

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 four five-page papers 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 during the week of April 28; 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
Four 5-page essays	35 points each, 140 points total
<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 should also be on reserve in the Hayden Library. All other class readings, indicated with an asterisk (*), are available online at the class website, listed above.

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

Margaret Jacob, *Scientific Culture and the Making of the Industrial West*

René Descartes, *Discourse on Method*

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://writing.mit.edu/wcc>>
- Avoiding Plagiarism: <<http://writing.mit.edu/wcc/avoidingplagiarism>>

Class Meetings and Reading Assignments

Week One

2/1. Introduction: Reason in Antiquity, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance

2/3. 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

2/8. Galileo and the Roman Catholic Church

1. *The Making of the West*, 606-18
2. Jacob, *Scientific Culture*, 15-33
3. *Galileo, *The Starry Messenger*, in Stillman Drake, ed. *Discoveries and Opinions of Galileo*, 21-58
4. Galileo, excerpt from *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems*. (to be handed out in class)
5. Maurice A. Finocchiaro, *The Galileo Affair: A Documentary History*, 276-9 (to be

handed out in class)

6. Browse the Galileo Project web site: <http://galileo.rice.edu/>

2/10. The Cartesian Method

1. René Descartes, *The Discourse on Method*, all.
2. Jacob, *Scientific Culture*, 34-50

Week Three

2/15. The Trial of Charles I, King of England (1649)

1. *The Making of the West*, 636-44
2. *David Lagomarsino and Charles J. Wood, eds. *The Trial of Charles I*, 1-16, 58-82, 102-29.
3. Jacob, *Scientific Culture*, 51-72

2/17. Louis XIV and the Court at Versailles

1. *The Making of the West*, 621-36
2. Browse the Versailles web site: <http://www.chateauversailles.fr>
3. **First Paper Due**

Week Four

2/22. No Class. Monday Schedule of Classes.

2/24. Writing Workshop

Week Five

3/1. The Radical Enlightenment

1. *The Making of the West*, 695-702
2. * 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
3. * *The Treatise of the Three Impostors*, in Margaret Jacob, ed. *The Enlightenment: A Brief History with Documents* (Bedford/St Martins, 2001), 94-114
4. *John Locke, Excerpt form *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.

3/3. The Newtonian Moment

1. *Isaac Newton, *Principia Mathematica*, in *University of Chicago Readings in Western Civilization*, Vol. 6, 587-92.

2. *Voltaire, “On Locke,” “On Descartes and Newton,” and “On the System of Gravitation”, from his *Letters on England* (Penguin edition, 1980), 62-81.
3. Jacob, *Scientific Culture*, 73-115.
4. Browse the Newton Project web site: <http://www.newtonproject.sussex.ac.uk/>
5. **Rewrite of First Paper Due**

Week Six

3/8. The Encyclopedia of Diderot & d’Alembert

1. *The Making of the West*, 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 “Philosopher,” and “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.”

3/10. Cosmopolitanism and the Jews in the Eighteenth Century

1. * Encyclopedia article on “Jew”
2. Lessing, *Nathan the Wise*, 1-115

Week Seven

3/15. France in the Age of Democratic Revolution

1. *The Making of the West*, 733-52
2. **Second Paper Due**

3/17. Revolution in France

1. *The Making of the West*, 752-73
2. Browse *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity: Exploring the French Revolution*: <http://chnm.gmu.edu/revolution/>; specific assignments to be given in class.

SPRING VACATION, MARCH 21-25

Week Eight

3/29. The Trial of Louis XVI [N.B.: We will hold two class sessions this day.]

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

3/31. No Class Meeting

Week Nine

4/5. After The King's Trial: Terror, Napoleon, Restoration

4/7. Conservatism Created: A Response to Reason and Revolution

1. *The Making of the West*, 773-6.
2. *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.
3. *Massimo Boffa, "Counter-Revolution," in *A Critical Dictionary of the French Revolution*, eds. François Furet and Mona Ozouf (Harvard, 1989), 640-8
4. * Massimo Boffa, "Maistre," in *A Critical Dictionary of the French Revolution*, eds. François Furet and Mona Ozouf (Harvard, 1989), 965-71
5. *Joseph de Maistre, *Evenings in St. Petersburg*. Excerpted in *Introduction to Contemporary Civilization in the West* (Columbia University Press, 3rd ed., 1961), 106-13.

Week Ten

4/12. 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, 3rd ed., 1961), 124-47.

4/14. Romanticism in Literature, Art, & Music

1. *The Making of the West*, 815-9

Week Eleven

4/19. NO CLASS – PATRIOTS DAY

4/21. The Industrial Revolution and the Movement to Abolish Slavery
1. Third Paper Due

Week Twelve

4/26. A Cultural Interpretation of Industrialization

1. *The Making of the West*, 810-1, 829-40.
2. Jacob, *Scientific Culture*, 131-207.

4/28. 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, 3rd ed., 1961), 592-619.

Week Thirteen

5/3. Utopian Socialist Experiments

1. *Robert L. Heilbroner, “The Visions of the Utopian Socialists”, in *The Worldly Philosophers* (New York, 1972), 102-30.
2. *Robert Owen, “Report to the County of Lanarck” and “The Economist.” Excerpted in *Introduction to Contemporary Civilization in the West* (Columbia University Press, 3rd ed., 1961), 661-79.

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

1. *The Making of the West*, 849-69.
2. Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*, all

Week Fourteen

5/10. 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, 3rd 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* (2nd ed. University of Chicago Press, 1990), 12-38.

5/12. Conclusion

1. **Fourth paper due**

NO FINAL EXAMINATION

MIT OpenCourseWare
<http://ocw.mit.edu>

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