation: 10%

**Policies:**
This course has a D2L site where you will find certain readings, the syllabus, any handouts, and your grades. There will also be a Q&A section that I'll check in on once or twice a week. If you have a general course question post it here and I'll reply when I check in.

I use the following grade scale: 92 and above = A; 87-91 = AB; 82-86 = B; 77-81 = BC; 72-76 = C; 67-71 = CD; 62-66 = D; 61 and below = F. You'll receive letter-grades for papers, which correspond to the following number scores: A= 95; AB = 90; B = 85; BC = 80; C = 75; CD = 70; D = 65; F = 60.

Papers submitted late will be docked half a letter grade per date overdue, so a paper that would otherwise earn a B but is turned in a day late will earn a CB.

I do not allow cellphones or laptops in class. Texting or surfing the web is very distracting to me and to your fellow students and is not permitted. If you don't want to come to class don't come, but don't come only to distract others or I may ask you to leave. Unfortunately, I do not allow exceptions. If you are used to typing notes into your laptop I recommend that you write them out in class and type them up afterwards (which, incidentally, is a great way to review the material).

Missing more than six classes is grounds for an automatic failure of the course. Also, be sure that you firmly understand plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty, as they too are grounds for automatic failure.
If you are struggling or would like some help with the class please stop by my office, preferably during office hours but if you can't make it at those times make an appointment for another. You will probably find this to be a very challenging class, but it is also a great opportunity for you to learn and to develop your critical reading, writing, and thinking skills. I hope that you will see the value of these skills, and therefore of seeking help when needed.

Students with a documented disability who need accommodations must contact the Disability Services Office at 465-2841. Reasonable accommodations can be made unless they alter the essential components of the class. Contact the instructor and Disability Services Coordinator in a timely manner to formulate alternative arrangements.

Lastly, any aspect of this course is subject to revision by the instructor. If there are any changes I'll be sure to let you know both in class and via e-mail.

**Texts:**
The Portable Enlightenment Reader, Isaac Kramnick (editor), Penguin Books
Theological-Political Treatise, Benedict de Spinoza (Jonathan Israel, editor), Cambridge University Press (TTP)

**Schedule:**
Sept. 5: Introduction to the Course

The Radical and Moderate Enlightenments
Sept. 10: Jonathan Israel: Introduction to Revolution of the Mind (1-23, 32-36) (D2L)

  • Exercise: Outline Spinoza's argument

Sept. 17: Benedict Spinoza: TTP ch. 5, On Ceremonies and Narratives

Sept. 19: Immanuel Kant: “What is Enlightenment?” (1-7)

**POSITION PAPER # 1 DUE SEPT. 21:** Which ought to play a stronger role in our pursuit of social betterment, the radical or moderate ideals of the enlightenment?

**Gender**
  • Exercise: Identify the specific points of contrast between these writers

Sept. 26: Constantia: On the Equality of the Sexes (601-609) & Mary Wollstonecraft: Vindication of the Rights of Woman (618-629)

**Education**
  • Exercise: Should the government pay for public education? Give and explain Rousseau's answer, Priestley's, and your own

Knowledge
Oct. 3: John Locke: An Essay Concerning Human Understanding (185-188) & Gottfried Leibniz: New Essays on Human Understanding (188-190)

Oct. 8: Hume – A Treatise of Human Nature (195-202)
  • Exercise: Make a list of three items Hume would claim we can know and three that we can't
  • Take-home Midterm Exam Distributed

The State
Oct. 10: Benedict Spinoza: TTP ch. 16, Foundations of the State

Oct. 12: Take-home Midterm Exam Due to Dropbox by 5:00.

Oct. 15: Benedict Spinoza: TTP ch. 20, A Free State
  • Exercise: What would a day in Spinoza's free state be like?


Oct. 22: Jean-Jacques Rousseau: The Social Contract (430-438, read further if you like, but you needn’t.)

Oct. 24: Catch-up day on the different roles of the state

Oct. 26: POSITION PAPER # 2 DUE: What, if any, is the government's responsibility towards the poor?

Science & Medicine

Oct. 31: Carl Zimmer: Soul Made Flesh, ch. 1, Hearts and Minds, Livers and Stomachs (recommended but not required) & ch. 6, The Circle of Willis (both on D2L)

Nov. 5: Carl Zimmer: Soul Made Flesh, ch. 8, A Curious Quilted Ball (D2L)

Nov. 7: Roger Cotes: Introduction to Newton's Principia (48-51)
  • Exercise: What kind of thing is gravity, according to Cotes? What do you think gravity is?

Religion and the Church
Nov. 12: Baron d'Holbach: No need of theology … only of reason” (140-150)
  • Exercise: Outline d'Holbach's argument


Nov. 19: David Hume: Of Miracles and the Origin of Religion (109-115)

Nov. 21: Thanksgiving

Nov. 26: Benedict Spinoza: TTP ch. 6, On Miracles
  • Exercise: How does Spinoza's argument differ from Hume's?

Nov. 28: Benedict Spinoza: TTP ch. 13, The Teaching of Scripture

Dec. 3: Benedict Spinoza: TTP ch. 15, Theology and Reason

Dec. 5: Whither the future?
  • Presentations

POSITION PAPER # 3 DUE DEC. 7: Assuming God exists, what if anything ought the church to do in helping us to lead a devout life?

Dec. 10: Whither the Future?
  • Presentations

Dec. 12: Whither the Future?
  • Presentations

Final Exam: Friday, December 14, 1:00-3:00