The Enlightenment and Its Legacy
IDSEM-UG 1093-001/Fall 2011
Interdisciplinary Seminar (social sciences)
Rosanne Kennedy
TuTh 9:30-10:45
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Course Description

The Enlightenment, the 18th century cultural, political, and intellectual movement in the West, has had a lasting influence on our present values and political thought. Reason, freedom, skepticism, critical thought, progress – even democracy – are values and commitments we have inherited from this era. In order to specify the thought of this period (as well as debates and disagreements) we will first read various authors of the Enlightenment. Readings for this part of the course will include Locke, Diderot, Rousseau, Adam Smith, Buffon, and Kant. In the second part of the course we will turn to the legacy of the Enlightenment. We will consider doubts and critiques that have risen. For example Freud (and psychoanalysis) has questioned the primacy of reason in both individual and collective action; Adorno and Foucault have questioned the ethics of political rationalism; and recent feminists have noted the paradoxes of the Enlightenment's rather narrow and implicitly gendered view of equality and citizenship. Do such criticisms alter our view of the basic tenets of Enlightenment thought? Or, on the contrary, might we read them as continuing the “spirit of critique” inaugurated by the thought of the 18th century?

Required Texts:

John Locke, *Second Treatise on Government*
Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality* (*Second Discourse*)
Rousseau, *Social Contract*
Marx, “Communist Manifesto”
Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*
Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals*
Adorno and Horkheimer: *Dialectic of Enlightenment*
Foucault: *History of Sexuality, vol. 1.*

Note: All books are available at the NYU Bookstore except “Communist Manifesto” which is easily available online
Course Requirements:

Each student will be required to write one midterm essay (7-8 pp) and a final essay (10-12 pp). I will hand out paper topics two weeks before papers are due. As a seminar, it is imperative that you come to class prepared: that you have done the reading, formulated questions/critiques, etc. Also, you will be responsible for one presentation during the semester. Attendance is mandatory. More than two unexcused absences will affect your final grade. Incompletes will not be given except for rare cases and with documentation.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s work as your own without proper documentation/attribution – will result in an F for the course and the possibility of further disciplinary action. Gallatin’s policy on plagiarism is outlined in the student handbook.

Grading:

Midterm: 30%
Final: 50%
Participation: 20%

Schedule:

Tuesday, September 6: Introduction to the Course

What is the Enlightenment?

Thursday, September 8: What is Enlightenment? The Enlightenment, Part Two, 375-405 (except Adorno Horkheimer excerpt)


Thursday, September 15: Knowledge. The Enlightenment, 33-58 and Locke, Second Treatise

Tuesday, September 20: Religion. The Enlightenment, 59-90 and Locke, Second Treatise


Tuesday, September 27: Science. The Enlightenment, 122-47 and Rousseau, Discourse on Inequality.


Tuesday, October 11: No Class.


Thursday, October 20: Others. *The Enlightenment*, 296-327 and Wollstonecraft

**Post-Enlightenment**

Tuesday, October 22: Marx, “Communist Manifesto”

Thursday, October 27: Marx, “Communist Manifesto”

Tuesday, November 1: Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*. Midterm Essay Due in Class.

Thursday, November 3: Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*.

Tuesday, November 8: Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*

Thursday, November 10: Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals*.

Tuesday, November 15: Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals*.

Thursday, November 17: Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals*

Tuesday, November 22: Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals*.

Thursday, November 24: No Class, Thanksgiving.

Tuesday, November 29: Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*
Thursday, December 1: Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*

Tuesday, December 6: Foucault, *History of Sexuality, vol. 1*

Thursday, December 8: Foucault, *History of Sexuality, vol. 1*

Tuesday, December 13: Foucault, *History of Sexuality, vol. 1*

Thursday, December 15: Conclusion. Final Papers Due.