

# History 421: The Intellectual and Cultural History of the Enlightenment

Prof. J. L. Caradonna

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Office hours: by appointment

Class meets on Mondays from 1300 - 1550 in Tory 244

## INTRODUCTION

This seminar will investigate the rise of the critical public sphere in late seventeenth and eighteenth-century Europe. Unlike most courses on the Enlightenment which focus exclusively on the works of famous philosophers, the concentration in this seminar is on intellectual practices and venues of critical exchange. Where did groups and individuals meet to exchange ideas? Who got to participate? How did these sites of interaction create new forms of knowledge? What discursive practices emerged (and triumphed) in this period, and how did they affect European society? The syllabus is designed to introduce students to current historiographical debates, and stimulate original research.

## BOOKS (for sale)

James Van Horn Melton, *The Rise of the Public in Enlightenment Europe*

Steven Shapin & Simon Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air-Pump*

Steven Shapin, *The Social History of Truth*

Roger Chartier, *The Cultural Origins of the French Revolution*

Robert Darnton, *The Literary Underground of the Old Regime*

Margaret Jacob, *Living the Enlightenment*

Course pack (all other readings are on reserve in Rutherford)

Note: If purchasing all the books proves too expensive, please prioritize the course pack; the other books can be checked out of Rutherford or ILLED.

## ORGANIZATION

This course is based on active student leadership and participation. At each meeting, 2-3 students will co-lead (along with the professor) a discussion of the week's pre-assigned readings. The writing load is relatively light and thus the reading load is relatively heavy. Each student will lead a class discussion on two occasions. The leaders for the day will introduce the readings and facilitate a discussion on major themes in the course. In addition to co-facilitating two meetings, students are required to write a weekly two-page review of the readings (analyzing the main arguments in the texts). Finally, students will research and write (or expand) a Wikipedia article (4-5 pages) on a topic related to the history or historiography of the Enlightenment.

## WIKIPEDIA ARTICLE

The final project for this course is to write an original Wikipedia article (or expand a brief, pre-existing one), which will be published on the web by the end of the term. Wikipedia, for those who don't already know, is an open-source, publicly-administered, online encyclopedia. As a collaborative research project, it is not unlike the *Encyclopédie* edited by d'Alembert and Diderot in the eighteenth century. Students are required to write an article of at least 4-5 pages in length, using the style, tone, and format required by Wikipedia (explained in class). The purpose of the assignment is to increase the store of reliable historical information on the world-wide web, and encourage students to think critically about the trivialization of knowledge. I will suggest some article topics, but students are encouraged to come up with their own. In the first week of the semester, a librarian from Rutherford named Denis Lacroix will explain how to edit and create Wikipedia entries; he will also provide useful tips for conducting historical research. If we have time at the end of the course, students can present rough drafts to the class and receive feedback on how to improve a composition.

## MARKING

- Facilitation of class discussion (2 times per student): 30%
- Active class participation (including attendance): 20%
- Weekly two-page critical analysis of the readings: 15%
- Wikipedia article of 5-6 pages (due on the web on the last day of class): 35%

### Week 1

January 5:

Lecture: Approaches to the Enlightenment; meeting with Denis Lacroix on Wikipedia

### Week 2

January 12:

**Discussion topic:** What is the 'public sphere' and 'public opinion'?

**Readings discussed:**

Dorinda Outram, *The Enlightenment*, pp.1-30 [Course pack]

James Van Horn Melton, *The Rise of the Public in Enlightenment Europe*, pp1-77 [Purchase]

Immanuel Kant, "What is Enlightenment?" pp.3-10 [Course pack]

### Week 3

January 19:

**Discussion topic:** Experiments and the production of knowledge

**Readings discussed:**

Steven Shapin & Simon Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air-Pump*, pp.3-154

[Purchase]  
Steven Shapin, *The Social History of Truth*, pp.xv-41, 65-192 [Purchase]

#### **Week 4**

January 26:

**Discussion:** Academies, sociability, and the participatory Enlightenment

**Readings discussed:**

Caradonna, "The Participatory Enlightenment: the *Concours Académique* and Intellectual Culture in Eighteenth-Century France, pp.1-45 [Course pack]

Roche, *France in the Enlightenment*, pp. 420-448, 512-518 [Course pack]

Francis Bacon, *New Atlantis*, pp.245-302 (1942 version; other versions okay)

[Reserve or on-line at [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org)]

#### **Week 5**

February 2:

**Discussion topic:** Critical reading practices; the complex relationship between Enlightenment and Revolution

**Readings discussed:**

Roger Chartier, *The Cultural Origins of the French Revolution*, pp.1-91  
[Purchase]

Robert Darnton, *The Literary Underground...*pp.v-70, 122-147, 167-208  
[Purchase]

#### **Week 6**

February 7:

**Discussion topic:** Were salons part of the enlightened public sphere?

**Readings discussed:**

Dena Goodman, *The Republic of Letters*, pp.1-11, 53-135 [Reserve]

Antoine Lilti, "Sociability and Mondanité: Men of Letters in the Parisian Salons of the Eighteenth-Century," pp.1-25 [Course pack]

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, selections from "Letter to M. d'Alembert on the Theatre," pp.47-57, 92-113 [Course pack]

**Assignment: Begin researching Wikipedia article**

#### **Week 7**

No Class

#### **Week 8**

February 23:

**Discussion topic:** Libraries, journals, dictionaries, and the transmission of scholarly knowledge

**Readings discussed:**

Jonathan Israel, *Radical Enlightenment*, pp.119-155 [Course pack]

Jack R. Censer, *The French Press in the Age of Enlightenment*, pp.15-120

[Reserve]

Bayle, *Political Writings*, pp.1-16, 172-179, 231-238, 311-320 [Course pack]

## Week 9

March 2:

**Discussion topic:** A taxonomy of knowledge: Diderot and d'Alembert's  
*Encyclopedia*

**Readings discussed:**

Robert Darnton, *The Business of Enlightenment*, pp.1-37 [Course pack]

D'Alembert, *Preliminary Discourse to the Encyclopedia of Diderot*, pp.3-105,  
143-157 [Reserve]

Selections from the *Encyclopédie*, translations found at:

<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/login.ezproxy.library.ualberta.ca/d/did/>  
(choose 2-3 articles to read and discuss) [online]

**Field trip to Rutherford to the look at an original copy (end of class)**

## Week 10

March 9:

**Discussion topic:** Freemasons and the 'masonic conspiracy'

**Readings discussed:**

Margaret Jacob, *Living the Enlightenment*, pp.3-161, 203-224 [Purchase]

Abbé Barruel, *Memoirs, illustrating the history of Jacobinism*, pp.5-46, 263-282  
[Course pack]

## Week 11

March 16:

**Discussion topic:** Cafés, debating societies, and the penny university

**Readings discussed:**

Donna Andrew, "Popular Culture and Public Debate," pp.405-423 [Course pack]

Brian Cowan, *The Social Life of Coffee*, pp.1-4, 89-112 [Course pack]

Helen Berry, "Rethinking Politeness in Eighteenth-Century England," pp.65-81  
[Course pack]

Steele and Addison (ed. by Allen), selections from 'The Tatler' and 'The  
Spectator,' Tatler # 1, 111, 155, 224, Spectator # 1, 2, 6, 65, 66, 96, 117,  
125, 420, 465 [Course pack]

Steele and Addison (ed. By Mackie), "Introduction," pp.1-37 [Course pack]

## Week 12

March 23:

**Discussion topic:** Sex, nature, and difference

**Readings discussed:**

Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex*, chs. 1, 5 [Reserve]

Dena Goodman, "Difference: An Enlightenment Concept" in *What's Left of  
Enlightenment*, pp.129-147 [Course pack]

Emma Spary, "The 'nature' of Enlightenment" in *The Sciences in Enlightened  
Europe*, pp.272-304 [Course pack]

### Week 13

March 30:

**Discussion topic:** Women, feminism, education and publishing in the Enlightenment

Carla Hesse, *The Other Enlightenment*, pp.31-55 [Course pack]

Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, pp.1-133 (= the entire book) [Reserve and Online]

### Week 14

April 6:

**Activity:** present Wikipedia articles to the class

**Wikipedia articles due in class (on the web and in paper form)**

### Bibliography:

#### Secondary Sources:

Dorinda Outram, *The Enlightenment*

James Van Horn Melton, *The Rise of the Public in Enlightenment Europe*

Roger Chartier, *The Cultural Origins of the French Revolution*

Robert Darnton, *The Literary Underground of the Old Regime*

Robert Darnton, *The Business of Enlightenment*

Dena Goodman, *The Republic of Letters: A Cultural History of the French Enlightenment*

Antoine Lilti, "Sociability and Mondanité: Men of Letters in the Parisian Salons of the Eighteenth-Century"

Steven Shapin & Simon Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air-Pump: Hobbes, Boyle, and the experimental Life*

Steven Shapin, *The Social History of Truth*

Jeremy L. Caradonna, "The Participatory Enlightenment: the *Concours Académique* and Intellectual Culture in Eighteenth-Century France"

Jonathan Israel, *Radical Enlightenment*

Jack R. Censer, *The French Press in the Age of Enlightenment*

Daniel Roche, *France in the Enlightenment*

Margaret Jacob, *Living the Enlightenment*

Carla Hesse, *The Other Enlightenment*

Donna Andrew, "Popular Culture and Public Debate"

Brian Cowan, *The Social Life of Coffee: The Emergence of the British Coffeehouse*

Helen Berry, "Rethinking Politeness in Eighteenth-Century England: Moll King's Coffee House and the Significance of 'Flash Talk'"

Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex*, chs. 1, 5

Dena Goodman, "Difference: An Enlightenment Concept" in *What's Left of Enlightenment*.

Emma Spary, "The 'Nature' of Enlightenment" in *The Sciences in Enlightened Europe*

**Primary Sources:**

Immanuel Kant, "What is Enlightenment?"

D'Alembert, *Preliminary Discourse to the Encyclopedia of Diderot*

*l'Encyclopédie*, selections from the on-line English translations at the Univ. of Michigan

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, selections from "Letter to M. d'Alembert on the theatre"

Francis Bacon, *New Atlantis*

Pierre Bayle, *Political Writings* (selections from Bayle's *Dictionary*)

Steele and Addison, selections from *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*

Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*

**Wikipedia Article Ideas:**

Salons of Paris

Historiography of the Enlightenment

*Journal des savants*

Robert Darnton

Roger Chartier

Jonathan Israel

Daniel Roche

Barruel's *Memoirs Illustrating the History of Jacobinism*

Rousseau's "Letter to d'Alembert on Spectacles"