The Enlightenment was one of the main ‘roads to modernity’ in eighteenth-century Europe and its latter-day proponents still regard its central tenets – rationalism, secularism, individualism – as the very definition of what it means to be modern. For many historians of European thought, it represents the single most significant event since the Renaissance: an intellectual revolution that fundamentally transformed man’s understanding of his place in the natural as well as the social world and produced not just the ‘ideas of 1789’, but the various ideologies (liberalism, socialism, pacifism) that would shape Western political theory and praxis over the next two centuries.

While the scholarly output on the Enlightenment and its various individual representatives is vast, relatively little is known about those thinkers who resisted the ‘Age of Reason’ and launched what Isaiah Berlin later identified as a ‘Counter-Enlightenment’. And yet there was, as early as the mid-eighteenth century, a vociferous and highly articulate contingent in the new ‘republic of letters’ which fiercely opposed the materialism and atheism of the lumières, their abstract, a-historical conceptions of the self and their levelling of national traditions and cultural diversity in the name of universalism and progress. These anti-philosophes, though frequently marginalized in the history of ideas, played a no less important role in the formation of European thought. Appalled by the rapid ‘disenchantment of the world’ (Max Weber), they attacked what they viewed as the terribles simplifications and, especially in the wake of the French Revolution, the doctrinaire intolerance of their enlightening enemies. In doing so, they not only formulated crucial new concepts and ideals that laid the discursive foundations for what we now call, somewhat vaguely, ‘the Right’; they also forced the ‘party of progress’ to re-define its own positions.

In this seminar, we will trace the intellectual struggles over Enlightenment from the critique of revealed religion in the ancien régime to the ‘culture wars’ of the present day. We will examine these struggles as on-going, politically charged controversies about the nature and meaning of modernity, without, however, establishing any facile links between ‘the unfinished project of modernity’ (Jürgen Habermas) and the ‘Enlightenment project’. We shall approach both projects, instead, as profoundly dialectical phenomena that were generated and defined, from the beginning, by their opposites. Particular attention will be given, accordingly, to liminal figures, theorists at the interface between Enlightenment and Counter-Enlightenment like Rousseau, Nietzsche, Freud, and Adorno, who embraced central aspects of Aufklärung while questioning its triumphalist belief in humanity’s inexorable march towards ever higher levels of rationality, emancipation, and civilization. We shall read the works of these theorists as ‘historically’ as is possible in such a text-based seminar, concentrating on the following themes, listed here, rather simplistically, as binary oppositions: progressivism/historicism, optimism/Kulturkritik, society/community, reason/faith, rationalization/myth, peaceful meliorism/violent renewal.

Although many of the texts on our syllabus are by German authors, we will also look at the specific national contexts (political, social, cultural) that conditioned the debates about Enlightenment in other countries, most notably France. The reading list attached below, though quite expansive, is by no means final and the course co-ordinator strongly welcomes bibliographical suggestions from all participants.
General reading

**Introductions**

**Sourcebooks and readers**

**On the ‘intellectual historical’ approach to the Enlightenment (and its discontents)**

**Major monographs on the Enlightenment**
E. Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment* (Princeton 1951)
J. Van Horn Melton, *The Rise of the Public Sphere in Enlightenment Europe* (Cambridge 2001)

*On the Counter-Enlightenment*
K.M. Baker and P. Reill (eds), *What’s Left of Enlightenment? A Postmodern Question* (Stanford 2001)
* G. Garrard, *Counter-Enlightenments: From the Eighteenth Century to the Present* (London 2006)

**Seminar 1**
Foundational statements: What is Enlightenment? What is Counter-Enlightenment?

*Set texts*
Rousseau, *Discourse on the Sciences and the Arts* (1750)
Kant, ‘An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?’ (1784)

*Additional primary literature*
Voltaire, *Essay on Customs and Morals* (1756)
Herder, *Another Philosophy of History for the Education of Mankind* (1774)
Mendelssohn, ‘On the Question: What is Enlightenment?’ (1784)
Hamann, ‘Metacritique on the Purism of Reason’ (1784)
Condorcet, *Sketch for a Historical Picture of the Progress of the Human Mind* (1795)

*Secondary Literature*

Seminar 2
After the Deluge: Critics of Enlightenment in post-revolutionary Europe

Set texts
Hegel, Phenomenology of Spirit (1806), ch. VI.B.II. (‘Enlightenment’)
Hegel, Lectures on the Philosophy of World History (1822-1831), ‘The Modern Age’
De Maistre, Essay on the Generative Principle of Political Constitutions (1814)

Additional primary literature
Donoso Cortes, Essay on Catholicism, Liberalism and Socialism (1851)
Novalis, Christendom or Europe (1799)

Secondary literature
* H. Mah, ‘German Historical Thought in the Age of Herder, Kant and Hegel’, in L. Kramer and S. Maza (eds), *A Companion to Western Historical Thought* (Oxford 2002), pp. 154-159 (‘Metaphysics and History’)
* F. Beiser (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel* (Cambridge 1993), ch. 9 (‘Hegel’s Historicism’), pp. 270-301
** K. Löwith, *Meaning in History: Theological Implications of the Philosophy of History* (Chicago 1957), ch. III (‘Hegel’), pp. 52-60
** G. Garrard, *Counter-Enlightenments: From the Eighteenth Century to the Present* (London 2006), chs 3 (‘Counter-Enlightenment and Counter-Revolution’) and 4 (‘The Return of Faith and Feeling’), pp. 36-74
* R.A. Lebrun (ed.), *Joseph de Maistre’s Life, Thought and Influence: Selected Studies* (Montreal and Kingston 2001), esp. the chapters by Lebrun and Reedy in Pt III (pp. 153-190) and the reception histories by Lebrun and Pranchère in Pt IV (pp. 271-327)
C.M. Lombard, *Joseph de Maistre* (Boston 1976)
Seminar 3  
Towards a new Materialism (and Humanism): Marx and the Young Hegelians

Set texts  
Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity* (1841), Preface to the Second Edition (1843) and the Introduction (‘The Being of Man in General’ and ‘The Essence of Religion in General’)  

*Additional primary literature*  
Marx, *On the Jewish Question* (1844)  
Marx, *Theses on Feuerbach* (1845)

*Secondary literature*  
M.B. Steger and T. Carver (eds), *Engels after Marx* (Manchester 1999)  
J. D. Hunley, *The Life and Thought of Frederick Engels* (New Haven, 1991)  
** L. Krieger, ‘Marx and Engels as Historians’, *Journal of the History of Ideas* 14 (1953), pp. 381-403  
J. Ferraro, *Freedom and Determination in History according to Marx and Engels* (New York 1992)  
F. Furet, *Marx and the French Revolution* (Chicago 1988), Pt I (Introduction), chs 1-2 (pp. 3-66)

Seminar 4
Renouncing Reason in the Age of Science: Nietzsche

Set texts
Nietzsche, ‘On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense’ (1873)
Nietzsche, *On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life* (1874)
Nietzsche, *The Antichrist* (1888)

Additional primary literature
Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human* (1878-1882)

Secondary literature
S. Houlgate, *Hegel, Nietzsche and the Criticism of Metaphysics* (1986), esp. ch. 3 (‘Nietzsche and Metaphysics’)
J.P. Stern, *A Study of Nietzsche* (1979), ch. 5 (‘Sketch of a Book’)
G. Garrard, *Counter-Enlightenments: From the 18th century to the present* (New York 2006), ch. (‘The Strange Case of Friedrich Nietzsche and the Enlightenment’), pp. 74-80
** N. Martin, ‘“Aufklärung und kein Ende”: The Place of Enlightenment in Friedrich Nietzsche’s Thought’, *German Life and Letters* 61, 1 (January 2008), pp. 79-97

Seminar 5
Reason and its Discontents: Freud, Bergson, Le Bon

Set texts
Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899), Introduction
Freud, *The Future of an Illusion* (1927)
Bergson, *Creative Evolution* (1907)
Le Bon, *The Crowd* (1895)

Additional primary literature
Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930)
Secondary literature

** J. Toews, ‘Historicizing Psychoanalysis: Freud in His Time and for Our Time’, *Journal of Modern History* 63 (1991), pp. 504-545; this article is available on-line at: [http://www.jstor.org/view/00222801/di971057/97p00712/0]
P. Gay, *Freud: A Life for our Time* (1988); for a much more compact version of Gay’s take on Freud see:
** R. Wollheim, *Freud* (1990), esp. ch. VIII (‘Civilization and Society’), pp. 253-275
F. J. Sulloway, *Freud, Biologist of the Mind: Beyond the Psychoanalytic Legend* (1979)
* B. Bettelheim, *Freud and Man’s Soul* (1982)
** M. Mack, ‘Freud’s Other Enlightenment: Turning the Tables on Kant’, *New German Critique* 85 (Winter, 2002), pp. 3-31
R.C. Grogin, *The Bergsonian Controversy in France, 1900-1914* (Calgary 1988)

Seminar 6

Seduced by Unreason? Heidegger, Bataille, and the Lure of Fascist Ideology

Set texts
Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology* (1949)
Bataille, ‘The Psychological Structure of Fascism’ (1935)
**Additional primary literature**

Bataille, ‘The Notion of Expenditure’ (1933)
M. Blanchot, ‘Le Terrorisme comme méthode de salut public’, *Combat* 1, 7 (July 1936)
Heidegger, ‘Only a God Can Save Us’: An Interview with *Der Spiegel* (1966)

**Secondary literature**

M. Zimmerman, *Heidegger’s Confrontation with Modernity* (Bloomington 1990)


J. Young, *Heidegger, Philosophy, Nazism* (Cambridge 1997)


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**Seminar 7**
The End of Reason? Adorno, Horkheimer, and the Entwinement of Enlightenment and Myth

*Set texts*
Horkheimer and Adorno, *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947)
Horkheimer, ‘Reason against itself: Some remarks on Enlightenment’ (1946)

*Additional primary literature*
Horkheimer, ‘The End of Reason’ (1941)
Adorno, ‘Theses Against Occultism’ (1969)

*Secondary literature*
* W.D. Wilson and R.C. Holub (eds), *Impure Reason: Dialectic of Enlightenment in Germany* (Detroit 1993)
O. K. Werckmeister, ‘When Dogma Bites Dogma, or the Difficult Marriage of Marx and Freud’, *The Times Literary Supplement* (8 January 1971)
Seminar 8
Re-assessing the Potentials and Pathologies of Enlightenment in a ‘Postmodern’ World: Habermas, Lyotard, and the new Culture Wars

Set texts

Additional primary literature
Améry, ‘Enlightenment as Philosophia Perennis’ (1977)
Foucault, ‘What is Critique?’ (1978)
Foucault, ‘Kant on Enlightenment and Revolution’ (1986)
Habermas ‘Taking Aim at the Heart of the Present: On Foucault’s Lecture on Kant’s What is Enlightenment?’ (1984)
Habermas, The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures (1985)
Honneth, ‘An Aversion Against the Universal’, Theory, Culture and Society 2, 3 (1985)
Honneth, ‘Enlightenment and Rationality’ (1987)
Gray, Al-Qaeda and What it Means to Be Modern (2005)

Secondary literature
J. Rajchman, ‘Habermas’ Complaint’, New German Critique (Spring 1989)
* R.C. Holub, Jürgen Habermas: Critic in the Public Sphere (London 1991), chs 4 (pp. 78-106), 6 (pp. 133-162), and 7 (pp. 162-190)
** L. Goode, Habermas: Democracy and the Public Sphere, London 2005, ch. 2 (pp. 29-56)
C. Calhoun, Habermas and the Public Sphere, new edn, Boston 1992
** M. Passerin D’Entrevès and S. Benhabib (eds), *Habermas and the Unfinished Project of Modernity: Critical Essays on The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* (Boston 1997), esp. the Introduction by Passerin D’Entrevès and ch. 5 (‘Habermas and Foucault’), pp. 147-172
* M. Kelly (ed.), *Critique and Power: Recasting the Foucault/Habermas Debate* (Cambridge/Mass. 1994), esp. the chapters by T. McCarthy, ‘The Critique of Impure Reason: Foucault and the Frankfurt School’ and N. Fraser, ‘Michel Foucault: A Young Conservative?’
N. Wilson, ‘Punching out the Enlightenment: A Discussion of Peter Sloterdijk’s *Kritik der zynischen Vernunft*, New German Critique 41 (1987), pp. 53-70
P. Kurtz (ed.), *Challenges to the Enlightenment: In Defense of Reason and Science* (New York 1994), esp. the introduction by Kurtz