

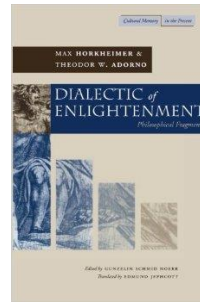
Roger Maioli

## Versions of Enlightenment

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LIT 6934

Meeting times: W 6-8



Adorno & Horkheimer  
**Dialectic of Enlightenment**

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### **Course Description:**

The Enlightenment has been regarded as the source of either the most progressive or the most retrograde among the values of modernity. It has been described as a historical seedbed for scientific progress, social equality, and political freedom, but also as the moment when modern forms of totalitarianism, scientism, and discrimination by race and gender acquired their contemporary outlines. In this course we will contrast and examine these competing conceptions of the Enlightenment by considering how the movement was envisioned, promoted, and criticized both by its central figures and by later historians and cultural critics. We will read, for example, Condorcet's optimistic description of the possibilities of human progress next to Rousseau's critique of the arts and sciences; or Adorno and Horkheimer's critical study of the Enlightenment alongside more favorable accounts by Isaiah Berlin and Jonathan Israel. Other readings will include Bacon, Locke, Hume, Voltaire, Mary Wollstonecraft, Kant, Herder, and Foucault. Among the questions we will be addressing are: What exactly was the Enlightenment? Was it a single European phenomenon, or a collection of national movements with certain incompatible features? What is the nature of its modern legacy? And what can it teach us about the cultural and political crises of our own time?

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## REQUIRED TEXTS

I will circulate most of our readings in the form of electronic handouts. There are nonetheless other titles you will be expected to acquire. If you already have a copy of any of them, you are welcome to use that copy. In some cases, as with Hume, there are also reliable electronic versions you are welcome to use. Otherwise, please get the editions listed below, especially if the work in question is translated from another language. The works are listed in the order in which we will be using them:

David Hume, *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter Millican (Oxford World's Classics, 2007).

Voltaire, *Candide, or, Optimism*, transl. Theo Cuffee (Penguin Deluxe Edition, 2005).

Voltaire, *Letters Concerning the English Nation*, ed. Nicholas Cronk (Oxford World's Classics, 2009).

Locke, *Second Treatise of Government and A Letter Concerning Toleration*, ed. Mark Goldie (Oxford World's Classics, 2016)

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, *The Social Contract and The First and Second Discourses*, ed. Susan Dunn (Yale, 2002)

Wollstonecraft, Mary, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman and A Vindication of the Rights of Men*, ed. Janet Todd (Oxford World's Classics, 2008)

Equiano, Olaudah, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*, ed. Werner Sollors (Norton Critical Editions, 2001)

Horkheimer & Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, ed. Gunzelin Schmid Noerr (Stanford, 2002)

Montesquieu, *Persian Letters*, ed. Andrew Kahn (Oxford World's Classics, 2008)

## COURSE SCHEDULE

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<b>Aug. 23</b>	Bacon, Part I of <i>The New Organon</i> (on Canvas) Descartes, <i>Discourse on Method</i>
<b>Aug. 30</b>	Hume, <i>An Essay Concerning Human Understanding</i>
<b>Sep. 6</b>	Voltaire, <i>Letters concerning the English Nation</i> Voltaire, <i>Candide</i>
<b>Sep. 13</b>	Locke, <i>Second Treatise</i> Locke, <i>A Letter Concerning Toleration</i>
<b>Sep. 20</b>	Rousseau, <i>Discourse on the Sciences and Arts</i> Rousseau, <i>Discourse on the Origins of Inequality</i>
<b>Sep. 27</b>	Wollstonecraft, <i>A Vindication of the Rights of Woman</i>
<b>Oct. 4</b>	Equiano, <i>The Interesting Narrative</i>
<b>Oct. 11</b>	Condorcet, excerpts from <i>The Sketch</i> (on Canvas) Herder, <i>This Too a Philosophy of History</i> (on Canvas) Isaiah Berlin, "The Counter-Enlightenment" (on Canvas)
<b>Oct. 18</b>	Kant, "What is Enlightenment?" and related texts (on Canvas) Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?" (on Canvas) Warner & Siskin, "This is Enlightenment" (on Canvas)
<b>Oct. 25</b>	Horkheimer & Adorno, <i>Dialectic of Enlightenment</i>
<b>Nov. 1</b>	Kramnick, <i>The Enlightenment Reader</i> (on Canvas) O'Brien, <i>Women and Enlightenment</i> (on Canvas)

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**Nov. 8** Bernasconi and Lott, *The Idea of Race* (on Canvas)  
Curran, *The Anatomy of Slavery* (on Canvas)

**Nov. 15** Montesquieu, *Persian Letters*  
Aravamudan, *Enlightenment Orientalism* (on Canvas)

**Nov. 29** Robert Darnton, "In Search of Enlightenment" (on Canvas)  
Jonathan Israel, *A Revolution of the Mind* (on Canvas)  
Asad Haider, "The Paradox of Enlightenment" (on Canvas)

**Dec. 6** Workshop

**Dec. 16** Final paper due