The 18th Century Enlightenment
History 71000
Professor Helena Rosenblatt
Hrosenblatt@gc.cuny.edu 212-817-8440
Mondays 4:15-6:15
Office hours: by appointment

**Course Description:** It is a widely recognized fact that the modern Western world owes many of its fundamental ideas to the European Enlightenment. It is also true that since the mid-20th century, the Enlightenment has come under attack. It is accused of a variety of purported sins, including Euro-centrism, imperialism, racism, sexism, and proto-totalitarianism. In this course, we will read texts by some of the most important writers of the Enlightenment (Hume, Diderot, Locke, Montesquieu, Rousseau, and Wollstonecraft) with a focus on the following themes: the social contract and the role of government, property and commerce, religion, race and slavery, sex and gender. We will also read recent critiques and defenses of the Enlightenment, with a view to deciding for ourselves what we might still be able to learn from it.

**Course Learning Objectives:**
Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to
* Read texts more critically and effectively
* Identify and summarize ideas in texts in an articulate and persuasive manner, verbally and in writing
* Display a grasp of the key concepts associated with enlightenment
* Display a grasp of the key criticisms levied at the enlightenment.

**Course Schedule with Required Readings:**

**August 29 Introduction.**

**September 12 Before the Enlightenment**

Excerpts from:
Loyseau, *A Treatise on Orders*
Bossuet, *Politics Drawn from the Very Words of Holy Scripture*
Hobbes, *Leviathan*
Pufendorf, *On the Duty of Man and Citizen*
Filmer, *Patriarcha*
Find these readings at:
http://enlightenment.commons.gc.cuny.edu/
September 19 An Age of Commerce and Refinement

Hume "Of Refinement in the Arts" (text will be provided)
Rousseau First Discourse (Hackett edition)
Please purchase or borrow this edition:
The Basic Political Writings, transl by Donald A. Cress, intro by Peter Gay

September 26 The Origins of Government according to Locke

John Locke, Two Treatises of Government

Skim but do not skip the First Treatise; focus on the Second.
There are many good paperback editions of Locke’s Two Treatises available on the market; but be sure to get a hard copy that you can bring to class.

October 3 NO CLASS

October 6. The Origins of Government according to Rousseau

Rousseau, Social Contract (Hackett edition)

October 17 Empire

Sankar Muthu, Enlightenment Against Empire pages TBA
Diderot, Supplement to the Bougainville's Voyage text will be provided

October 24 Anthropology and Politics
Rousseau's Second Discourse (Hackett edition)

October 31 Montesquieu, Persian Letters
Special Guest: Professor Stuart Warner, Roosevelt University, editor of a forthcoming new edition of the Persian Letters.

Please purchase or borrow this edition:
Persian Letters: With Related Texts (Hackett Classics)
translated, with notes, by Raymond N. MacKenzie

Pay special attention to the following letters: 1-15; 20; 23; 24; 26-30; 32; 37-38; 44; 46; 47; 51; 53; 59-64; 67; 69; 70-71; 75; 79-81; 83; 85; 88-90; 93; 97; 105-06; 112-16; 127; 131-32; 141-42; 146-61.
Pay very special attention to
1-9; 20; 23-24; 26-28; 30; 32; 37; 44; 51; 53; 59-64; 67; 70-71; 83; 93; 105-06; 112-15; 127; 131-32; 141-142; 146-161.

Pay very, very special attention to
3; 6; 24; 30; 32; 44; 51; 53; 62; 67; 81; 127; 141.

**November 7 Religion**
Locke’s *Letter on Toleration*, *Treatise of the Three Imposters* and
Rousseau's *Profession of Faith* Texts will be provided

**November 14 Feminism**
Rousseau's *Emile* (text will be provided),
Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*
Please purchase or borrow the Oxford World’s Classics edition, Janet Todd editor (which contains also *A Vindication of the Rights of Men* and *An Historical and Moral View*)

**November 21 Gender**
Special Guest: Professor Rosanne Kennedy, NYU, and author of
*Rousseau in Drag: Deconstructing Gender* (Palgrave, 2012)

Tom Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Harvard University Press, 1990) pages TBA and provided
Lieselotte Steinbrugge, *The Moral Sex* pages to be announced and provided

**November 28, Legacies**
Selections from
(articles will be provided)

**December 5 Student Presentations**