

HIST 29522/39522: Europe's Intellectual Transformations Renaissance to Enlightenment

Cross-lists: FREN 23922/39322, SIGN 26036, RLST 22605/HCHR 39522, RENS 29522/39522

Dr. Ada Palmer
Winter 2019, Ryerson Laboratory 251
Class: Tues/Thurs 2:00 pm - 3:20 pm

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

The foundational transformations of Western thought from the end of the Middle Ages to the threshold of modernity. Overview of the three self-conscious and interlinked intellectual revolutions which reshaped early modern Europe: the Renaissance revival of antiquity, the "new philosophy" of the seventeenth century, and the light and dark faces of the Enlightenment. Treats scholasticism, humanism, the scientific revolution, Bacon, Descartes, Hobbes, Locke, Voltaire, Diderot, Sade. First-year students and non-History majors welcome.

READINGS

It is recommended that you purchase the following books from the **Seminary Co-op Bookstore**. They are also available on reserve in Regenstein. **If you already own a different edition** of one of these books, or have found one online etc., you may use that instead, but page numbers may not correspond, which can create difficulties when we read selections instead of complete works. **If you want to order books online, I strongly recommend ABEBooks.com for used copies.**

Note: if you are taking the course for French credit you must complete the Montesquieu, Voltaire, and Diderot readings in French. All are available through free e-book editions, and on reserve in Regenstein, and the Seminary Co-Op has a few for us, or you can try ABEBooks.com. I have listed French language versions here available on Amazon &c.

1. *Humanist Educational Treatises*, ed. Craig Kallendorf (I Tatti Renaissance Library ISBN 978-0674007598)
2. Francis Bacon, *Selected Philosophical Works*, Hackett 0872204707
3. Descartes, *Discourse on Method and Meditations*, Hackett, 9780872204201
4. Hobbes, *Leviathan* (any edition is fine; I recommend the Penguin Classic)
5. Locke, *Second Treatise of Government* (any edition, recommended Hackett 0915144867)
6. Montesquieu, *Persian Letters* (recommended Penguin Classics, 9780140442816)
 - a. **French Language Edition:** Montesquieu, *Lettres Persanes* (try Flammarion ASIN B01GED6DLQ)
7. You will need one a good Voltaire collection. We are reading *Candide*, *Micromegas*, *the Tale of the Good Brahman*, *the Poem on the Lisbon Earthquake*, and excerpts from the *Letters on England* and some other essays. You may use any edition of Voltaire that contains all these. These are recommended; Block is best but out of print.
 - a. Voltaire, *Candide and Other Writings*, ed. Haskell M. Block, the Modern Library (1956, out of print hardcover) B004JKINTW (This is better but out of print).
 - b. Voltaire, *The Portable Voltaire*. Penguin Classics. ISBN 0140150412

- c. **Alternate French Language Editions:** I recommend purchasing *Micromégas*, *Zadig*, *Candide* (Flammarion AIEN 2081351277) and an edition of *Lettres Philosophiques* sometimes called *Lettres Sur Les Anglais* or *Lettres Philosophiques Sur Les Anglais*, such as the Cambridge edition ISBN B000NPF1UQ). The poem you can find online. Several versions of his complete works are also free on Kindle, and they are also free online.
- 8. Diderot, *Rameau's Nephew/D'Alambert's Dream* (Penguin, 9780140441734)
 - a. **Alternate French Language Editions:** You can get the two together in the edition published by Mazenod in 1957 (Check ABEBooks.com and search for the phrase “diderot Neveu de Rameau Rêve de d'Alambert”) or you can get them separately as *Le Neveu de Rameau* (Flammarion ASIN B00CAS7SW8) and *Le Rêve de d'Alambert*. You can also get his complete fictional works as *Contes et Romans* (ISBN 207011595X) but it's pricey.
- 9. Manetti, *On Human Worth and Excellence* (I Tatti Renaissance Library ISBN 0674984587. Note: this book is not coming out until Feb 5; the Seminary Co-Op Bookstore will get them in for us.

REQUIRED E-RESERVES:

Thomas Aquinas, Proofs of the Existence of God excerpt (15 pages)

Humanist Letter Collection (one file)

- i. Petrarch, poem “Italia Mia” from the *Canzoniere*, and *Epistulae Familiares*, I 9, II 9 (partial), III 12, III 18, XXIV 3-4 (and associated excerpts from XXIV 2, XXI 10 etc.), XXIV 12 (partial).
- ii. *Two Renaissance Book Hunters*, letters of book-hunter Poggio Bracciolini & his friends about his efforts traveling to rare libraries to find rare works: letters XLIX, L, and Appendix letter of Francesco Barbaro.
- iii. Ficino, *Meditations on the Soul*, letters 1-11, 22, 26-27 (16 pages total)
- iv. Lorenzo de Medici, Letter of advice to his son Giovanni upon becoming the youngest Cardinal in the history of the Church
- v. Machiavelli, *Machiavelli and His Friends*, letters 222 (on the political situation), 223 (describing the life of Florence's ambassador in Rome, 224 (describing Machiavelli's life in exile).

Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*: Book 1 complete, Book 2 chapters 1-3 (through “Of Ideas of One Sense”) and 19-21 (from “Of the Modes of Thinking” to “Of Power”), and Book 3 chapters 1-2 (“Of Words or Language in General” and “Of the Signification of Words”).

Optional secondary source readings for those who want more background information are listed at the end of the syllabus.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Note that graduate students and students taking the course for French credit or through other non-History cross-lists will have variable assignments, listed below the standard assignments.

1. **Attendance (20%).**
2. **Class participation OR responses (20%).** The teaching assistants will take note of which students speak up in class, asking questions or supplying comments. Students who do so will receive credit for class participation. If you don't have a chance to participate in any given class, or if you prefer to listen rather than to speak, you may instead turn in periodic one-to-two page (double spaced) written comments expressing your own views on the discussion that occurred in the previous class. You should aim to either participate in discussion or turn in a written response at about half the classes, so a minimum of five times during the quarter. If you do it more often, great! But five times total is sufficient for full credit. If you are not certain whether you have spoken enough in class, ask a Teaching Fellow by e-mail.
3. **Six three-page response papers (30%),** answering a question reflecting on the previous week's reading. A question prompt is listed for each one, week by week. These responses are worth 5% each, 30% total
4. **Final paper (or creative project) treating another work or author from the period which we did not read (30%),** analyzed from the perspective of the themes of the course. The paper must compare the selected work or author in depth to at least two figures we read in class, with footnotes citing passages from all three. Papers making use of more than three authors will in general be graded more favorably than those which only use the minimum. This must be a serious analytic paper with a thesis and a real argument, and must examine the authors in question in a historical context, reflecting on their positions in the continuity of European thought and the major themes of the course (i.e. humanism's innovative interest in the utility of virtue, the rejection of the presumptive authority of the past, the rise of nominalism, etc.) Suggested authors/texts that would make good choices for this paper are listed at the end of this syllabus.
5. **Optional Extra Credit Assignments (+4% each, maximum of two)**

Written assignments must be in double-spaced in Times New Roman font, size 12, with standard margins. All students must turn in both the first draft and final draft of the paper or project to pass the course; if you do not turn one of them in, you will receive an F for the course even if the percentages earned from other course components would give you a passing grade. Students have six options for the final project:

Creative Assignment Track

Students may propose a custom project, such as a piece of creative writing, a philosophical fable or dialog, a performance, a digital project, or writing a short portion of a larger project. Students must discuss proposals with instructors and receive approval by Week 7.

ALTERNATE REQUIREMENTS

Students taking this course for French credit must identify themselves to the instructors within the first two weeks of the course, and complete two special requirements: (1) complete in French the readings by Montesquieu, Voltaire, and Diderot; students in the earlier levels (first two years) of French may request to do only parts of these readings in French. (2) Examine French language

works in their final papers. Works may be from the Renaissance or Enlightenment, but the student must engage with the texts in French, though the use of an English translation to enable speedy mastery of long works is allowed. Writing the response papers and final paper in French is recommended but optional.

Students in History of Science, Religious Studies, Renaissance Studies, or the KNOW program may choose to design a customized assignment to better fit their special fields of study.

Graduate students taking this course who are working on seminar papers, MA theses, or other larger projects on topics related to the course themes may choose, instead of completing the writing assignments specified here, to work on those larger projects as their written assignments. Students who wish to take this option must discuss it with the instructor to work out details about length and date. The deadlines can be made flexible to accommodate the needs of concurrent study.

EXTRA CREDIT:

Up to twice per quarter (any time before the last class session), you may complete this extra credit assignments and receive a bonus equivalent to up to 4% of the course grade: **Extra-Credit Assignment: Writing “Half and Half Again”**: This self-paced exercise for improving your writing skill is based on exercises used in professional creative writing workshops and journalism training programs. It is designed to teach you how to improve your writing skills on your own time, which can in turn improve your grades on future writing assignments (in this class and others), and give you writing skills which will be valuable lifelong. Take a paper, of at least four pages in length, which you have written for a different class (either in college or in High School) and rewrite it to make exactly the same arguments in half as many words. You must hand in both the original paper and the shortened version. For extra challenge (and an extra 4% bonus) wait two weeks, then rewrite the same paper a second time to be one quarter its original length. (If you are interested in further opportunities to develop writing skills, see me.)

COURSE SCHEDULE:

Note: Most weeks readings are due Thursday, and reflection papers on the readings the following Tuesday. Some weeks have no reflection papers, and instead have readings for Tuesday as well as for Thursday.

2. Introduction: Characteristics and Periods of Ancient and Medieval Thought
 - a. **Jan 8:** No assignment for this class.
 - i. No assignment for this class.
 - b. **Jan 10:** Read e-reserve examples of scholastic logic:
 - i. Aquinas, Proofs of the Existence of God
3. Renaissance Humanism
 - a. **Jan 15:** Read e-reserve Humanist Letter Collection (these are all one file on Chalk – it’s about 70 pages of reading in all)

- i. Petrarch, poem “Italia Mia” from the *Canzoniere*, and *Epistulae Familiares*, I 9, II 9 (partial), III 12, III 18, XXIV 3-4 (and associated excerpts from XXIV 2, XXI 10 etc.), XXIV 12 (partial).
 - ii. *Two Renaissance Book Hunters*, letters of book-hunter Poggio Bracciolini & his friends about his efforts traveling to rare libraries to find rare works: letters XLIX, L, and Appendix letter of Francesco Barbaro.
 - iii. Ficino, *Meditations on the Soul*, letters 1-11, 22, 26-27 (16 pages total)
 - iv. Lorenzo de Medici, Letter of advice to his son Giovanni upon becoming the youngest Cardinal in the history of the Church
 - v. Machiavelli, *Machiavelli and His Friends*, letters 222 (on the political situation), 223 (describing the life of Florence’s ambassador in Rome, 224 (describing Machiavelli’s life in exile).
 - b. **Jan 17:** Read *Humanist Educational Treatises*, complete (read all four treatises, Vergerio, Bruni, Piccolomini, and Guarino). Note: this is a facing page Latin/English edition, so it looks like 310 pages but it’s actually only 105.
4. Bacon: Rejecting the Presumptive Authority of the Past
 - a. **Jan 22:** Three Page Response Paper #1 Due: Humanism.
 - b. **Jan 24:** Bacon, *New Organon* (including the *Great Instauration*) 66-155 (Book 1 complete and Book 2 paragraphs 1-10), and *New Atlantis* 241-248 (arrival) and 260-268 (the House of Solomon) in Bacon, *Selected Philosophical Works*.
5. Descartes: The Hierarchy of Evidence
 - a. **Jan 29:** Three Page Response Paper #2 Due: Bacon. Reflection question: both Bacon and humanism are innovative in looking more at the real/material/human world than earlier philosophers did, compare/contrast how they look at the real world, differences, and the utility of each approach.
 - a. **Jan 31:** Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, read Meditations I-VI (all) and THEN read the *Discourse on Method* sections 1-5 and the first paragraph of section 6. (Optional finish section 6 – it’s not very long).
6. The Beast of Malmesbury, or “Here Lies Tom Hobbes, the Bugbear of the Nation...”
 - a. **Feb 5:** Three Page Response Paper #3 Due: Descartes. Reflection question: two options. Either (A) compare how Bacon and Descartes each make use of humanism and other earlier philosophical movements even while claiming to reject them, *or* (B) discuss their different hierarchies of evidence, and the merits and consequences of the differences between them.
 - b. **Feb 7:** Read Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Book 1 (complete) and Book II chapters 1-21.
7. Locke: the Triumph of Nominalism, or “...Who Slew at Last the Dread Leviathan.”
 - a. **Feb 12:** Three Page Response Paper #4 Due: Hobbes. Reflection question: either (A) discuss the ways Hobbes is responding to either Descartes or humanism, *or* (B) pick an excerpt from *Leviathan* and discuss in depth how it applies Bacon’s new methods.
 - b. **Feb 14:** Read Locke, read first on e-reserve (or physical reserve in Regenstein) excerpts from *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*: Book 1 complete

(it's short), Book 2 chapters 1-3 (through "Of Ideas of One Sense"), and 19-21 (from "Of the Modes of Thinking" to "Of Power"), and Book 3 chapters 1-2 ("Of Words or Language in General" and "'Of the Signification of Words"). Then read *Second Treatise of Government* chapters 1-10.

8. Revisiting Humanism: The Human Sphere and the Utility of Virtue

- a. **Feb 19:** Three Page Response Paper #5 Due: Locke. Reflection question: Commenting on one of our earlier authors as well as Locke, discuss how the absence of nominalism from their epistemologies/psychologies shape their work. You may if you prefer reflect on another pre-Locke philosopher whom you have studied in another course (Plato, Aristotle, Maimonides, Machiavelli etc.)
- b. **Feb 21:** Read Manetti, *On Human Worth and Excellence*, complete.

9. The Birth of Cultural Relativism

- a. **Feb 26:** Three Page Response Paper #6 Due: Manetti. Reflection question: Considering one or more of Bacon, Descartes, Hobbes, or Locke, reflect on what they do/don't retain from humanism while professing to reject it.
- b. **Feb 28:** Read Montesquieu, *Persian Letters*, letters 1-76 (pp. 41-154), letter 83 (pp. 162-3), letters 97-105 (pp. 180-192), letter 125 (pp. 223-4), letter 128 (pp. 226-8), letters 130-141 (230-254), and 147 to the end, which is letter 161 (pp. 270-281). Optional: letter 143 mocking medical practices of the time.

10. The Pen Mightier than Swords

- a. **Mar 5:** SPECIAL: no response paper due this week. Instead read Voltaire, From the *English Letters* the chapters "Inoculation" "Chancellor Bacon" and "Locke," and from the *Philosophical Dictionary* the entries on Adultery, Ancients and Moderns, Atoms, Authority, Beauty, Bees, Faith, Free Will, Intolerance, Sect, Theist. Then read *Micromegas*. All these are in *The Portable Voltaire*.
 - i. If you are lucky enough to have the Block *Candide and Other Writings* volume instead of *The Portable Voltaire*, read all the selections from the *Philosophical Letters* (those are the *English Letters*), acquaint yourself with the *Commentary on the Book On Crimes and Punishments*, and read the sections of the *Philosophical Dictionary* which Block includes.
 - ii. If you have a different volume of Voltaire, read some selections of your choice from the *English Letters* (ideally including the sections on the Quakers and the Stock Exchange) and the *Philosophical Dictionary*.
- b. **Mar 7:** Read Voltaire, *Candide*, *Tale of a Good Brahman*, and *Poem on the Lisbon Earthquake*. If you are lucky enough to own the Block *Candide and Other Writings* edition, read the letter to Rousseau on page 511, to Diderot on p. 515, again to Diderot on 536.

11. How the *Encyclopedia* Destroyed the World

- a. **Mar 12:** SPECIAL: no response paper due this week. Instead read Diderot, *Rameau's Nephew* and *D'Alambert's Dream* (French : *Le Neveu de Rameau* and *Le Rêve de d'Alambert*)

Final Paper/Project due by midnight (12:00 AM) on March 20th

Final projects should be submitted by e-mail (except Wikipedia projects which are online). Final papers must be submitted electronically to both to the Teaching Fellow and to the Professor.

COURSE POLICIES:

Laptop Policy: Laptops may be used for note taking in class, however laptop use is not allowed for students sitting in the last two rows of the classroom. This is because it is too tempting to vanish into the internet back there without noticing and miss out on course content.

Absences and Lateness: Students who miss class without getting in touch with the instructors will lose points. Students who miss for a specific reason should get in contact to let us know, ideally in advance if possible. We are willing to give excused absences for a wide variety of absences including undocumented illness, travel for interviews or conferences, family events, and personal disruptions such as “My sister is giving an exciting concert in another city and I really want to go.” But we will not give credit for missed classes if you do not contact us.

Late assignments will receive a deduction of one grade level per day, i.e. one day late turns B+ into B, two days turns B+ to B- etc. However both the professor and the teaching assistants are empowered to give extensions without penalty if students make arrangements with us. Contacting us in advance with extension requests will always be better received and more likely to meet approval.

Disability and Accessibility: The Disability Services office offers many excellent resources, but it is not uncommon for students to have undocumented needs, especially related to intermittent or invisible disabilities (including physical and mental illness), or disabilities not yet officially certified. If you have any sort of disability-related needs, feel free to speak to the instructor even if you do not have documentation, or if your documentation offers some accommodations but not others. Professor Palmer is herself disabled (invisible disability) and happy to offer supplementary mentoring or to talk in office hours with any student with disability or with friends/family who have disability.

SUGGESTED AUTHORS/TEXTS TO EXAMINE IN FINAL PAPER (in roughly chronological order)

- Peter Abelard, *Ethical Writings*, or *Collationes*
- Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* (just do sections, not the whole thing)
- Scholastic excerpts in *Five Texts on the Medieval Problem of Universals*, ed. Paul V. Spade, or *A Scholastic Miscellany: Anselm to Ockham*
- Petrarch, *Invectives*, or *My Secret Book*, or letters (I Tatti letters collections)
- Humanist texts in *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man: Petrarca, Valla, Ficino, Pico, Pomponazzi, Vives*, ed. Cassirer and Kristeller
- Leonardo Bruni, *History of the Florentine People*
- Lorenzo Valla, *De Voluptate*, or *Dialectical Disputations*
- Salutati, *Political Writings*, or *On the World and Religious Life*
- Marsilio Ficino, *Platonic Theology* (vol. 1 or 1-2)

- Poliziano, *Silvae and Letters*
- Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, *Oration on the Dignity of Man*
- Bartolomeo Scala, *Essays and Dialogues*
- Brandolini, *Republics and Kingdoms Compared*
- Polydore Virgil, *On Discovery*
- Francesco Filelfo, *On Exile*
- Juan Luis Vives, *On Education*
- Moderata Fonte, *The Worth of Women*
- Lucrezia Marinella, *The Nobility and Excellence of Women and the Defects and Vices of Men*
- Savonarola, *Apologetic Writings*
- Paolo Giovio, *Notable Men and Women of Our Time*
- Pietro Bembo, *History of Venice*
- Zabarella, *On Methods*
- Rabelais, *Gargantua*
- Erasmus, *Praise of Folly*
- Erasmus and Luther, *The Battle Over Free Will*
- Olympia Fulvia Morata, *The Complete Writings of an Italian Heretic*
- Machiavelli, *Discourses*
- Thomas More, *Utopia*
- Montaigne, *Essays*, or *Apology for Raymond Sebond*
- Francis Bacon, *Essays* or *The Advancement of Learning*
- Descartes, *The Passions of the Soul*
- *The Correspondence between Princess Elizabeth of Bohemia and René Descartes*
- *Three Cartesian Feminist Treatises*
- Thomas Hobbes, *Human Nature* or *Behemoth*, or translations of Homer
- Charles Blount, *The Miscellaneous Works of Charles Blount, Esq.*
- John Wilmot Earl of Rochester, *Selected Works* (Penguin) or others of your choice
- John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government* or *On the Reasonableness of Christianity*
- Newton, *Principia*
- Pierre Bayle, *Historical and Philosophical Dictionary* (see Hackett, ISBN 0872201031)
- Pascal, *Pensées*
- Leibnitz, *Discourse on Metaphysics*, or other works
- Spinoza, *Ethics*, or *Theological-Political Treatise*
- *The Book of Magic*, ed. Brian Copenhaver
- Joseph Butler, *Five Sermons* (Hackett Classics)
- Montsequieu, *Spirit of the Laws*
- Rousseau, *First Discourse*, or *Second Discourse*, or *Émile* (or other works of your choice)
- Cesare Beccaria, *On Crimes and Punishments*
- *Encyclopedié*, recommended *The Encyclopedie of Diderot and D'Alembert: Selected Articles*
- Malebranche, *The Search After Truth*
- La Mettrie, *Machine Man*
- Samuel Johnson, *Selected Essays* or *Major Works*
- Margaret Cavendish, *The Blazing World*
- Voltaire, *Zadig*, letters, commentary on Beccaria, *Philosophical Dictionary* (or other works)
- Emilie de Châtelet, *Selected Philosophical and Scientific Writings*
- Baron d'Holbach, *The System of Nature*

- Diderot, *Jacques the Fatalist and His Master*, or *Philosophical Writings* (Oxford edition), or *Letters to Sophie Volland*
- Marquis de Sade, *Philosophy in the Bedroom*
- Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* and *A Vindication of the Rights of Men*
- Ben Franklin, *Autobiography, Poor Richard, and Later Writings* (Library of America)
- Thomas Paine, *Common Sense*
- *The Federalist Papers*

Other works or collected letters by any of the authors we read for class are also good choices. If you want to suggest a text or author to read instead, contact the instructor.

OPTIONAL SECONDARY SOURCE READINGS (for those who want more background)

Historical Introductions (if you want more events/politics/context):

- Guido Ruggiero, *The Renaissance in Italy: A Social and Cultural History of the Rinascimento*.
- Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Reformation: a History*
- Will and Ariel Durant, *The Age of Voltaire* (basic Enlightenment history, good on most things but wrong about Diderot.)
- D. Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe*.

Philosophical introductions (if you want more detail and review of ideas & movements):

- Pierre Hadot, *What Is Ancient Philosophy?*
- Marenbon, *Medieval Philosophy: An Historical and Philosophical Introduction*. (Updated alternative to the earlier pair by Marenbon, *Early Medieval Philosophy 480-1150* and *Later Medieval Philosophy: 1150:1350*.)
- Brian Copenhaver & Charles Schmitt, *Renaissance Philosophy*.
- James Hankins, "The Virtue Politics of the Italian Humanists" unpublished paper available on Academia.edu
- *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Philosophy*, ed. James Hankins, articles by Hankins, "Humanism and Scholasticism," and Lodi Nauta, "Lorenzo Valla and the Rise of Humanist Dialectic."
- Alan C. Kors, *The Birth of the Modern Mind* audio lecture series (Teaching Company)

More interpretations (if you want deep/diverse scholarly interpretations of periods/movements)

- L. D. Reynolds & N. G. Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars: A Guide to the Transmission of Greek and Latin Literature*, especially "The Latin West," (2014 edition) pp. 80-122.
- Brian Maxson, *The Humanist World of Renaissance Florence*.
- *Interpretations of Renaissance Humanism*, ed. Angelo Mazzocco (Brill 2006), chapters by Black, Hankins, Nauert, and Kessler.
- Alister E. McGrath, *The Intellectual Origins of the European Reformation*, 2nd ed.
- Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation*, two volumes.
- Margaret Meserve, *Empires of Islam in Renaissance Historical Thought*.
- G. MacLean, ed., *Re-orienting the Renaissance: cultural exchanges with the East* (2005).