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21H.433 The Age of Reason: Europe in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries  
Spring 2005

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## THE AGE OF REASON

**Subject Description.** Has there ever been an “Age of Reason?” In the western tradition, one might make claims for various moments during Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance. In this class, however, we will focus on the two and a half centuries between 1600 and 1850, a period when insights first developed in the natural sciences and mathematics were seized upon by social theorists, institutional reformers and political revolutionaries who sought to change themselves and the society in which they lived. Through the study of trials, art, literature, theater, music, politics, and culture more generally, we will consider evolution and revolution in these two and a half centuries. We will also attend to those who opposed change on both traditional and radical grounds.

**Subject Requirements.** Active class participation is central to our work together. Attendance is mandatory, and students are expected to arrive in class on time and prepared to discuss common readings. Students will write two five-page papers and one ten-page paper during the term. The first essay will be discussed in class and revised before a final grade is assigned. In addition, to satisfy the CI-H speaking requirement, we will stage the trial of Louis XVI in class on April 13; students will be assigned a character and expected to participate in the trial. There will be no exams and no final. Each assignment will be weighted as follows in the calculation of the final grade, although these calculations will also take into account improved performance during the course of the semester:

Class Participation	20 points
Two 5-page essays	35 points each, 70 points total
10-page essay	70 points
<u>Oral Exercise (Trial of Louis XVI)</u>	<u>40 points</u>
TOTAL	200 points

**Required Reading.** The following books are available for purchase at the MIT Bookstore; they will also be on reserve in the Hayden Library. All other class readings, indicated with an asterisk (\*), are available online at the class’ on the course website.

Lynn Hunt, *et al.*, *The Making of the West: Peoples and Cultures. Vol. B: 1320-1830*

René Descartes, *Discourse on Method*

Françoise de Graffigny, *Letters From a Peruvian Woman*

Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Nathan the Wise*, ed. Ronald Schechter

Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*, ed. John E. Toews

**Criteria for HASS CI Subjects.** Communication intensive subjects in the humanities, arts, and social sciences should require at least 20 pages of writing divided among 3-5 assignments. Of these 3-5 assignments, at least one should be revised and resubmitted. HASS CI subjects should further offer students substantial opportunity for oral expression, through presentations, student-led discussion, or class participation. In order to guarantee sufficient attention to student writing and substantial opportunity for oral expression, the maximum number of students per section in a HASS CI subject is 18, except in the case of a subject taught without sections (where the faculty member in charge is the only instructor). In that case, enrollments can rise to 25, if a writing fellow is attached to the subject.

**Statement on Cheating and Plagiarism:** The web now hosts many sites which offer college-level papers of varying quality on a variety of topics. I am well acquainted with these sites, and with others that offer detection services to professors. **Buying a paper and submitting it as your own work is cheating. Copying sections from someone else's print or online work into your own without an acknowledgement is plagiarism.** MIT has strict policies against both activities that I will fully enforce. For the appropriate MIT definitions and policies, visit the following websites. If you are uncertain about what constitutes cheating or plagiarism, please contact me **before** submitting the work in question.

- MIT Online Writing Communication Center: <<http://web.mit.edu/writing>>
- Avoiding Plagiarism: <<http://web.mit.edu/writing/Citation/plagiarism.html>>

## **Class Meetings and Reading Assignments**

### **Week One**

#### **2/7. Introduction: Ages of Reason**

#### **2/9. Demography, Geography, Agriculture, Global Trade, 1600-1850**

1. \*Gary Hatfield, "Reason", in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment*, ed. Charles Alan Kors, 3: 404-9
2. *The Making of the West*, 597-605, 665-80

### **Week Two**

#### **2/14. The Waning of the Renaissance: Montaigne and Galileo**

1. *The Making of the West*, 606-18
2. \*Michel de Montaigne, "On Cannibals," in trans. J.M. Cohen, *Michel de Montaigne, Essays* (Penguin, 1958), 105-19.
3. Maurice A. Finocchiaro, *The Galileo Affair: A Documentary History*, 276-9 (to be handed out in class)

4. Galileo, *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems*, excerpt (to be handed out in class)
5. Browse the Galileo Project web site: <http://galileo.rice.edu/>. Be sure to read “Galileo and the Inquisition,” including all the links embedded in the text: [http://galileo.rice.edu/bio/narrative\\_7.html](http://galileo.rice.edu/bio/narrative_7.html)

## **2/16. The Cartesian Method**

1. René Descartes, *The Discourse on Method*, all
2. \*Margaret Jacob, “The Cultural Meaning of Cartesianism,” in *Scientific Culture and the Making of the Industrial West* (Oxford, 1997), 34-50.
3. Optional: browse the “Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy” site on Descartes at <http://www.utm.edu/research/iep/d/descarte.htm>

## **Week Three**

### **2/21. No Class – Monday Schedule of Classes Held**

### **2/23. The Trial of Charles I**

1. *The Making of the West*, 636-44
2. \* ”An Agreement of the People, 1647,” in Eric Cochrane, Charles M. Gray, and Mark Kishlansky, eds. *University of Chicago Readings in Western Civilization. Volume 6, Early Modern Europe: Crisis of Authority* (Chicago, 1987), 342-49.
3. \* David Lagomarsino and Charles J. Wood, eds. *The Trial of Charles I*, 1-12, 74-82, 118-28.
4. **First Paper Due**

## **Week Four**

### **2/28. English Solutions, 1660-1700**

1. \*Roger Cotes, “Preface to Newton’s *Principia*,” in *University of Chicago Readings in Western Civilization, Vol. 6: Early Modern Europe: Crisis of Authority* (Chicago, 1987), 572-87.
2. \*Isaac Newton, “*Principia Mathematica*,” in *University of Chicago Readings in Western Civilization, Vol. 6: Early Modern Europe: Crisis of Authority* (Chicago, 1987), 587-92.
3. \*Voltaire, “On Descartes and Newton,” and “On the System of Gravitation”, from his *Letters on England* (Penguin edition, 1980), 68-81.
4. Margaret Jacob, “Science in the Crucible of the English Revolution,” and “The Newtonian Enlightenment,” in *Scientific Culture and the Making of the Industrial West* (Oxford, 1997), 51-96.
5. Browse the Newton Project web site: <http://www.newtonproject.ic.ac.uk/>

## 3/2. Writing Workshop

### Week Five

#### 3/7. The Radical Enlightenment

1. *The Making of the West*, 695-702
2. \*John Locke, Excerpt from *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, in Herbert H. Rowen and Carl J. Ekberg, eds., *Early Modern Europe: A Book of Source Readings* (Peacock Publishers, 1973), 274-8.
3. \* Baruch Spinoza, “The God of Man’s Making,” and “Ideas, Things, and the Human Mind” in *The Ethics of Spinoza: The Road to Inner Freedom*, 171-94
4. \* *The Treatise of the Three Impostors*, in Margaret Jacob, ed. *The Enlightenment: A Brief History with Documents* (Bedford/St Martins, 2001), 94-114

#### 3/9. No Class Meeting

1. Rewrite of First Paper Due

#### 3/11. Visit to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts

1. *The Making of the West*, 645-8.

### Week Six

#### 3/14. Women and Criticism

1. Françoise de Graffigny, *Letters From a Peruvian Woman*, all.

#### 3/16. The Public Sphere and the Encyclopedia of Diderot & d’Alembert

1. *The Making of the West*, 676-83, 707-29.
2. \* Jean le Rond d’Alembert, “Preliminary Discourse” in *Denis Diderot’s The Encyclopedia: Selections*, ed. Stephen J. Gendzier (New York, 1967), 1-12, 35-43.
3. \* Browse the online web site for English translations of Encyclopedia articles: <http://www.hti.umich.edu/d/did/>; read “Sunday.”
4. \* Browse the French online version of the *Encyclopedia* at <http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/efts/ARTFL/projects/encyc/>. Be sure to look at the engravings for “*chirurgie*” and “*imprimerie*.”

### Week Seven

#### 3/21. Tolerance: An Enlightenment Ideal?

1. Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Nathan the Wise*, all.

### 3/23. The Persistence of the Old Regime and Absolutism

#### 1. Second Paper Due

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**SPRING VACATION, MARCH 27-31**  
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### Week Eight

#### 4/4. Jean-Jacques Rousseau

1. *The Social Contract*, excerpts, in Margaret Jacob, ed. *The Enlightenment: A Brief History with Documents* (Bedford/St Martins, 2001), 177-201.
2. Optional: browse the “Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy” site on Rousseau at <http://www.iep.utm.edu/r/rousseau.htm>

#### 4/6. Revolution in France I

1. *The Making of the West*, 747-52
2. *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity: Exploring the French Revolution*: <http://chnm.gmu.edu/revolution/>, chapters 1-3, and browse the documents and images in the left-hand side-bar.

### Week Nine

#### 4/11. Revolution in France II

1. *The Making of the West*, 752-73
2. *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity: Exploring the French Revolution*: <http://chnm.gmu.edu/revolution/>, chapters 4-6, and browse the documents and images in the left-hand side-bar.

#### 4/13. The Trial of Louis XVI [N.B.: We will hold two class sessions this day.]

1. 11-12:30 PM: Assignments to be distributed in class
2. 7-8:30 PM: Assignments to be distributed in class

### Week Ten

#### 4/18. Patriots Day – No Class

#### 4/20. Terror, Napoleon, Restoration

1. *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity: Exploring the French Revolution*: <http://chnm.gmu.edu/revolution/>, chapters 7-10, and browse the documents and images in the left-hand side-bar.

## Week Eleven

### **4/25. Conservatism Created: A Response to Reason and Revolution**

1. *The Making of the West*, 773-6.
2. \*Massimo Boffa, "Counter-Revolution," in *A Critical Dictionary of the French Revolution*, eds. François Furet and Mona Ozouf (Harvard, 1989), 640-8
3. \*Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. Excerpted in Keith Michael Baker, ed. *The University of Chicago Readings in Western Civilization. Vol. 7: The Old Regime and the French Revolution* (University of Chicago Press, 1987), 428-45.
4. \*Joseph de Maistre, *Considerations on France*, excerpts in *University of Chicago Readings in Western Civilization, Vol. 7: The Old Regime and the French Revolution* (Chicago, 1987), 445-52.

### **4/27. Romanticism**

1. William Wordsworth, *Composed A Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey, On Revisiting The Banks Of The Wye During A Tour. July 13, 1798*,  
<http://www.bartleby.com/145/ww138.html>

## Week Twelve

### **5/2. Hegel: History, Reason, and the State**

1. \*Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Introduction to the Philosophy of History*. Excerpted in *Introduction to Contemporary Civilization in the West* (Columbia University Press, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 1961), 124-47.
2. Optional: browse the "Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy" site on Hegel at  
<http://www.iep.utm.edu/h/hegelsoc.htm>

### **5/4. Nineteenth-Century Liberalism**

1. *The Making of the West*, 840-58
2. \*Benjamin Constant, *Ancient and Modern Liberty Compared*. Excerpted in Keith Michael Baker, ed. *The University of Chicago Readings in Western Civilization. Vol. 7: The Old Regime and the French Revolution* (University of Chicago Press, 1987), 452-61.
3. \*John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, excerpted in *Introduction to Contemporary Civilization in the West* (Columbia University Press, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 1961), 592-619.
4. Optional: browse the "Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy" site on Mill at  
<http://www.iep.utm.edu/m/milljs.htm>

**Week Thirteen**

**5/9. The Revolutions of 1848 and *The Communist Manifesto***

1. *The Making of the West*, 849-69.
2. Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*, (Bedford/St. Martins edition, 1-97).

**5/11. Darwin & Christian Theology (or, Galileo Revisited)**

1. \*Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species*. Excerpted in *Introduction to Contemporary Civilization in the West* (Columbia University Press, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 1961), 813-32.
2. \*Alvar Ellegard, *Darwin and the General Reader: The Reception of Darwin's Theory of Evolution in the British Periodical Press, 1859-72* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed. University of Chicago Press, 1990), 12-38.

**Week Fourteen**

**5/16. No Class Meeting**

**5/18. Conclusion**

1. **Ten-Page paper due**

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**NO FINAL EXAMINATION**