The Enlightenment was an international intellectual movement that critiqued existing ideas and institutions, a cultural movement that sought to redefine how men and women related to their world, and a social movement that held up open discussion and debate as the ideal form of rationality. Accordingly, the Enlightenment was an important phase in the development of modern thought. In this course we shall examine the philosophies and philosophers of the Enlightenment by evaluating them within their various intellectual, social, and national contexts. In addition to instilling a broad cultural and historical literacy of modern Europe, I hope that this course will instruct students how to read, critically analyze, interpret, and write about historical sources.

You will have four, one-hour exams that correspond to the four units of the course:

Unit 1: The Enlightenment: An Introduction
Unit 2: Philosophies and Philosophers of the Enlightenment
Unit 3: The Enlightenment in Social Context(s)
Unit 4: The Enlightenment in National Context(s)

The exams are not cumulative. Each exam will be worth 25% of your final grade. These exams will contain identifications and essay questions. An identification should be a concise and specific description of a term that addresses the term’s significance to European history (i.e., why was it important? What difference did it make?). Identifications typically answer 5-7 basic questions: Who? What? When? Where? Why? How? And most importantly: Significance? Essays should be clearly written, logically organized, and thorough. It is imperative that you include specific supporting evidence to reinforce your general claims.

The key terms and study questions that occur in each unit and section are intended to prepare you for the exams. Please review these terms and questions before you begin reading. Several questions will require a synthesis of the information from each section in order to answer. I strongly encourage you to familiarize yourself with all of the key terms and to answer all of the study questions for a unit before you take an exam.

Please contact me at SMLandry@email.arizona.edu if you have any questions about the content of the course or the exams.
Books available for purchase from University of Arizona bookstore:


Other selected readings available online and on E-Reserve:


“Life of Gustavus Vassa” (Internet Modern History Sourcebook aka IMHS) [http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/Vassa.html](http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/Vassa.html)


“Salon Life” (IMHS) [http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/18salons.html](http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/18salons.html)


The E-Reserves are password protected. The password is: europe

A University of Arizona CatCard is **NOT** required to access the E-Reserves or online readings. The E-Reserve site can be found at: [http://eres.library.arizona.edu/](http://eres.library.arizona.edu/)

I strongly encourage you to read outside of the assigned texts. You will not be penalized if you include information from outside readings in your exam answers. Needless to say, outside reading can help to fill in gaps in the course content or elucidate concepts that you don’t completely understand. A word of caution, however: while the internet can be a valuable historical resource, you must be cautious of open-source sites (such as Wikipedia) that anyone can edit. They sometimes contain factual errors, omissions, incomplete entries, and bias.
Unit 1: The Enlightenment: An Introduction

The Enlightenment was a loosely-unified historical movement that existed in multiple forms. These forms differed according to the diverse social and regional contexts where the Enlightenment occurred. However, a handful of general Enlightenment principles may be observed among its particular manifestations. These included: programs of gradual and measured social, political, and cultural reform in lieu of revolutionary change; faith in the inevitability of social progress and the perfectibility of man; a belief in rationalism, including inductive logic and the empirical method, and the attendant belief that the application of reason to social problems was useful for their resolution; the belief that the process of rational communication and sociability was as important to realizing enlightenment as were enlightened principles; anti-clericalism, or opposition to the social influence of institutional churches—this included criticism of the religious fanaticism encouraged by some clergy members in order to maintain their influence over a superstitious laity. Anti-clericalism could also manifest itself as an antipathy to the clergy or in outright atheism.

The Enlightenment was primarily a movement of intellectual elites whose ideas did not at first penetrate all of society. However, during the late eighteenth century, popularizers of enlightened thought appeared and made enlightened ideas accessible to the increasingly literate masses. Although it was a movement of intellectual elites, in theory the Enlightenment was open to all educated individuals. This was not always the case in practice, as women, Jews, non-Westerners, and lower-class men were sometimes excluded from enlightened conversation.

Study Questions:

What is the difference between enlightenment and the Enlightenment? How did contemporaries imagine enlightenment and the Enlightenment? How did contemporaries describe the proper application and the limits of enlightenment and the Enlightenment? How do modern scholars conceptualize enlightenment and the Enlightenment?

Evaluate the debate between the ancients and moderns. How did the debate reflect changing conceptions of authority, genius, knowledge, and progress?

Describe the political, intellectual, scientific, and religious origins of the Enlightenment.

Describe the relationship of the Ancien Régime to the Enlightenment.
Unit 1: The Enlightenment: An Introduction

Section 1: What is enlightenment? What is the Enlightenment?

Read: P. Hyland, 53-58; M. Mendelssohn, “On the Question: What is Enlightenment?” (E-Reserve); J.K.W. Mohsen “What is to be Done Toward…” (E-Reserve); D. Outram, “What is Enlightenment?” (E-Reserve)

In 1783 the Berlin journal Berlinische Monatsschrift asked the question: “What is enlightenment?” For the next decade, intellectuals fiercely debated this question, exploring the meaning, proper realization, and limits of enlightenment. Like the Enlightenment itself, their answers were varied but shared some general characteristics. As an introduction to this course, we shall read a number of classic replies to the question asked by the Berlinische Monatsschrift. In addition, we shall read the opinion of a modern historian, Dorinda Outram, on the current meaning and historiography of the Enlightenment. Please take note that Outram previews several different approaches to the Enlightenment that are taken by modern scholars and inform this course.

Identifications:

Berlinische Monatsschrift
“Sapere Aude!”
Unit 1: The Enlightenment: An Introduction

Section 2: Origins of the Enlightenment


The Italian Renaissance (1420-1600) and Renaissance Humanism produced a new way for Europeans to relate to their cultural tradition. During the Renaissance texts from classical antiquity were recovered in Italy and Greece. This produced a change in the attitude of Europeans to ancient texts. There was growing sense that the ancient pagans (i.e., non-Christians) had something significant to contribute to European intellectual life in addition to what the Bible or divine Revelation could contribute. No one, however, suggested that these recently recovered classical texts should outweigh the importance of the Bible.

The Scientific Revolution (c. 1550) transformed the way scientists acquired knowledge about the world. Since antiquity, scientists had appealed to classical authors rather than experimentation for scientific knowledge. But in the mid sixteenth century, a handful of thinkers began to doubt the classical texts and instead used their senses to observe and explore the world. These scientists advocated observation and experimentation in lieu of adherence to classical scientific “authorities”.

The Battle of the Books or the quarrel between the ancients and the moderns (c. 1650) was a debate that questioned whether the contemporary arts and sciences had surpassed the knowledge of classical Greece and Rome. The “ancients” argued that superior representations of beauty and knowledge could be found in the classics. The “moderns” claimed that contemporary literature and science had surpassed that of the ancients. At stake were the very ideas of authority, genius, knowledge, and progress.

The Republic of Letters was an ever-changing and constantly growing community of European humanistic intellectuals who communicated with each other beginning in the late sixteenth century. Centered in France, the republic included scholars, clerics, journalists, social critics, and eventually monarchs such as Frederick the Great of Prussia, Catherine II of Russia, and Charles III of Spain. The “citizens” of this republic thought of themselves as a virtual community of wise and educated persons. Their republic cut across political boundaries and their status within the republic was based on education rather than birth or social class. Citizens of this republic wrote to each other about social, scholarly, and practical issues. They conceived of their audience as universal and their ideas as universally applicable to any society. The Italian Renaissance, the Scientific Revolution, the Battle of the Books and the emergence of the Republic of Letters did not cause the Enlightenment. But these were important precursors to the Enlightenment that contributed to its criticism of received ideas, its insistence on experimentation, and its cosmopolitan character.
Identifications:

Ancients vs. Moderns (aka The Battle of the Books)
Francis Bacon
*Historical and Critical Dictionary* (P. Bayle)
Isaac Newton
Italian Renaissance
*Novum Organum* (F. Bacon)
Pierre Bayle
*Principia Mathematica* (I. Newton)
Republic of Letters
Scientific Revolution
Whigs
Unit 1: The Enlightenment: An Introduction

Section 3: The Ancien Régime

Read: G. Bossenga, “Society in Old Regime France” (E-Reserve)

The reign of the French king Louis XIV came to an end in 1715 after seventy two years of rule. A stagnant political culture of conformity was all that was permitted under the absolutist reign of the Sun King. When Louis XIV died and Louis XV’s regency began, censorship laws in France were relaxed. French social critics and philosophers, known as philosophes, took advantage of the relaxation of censorship laws to criticize ignorance, superstition, the social influence of the church, government corruption, and aristocratic privileges, creating a culture of opposition between intellectual elites and the old order. This culture of opposition grew during the reigns of Louis XV (1715-1774) and Louis XVI (1774-1792), benefiting from the relative weakness of these monarchs. Enlightened criticism of the old social order delegitimized the monarchy and played at least some part in the collapse of the Ancien Régime and the outbreak of the French Revolution.

Identifications:

Absolutism
Ancien Régime
Edict of Nantes
Estates General
Jansenism
Louis XIV
Louis XV
Louis XVI
“Nobility of the Robe”
Philosophes
Unit 2: Philosophies and Philosophers of the Enlightenment

In the previous unit we recounted the origins and general characteristics of Enlightenment thought. In this unit we examine more closely the philosophies and philosophers of the Enlightenment. Theoretically, every idea and institution was open to enlightened critique. But there were a handful of themes that Enlightenment thinkers continuously revisited. These themes included reason and knowledge, religion, nature, society, and politics. During the late eighteenth century a group of anti-philosophes appeared that discounted the Enlightenment’s critical spirit and its emphasis on reason.

Study Questions

How did Enlightenment thinkers describe human nature? What was the relationship between these conceptions of human nature and the possibility of knowledge and enlightenment?

Describe the philosophies and major proponents of rationalism and empiricism.

How did Enlightenment thinkers variously conceive of religion? To what extent was religion inconsistent with the project of enlightenment? To what extent was religion consistent with the project of enlightenment?

What was the relationship of the Enlightenment to women? How was woman’s “nature” defined against man’s “nature”? How were women’s roles defined against men’s roles?

What was the relationship between the Enlightenment and the “Other”? How did dissident writers challenge Enlightenment binaries such as “primitive” and “enlightened”? How did this complicate Enlightenment notions of human nature and universality?

How did Enlightenment thinkers describe nature and the natural world?

How was the metaphor of the machine employed in Enlightenment scientific and technological thought?

Describe the social reforms proposed by Enlightenment thinkers.

What was the nature and purpose of (philosophical) history according to Enlightenment thinkers?

Describe the moral philosophies of Hume, Kant, Bentham, and Sade.

What were the criticisms levied by the anti-philosophes against the Enlightenment? According to these Counter-Enlightenment thinkers, what were the dangers of enlightened thinking?
Unit 2: Philosophies and Philosophers of the Enlightenment

Section 1: Reason, Knowledge, and Human Nature and the Enlightenment

Read: P. Hyland, 1-53

To realize the goals of the Enlightenment, every idea and institution were to be subjected to the test of reason. Enlightenment thinkers maintained that man, nature, and society were all explicable and capable of manipulation by reason. Observation, experimentation, and reason were the only legitimate sources of knowledge. Intuition, sentiment, emotion, social traditions, received ideas, and religion were all insufficient means of understanding man and the world. The nature of man also came under scrutiny as a legitimate object of study. And despite differences of opinion among Enlightenment thinkers about the true nature of man, there was a shared faith in the perfectibility of man. The philosophe could improve the human condition and help to perfect humanity by encouraging the use of reason and its application to all intellectual and social problems.

Identifications:

Alexander Pope
Empiricism
Epistemology
Leviathan (T. Hobbes)
Rationalism
René Descartes
The Enlightenment has a reputation for hostility to religion and even outright atheism in the popular imagination. The reality of the relationship of the Enlightenment to religion is actually more complex. The Enlightenment was primarily anti-clerical, or opposed to the pervasive social influence that clerics and the church held over society. Enlightened thinkers were generally critical of what they perceived as ignorance, intolerance, sectarianism, superstition, and especially fanaticism. But few enlightened thinkers were critical of religion, per se. Enlightenment thinkers could be anything from devout to dissenting Christians, to deists, and to atheists hostile to all forms of spirituality. But like every other idea and institution, religion was to be held up to the light of reason for scrutiny.

Identifications:

Anti-Clericalism
*Christianity not Mysterious* (J. Toland)
Deism
Natural Religion
Theodicy
Unit 2: Philosophies and Philosophers of the Enlightenment

Section 3: The “Other” and the Enlightenment

Read: P. Hyland 233-258, 296-327; “Life of Gustavus Vassa” (IMHS)

While the Enlightenment ostensibly recognized the equality of all peoples and universal accessibility to reason, it excluded some groups, such as women, Jews, non-Westerners, and lower-class men from enlightened conversation. These groups constituted the “primitive” foil to Enlightenment thinkers’ conception of a “civilized” society. A few enlightened thinkers recognized these contradictions in Enlightenment thought and criticized them. In some cases, members of these groups themselves challenged the contradictory lines of Enlightenment thought.

Identifications:

Abbé Raynal
A Vindication of the Rights of Woman (M. Wollstonecraft)
Mary Wollstonecraft
Mary Wortley Montagu
Olaudah Equiano
Olympe de Gouges
Unit 2: Philosophies and Philosophers of the Enlightenment

Section 4: Nature, Society, Politics, and Morality and the Enlightenment

The Enlightenment imagined a new relationship between man and nature. Enlightenment thinkers argued that nature was not mysterious and unknowable, but instead an object that could be understood, quantified, and indeed conquered by man. They also maintained that enlightenment, or the application of reason to social problems, would lead to the progressive improvement of society. Enlightenment thinkers idealistically believed that every historical age improved upon the previous one, and that each age became more rational and more moral. However, most intellectual elites believed that the public could only slowly attain enlightenment under the stewardship of enlightened thinkers. Like nature, enlightened thinkers argued that law, morality, crime and punishment, economies, and indeed all of civil society could be rationalized. Society, like nature, seemed to function like a precise machine, capable of enlightened manipulation.


Identifications:

Adam Ferguson
Carolus Linnaeus
Catherine II of Russia
Enlightened Despotism
Friedrich II of Prussia
Giambattista Vico
Marquis de Sade
The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire (E. Gibbon)
The Spirit of the Laws (Montesquieu)
The Wealth of Nations (A. Smith)
Utilitarianism
Unit 2: Philosophies and Philosophers of the Enlightenment

Section 5: The Counter-Enlightenment

Read: D. McMahon, “The Counter-Enlightenment and the Low-Life of Literature” (E-Reserve); I. Berlin, “The Counter-Enlightenment” (E-Reserve)

The Enlightenment did not enjoy universal support. Historians have noted the existence of a Counter-Enlightenment, a group of anti-philosophes who were opposed to enlightened ideas and especially wary of Enlightenment criticisms of religion and society. These anti-philosophes considered any attack on religion to be an attack on social and political stability. Most Counter-Enlightenment figures were more pro-throne and altar than they were anti-Enlightenment, so the Counter-Enlightenment and anti-philosophe movement did not possess much uniformity or traction.

Identifications:

J.G. Hamann
J.G. Herder
Joseph de Maistre
Nicholas-Joseph-Laurent-Gilbert
Unit 3: The Enlightenment in Social Context(s)

The Enlightenment should also be understood as a social movement in addition to an intellectual and cultural movement. Open discussion and debate was considered the acme of enlightened sociability. New media and forums appeared for the discussion, diffusion, and popularization of enlightened ideas. These new media and forums for the production and transmission of enlightened thought included pamphlets, serials, and novels, salons, cafes, taverns, and Masonic Lodges. These were media and forums where citizens could openly read about, discuss, and debate ideas. From these media and out of these discussions modern historians have recognized the formation of a public sphere, the emergence of a critical public opinion that passed judgment on matters of taste and politics. Sociability, in its many forms, was a necessary ingredient for the emergence of this enlightened public sphere. Accordingly, in the next unit we shall consider the Enlightenment in its social context(s) to reveal the social processes by which enlightened ideas were produced and diffused.

Study Questions:

Describe the emergence of the public sphere during the Enlightenment. What was its relationship to the Enlightenment? What was its significance?

How does the Hume-Rousseau affair illustrate how the general reading public participated in the public sphere? How did this change the relationship between philosophes and the general public? How did this change the composition of the Republic of Letters?

What was the Reading Revolution? What was its relationship to the Enlightenment? Why did some Enlightenment thinkers have reservations about the rise in popular literacy?

What was the difference between intensive and extensive reading during the eighteenth century?

What was considered “appropriate” reading material for women during the eighteenth century?

How did the “literary underground” enable the Enlightenment to penetrate French society?

According to Darnton, what books (both legal and illegal) were Frenchmen reading during the eighteenth century?

What was the relationship between the legal publishing guilds and the clandestine publishers in eighteenth-century France? How did the legal and illegal production and distribution of books affect what Frenchmen read?

How did forms of enlightened sociability differ between salons, taverns and coffeehouses, and lodges?

How did the different media and forums of the Enlightenment affect the content of enlightened ideas?
What was the relationship of social class to the media and forums of enlightened sociability?
The bourgeois public sphere, especially in Great Britain and France, emerged from the material conditions of the developing market economy, commercial trade, traffic in news, and literary marketplace of the reading public. Commercial contacts facilitated communication, the establishment of a post, and the transmission of news. The exchange of news, letters, and periodicals among private individuals in public forums—salons, coffee houses, clubs, and lodges—created an enlightened reading public. This enlightened and bourgeois public developed political consciousness and claimed the authority to evaluate the state and institutions of social hierarchy (estates, orders, and classes) on the basis of rational deliberation. As a result, enlightened public opinion was conceived as the sole legitimate arbiter of law. Accordingly, a public sphere emerged in the political realm, distinct from civil society or the state. The public sphere, or public opinion, emerged out of these enlightened discussions and debates occurring in cafes, salons, and lodges and began to assert itself against the monarchy and claim that it was the sole judge of what was right for France, that it had the right to determine the direction of French society, and that it had the duty to criticize the French monarchy when it strayed from its obligations. This is what the German philosopher Habermas called the “structural transformation of the public sphere”—the move from commentary on art, literature, and ideas toward the public criticism of political institutions. Today, many scholars agree that the emergence of this political public sphere and its criticism of the French monarchy was one of the primary catalysts of the French Revolution.

Identifications:

Parlements
Public Sphere
Unit 3: The Enlightenment in Social Context(s)

Section 2: Readers, Writers, Grub Street, and the Low-Life of Literature

Read: J. Metlon, The Rise of the Public Part II; R. Darnton, The Literary Underground of the Old Regime

An intellectual underclass that was not typically admitted into any of the institutions of the “High Enlightenment”, Grub Street represented the “Low Enlightenment” or literary underground of the old regime. The existence of Grub Street suggests a different social context of the French Enlightenment as well as a different temporal context. Grub Street writers were usually drawn from the literary proletariat and critical of the “aristocracy of letters”. But Grub Street also reflected the late Enlightenment’s impatience with the gradual and measured reform of the early Enlightenment. This literary underground, which included hacks, pornographers, libellists, and vulgar popularizers of the High Enlightenment, constituted a body of non-traditional intellectuals whose violently iconoclastic satires and criticisms of the existing social order attacked literary privilege (the pensions that writers received from the state) and disdained the “aristocracy of letters”. Voltaire called these figures “ragged rabble”, “dregs of humanity”, and “the riff-raff of literature”. But the materialist philosophies, atheism, pornography, and libels of the Grub Street hacks enjoyed wider audiences and more popular appeal during the late Enlightenment than the philosophes themselves. The iconoclastic and revolutionary tenor of their social criticism, rather than the content of their ideas, probably contributed to the destabilization of the French monarchy and made way for the Revolution.

Identifications:

“Aristocracy of Letters”
Grub Street
“Le Monde”
Mémoires Judiciares
Reading Revolution
Société Typographique de Neuchâtel
Tatler and Spectator (R. Steele and J. Addison)
Unit 3: The Enlightenment in Social Context(s)

Section 3: Universities, Salons, Cafes, Taverns, and Lodges as sites of Enlightenment Sociability

Read: J. Melton, *The Rise of the Public* Part III; “The First English Coffee-Houses, c. 1670-1675” (IMHS); “Salon Life” (IMHS)

The university was the primary setting for the Enlightenment in Germany. German scholars enjoyed relative academic freedom. Unlike British universities, whose purpose was to train the clergy and lawyers, and French universities, which focused on teaching a specialized and utilitarian knowledge, late eighteenth-century German universities pursued original research and were thus important sites of enlightened sociability.

Salons were forums for polite intellectual debate and social interaction. They were typically governed by a hostess who guided the discussion and enforced the rules. Female administration of the salons made it possible for women to participate in the Enlightenment without authoring texts. Salons were the quintessential form of enlightened sociability in France, although cafes and Masonic lodges were also popular forums for the exchange of ideas. Salons played a critical role in the introduction of new ideas and new literature to the public. One had to be invited to attend a salon and after attending one was expected to maintain loyalty to that salon.

Cafes and taverns were casual forums where ordinary people could meet and discuss ideas and borrow newspapers and books. Similar institutions included lending libraries where patrons could check out books for a small rental fee. These forums and media increased the circulation of Enlightenment ideas.

The Freemasons were an all-male secret fraternal organization. Masons were not discriminated on the bases of their social standing. All members were considered equal within the lodge: from the common man to the wealthy noble. Masons were primarily concerned with the moral improvement of their members and of society. Through Masonry the bourgeoisie found a way that it could participate in the new enlightened political culture. That is, the growing bourgeoisie, rapidly acquiring wealth and economic power, was nevertheless precluded from the political sphere. Excluded from politics, they began to meet in non-political, or social locations such as salons, cafes, taverns, and lodges. The cosmopolitan and egalitarian lodges provided a social space in which bourgeois morality and liberty might be realized independently of the political sphere. Thus the lodges constituted a form of bourgeois morality and egalitarian social organization opposed to the hierarchical social order of the Ancien Régime that could serve as the basis of criticism of the state and its institutions.

Identifications:

Freemasonry
Henriette Herz
Illuminati
Julie Lespinasse
Rahel Levin
Tischgesellschaft
Unit 4: The Enlightenment in National Context(s)


By this time I hope I have convinced you that multiple Enlightenments existed throughout Europe that shared general ideas and themes but differed among their varying intellectual, social, and regional contexts. In this unit we shall examine those regional and national contexts of the Enlightenment. While there was some overlap among them, each region or nation gave the Enlightenment its own national complexion. The practical and moderate nature of the British Enlightenment, the critical spirit of the French Enlightenment, the corporate nature of the German Enlightenment, and the composition of the Italian, Spanish, and American Enlightenments were all intimately influenced by their national contexts.

Study Questions:

What were the social, political, and religious contexts of the British Enlightenment?

Compare and contrast the British, French, and American Enlightenments. What roles did virtue, reason, and liberty play in each of these Enlightenments?

How does the life and work of Justus Möser illustrate the corporate character of the German Enlightenment?

Describe the life and work of Moses Mendelssohn in the context of the Haskalah.
The British Enlightenment may be characterized by its pragmatism, or its commitment to the solution of concrete problems with an eye toward determining how to live well. Accordingly, didactic moral weeklies such as Addison and Steele’s *Tattler* and *The Spectator* were some of the most widely circulated periodicals in eighteenth-century Britain and represented an important media of the British Enlightenment while coffeehouses and taverns represented the preferred forums of sociability for the reading and discussion of Enlightenment texts. British Enlightenment figures also stressed the improvement of the individual within society, believing that general social improvement would result from the improvement of each individual. Individuals, rather than the state or monarch, were the primary catalysts of reform and progress. Finally, during the British Enlightenment there was little criticism of religion. Following the Glorious Revolution both censorship and religious persecution were relatively lax in Britain. The British enjoyed relative religious freedom and toleration and the Anglican Church was not so powerful in England nor was its cultural influence very pervasive. England was less socially stratified than many other contemporary European nations. Socially hierarchies existed but they were not very pronounced. Because the English enjoyed a constitutional monarchy and their society was relatively open, the object of enlightened criticism during the British Enlightenment was usually not the state, but rather the inequalities of society. British Enlightenment figures such as Bacon, Locke, and Newton were acknowledged by no less than Voltaire as exercising a profound influence upon the French Enlightenment.

Identifications:

Adam Smith
David Hume
Edmund Burke
Edward Gibbon
Francis Hutcheson
Jeremy Bentham
John Locke
John Wesley
Joseph Butler
Joseph Priestley
The French Enlightenment was characterized by a social criticism practiced by the philosophes that manifested itself as attacks on prejudices and other foolish commonly-held beliefs; in anticlericalism, or an attack on the cultural influence of the Catholic Church and on the religious superstition it encouraged; and in criticism of the decadence and obsolescence of the aristocracy. One of the foundational texts of the French Enlightenment was Montesquieu’s *The Persian Letters* (1721), a satire of contemporary French manners and society from the viewpoint of a Turkish sultan visiting Paris. The Turkish sultan notes the frivolity of Parisian social practices, judging them according to his more enlightened tastes. *The Persian Letters* was wildly popular, but it was a book that could not have been written during the censorious reign of Louis XIV. During the next generation of the French Enlightenment, social criticism multiplied with the work of figures such as Diderot, Voltaire, and Rousseau.

Identifications:

Baron d’Holbach
Calas Affair
Charles-Louis de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu
Denis Diderot
Francois Marie Arouet (aka Voltaire)
Jean-Jacques Rousseau
Marquis de Condorcet
*The Social Contract* (Rousseau)
The German Enlightenment lacked the atheism, materialism, and social radicalism that was characteristic of extreme forms of the French Enlightenment. This is because the German Enlightenment was a corporate Enlightenment. This corporate Enlightenment occurred within the firmly entrenched estate society of eighteenth-century Germany. This estate society was characterized by political paternalism and loyalty to the institutions of the old regime; persistence of the agrarian state and old regime moral economy; and the difficulty of reforming the imperial system. Enlightened Germans advocated gradual reform of some features of their social institutions to be carried out from above rather than below; these suggested reforms included legal reforms according to rational principles and amelioration of the most exploitative features of serfdom. German intellectuals were compelled to compromise with the aristocratic social and political order that remained vital in Germany. The corporate nature of German society lessened the cultural impact of the German Enlightenment and is thus an important context for understanding the Aufklärung.

The German Enlightenment was also affected by its religious context. For example, German enlightenment texts were characterized by a philosophical profundity and Innerlichkeit, or inwardness. This tendency was inherited from the cultural influence of Pietism, the Protestant religious tradition characterized by individual piety, personal reflection, and religious inwardness. The influence of Pietism on German intellectuals also affected their vision of individual vs. social reform. German Enlightenment figures were dedicated to the enlightenment of the individual almost as much as they were to the idea of enlightenment as a means of social improvement.

The Haskalah is the name for the Jewish Enlightenment. Maskilim, or proponents of the Haskalah, agitated for Jewish emancipation, advocated rational reform of Judaism and Hebraic studies, and Jewish integration and assimilation into European culture. To these ends Jewish journals, newspapers, and salons were established.

Identifications:

Aufklärung
Gotthold Ephraim Lessing
Haskalah
Immanuel Kant
Justus Möser
Maskilim
Moses Mendelssohn
Unit 4: The Enlightenment in National Context(s)

Section 4: Italy, Spain, and the United States

Read: O. Chadwick, “The Italian Enlightenment” (E-Reserve); J. Lynch “The Enlightenment in Spain” (E-Reserve); G. Himmelfarb, The Roads to Modernity, 191-235

The Italian Enlightenment was more practical than theoretical. Italians wrote about actual social problems and proposed solutions for them. There was a legal and politically reform-minded bent to the Italian Enlightenment that was underlined by its brightest luminary, the philosopher and criminologist Cesare Beccaria. Italian Enlightenment intellectuals were usually independent and isolated from each other. Like the contemporary German states, there was little intellectual or cultural uniformity from region to region. Accordingly, the Italian Enlightenment was a regional Enlightenment that was centered around Naples in the South and Milan in the North.

The Spanish Enlightenment was characterized by the subordination of the Church to the Bourbon crown, the suppression of the Jesuits, and the reduction of the power of the Inquisition. The brightest luminary of the Spanish Enlightenment was the monk Feijóo. Feijóo wrote critical works on literature, art, philosophy, science, theology, math geography and history. He introduced Descartes, Francis Bacon, and Newton to Spain. Feijóo championed the rich intellectual tradition of Spain, which he sought to maintain by introducing Enlightenment ideas into the country. He supported female emancipation and the education of women, encouraged the progress of science in Spain, and derided religious superstition and fanaticism while remaining sincere in his Catholic faith.

The New World, with its huge territory and relatively sparse populations was considered by many to be the perfect laboratory for the testing of enlightened ideas. The American Enlightenment was an experiment primarily concerned with the establishment of political liberty and the maintenance of the new republic.

Identify:

Alexis de Tocqueville
American Philosophical Society
Antonio Genovesi
Benito Feijóo
Benjamin Franklin
Cesare Beccaria
Gaetano Filangieri
James Madison
Thomas Jefferson
Thomas Paine