Introduction to the History of European Political Thought in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

Performing Ideas of the Enlightenment and Romanticism

Dr Paul E. Kerry
Email: kp297@cam.ac.uk
Course Description

This introductory course aims to survey key political themes and sources, with a particular emphasis being given to the late-eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries. There were revolutions of many kinds taking place during these years, agricultural, technological, political, but our focus will be on those that occurred in political thought.

The framework of modern democratic governments and the reasoning that informs their political culture spring in large part from the intellectual ferment of this period. The historical context will be the American and French revolutions, as well as the Napoleonic Wars and the so-called concert of Europe, as well as the conceptual periodisations that historians call the Enlightenment and Romanticism.

As you are in Cambridge, this course will take every opportunity to highlight the long and rich intellectual heritage of the Colleges to inform your learning. We draw not merely draw on the course readings, but actively engage with interdisciplinary primary sources, including the visual arts, architecture, music, and performance.

Teaching Methodology

Lectures plus tutorial classes (seminars) form the basis of the teaching for this course. Lectures will introduce a cluster of related thinkers and ideas, while seminars aim to place these into broader historiographical contexts. The course strives to survey many of the thinkers on the Cambridge University Historical Tripos, Part I: Paper 20 and Part II: Paper 4.

Readings

We will draw many of our primary source readings from the Isaac Kramnick’s *Enlightenment Reader* and Warren Breckman’s *European Romanticism Reader*. The Kramnick and Breckman readers must be purchased before you arrive in Cambridge. A course reader will be provided. The focus on primary sources is meant to foster direct engagement with the key texts of the period. An extensive secondary source bibliography will also be provided that situates these sources in scholarly debate and will be helpful in crafting the final essay. Primary sources are also available free through various online sources but see especially the Liberty Fund Library of Liberty.

Bibliography

Your course packet will contain a bibliography with an extensive list of background readings for you to contextualize our primary sources. A rich array of scholarly articles on many of the individual thinkers that will be studied in this course can be found in the Cambridge Historical Tripos History of Political Thought Paper 20 Reading List – http://www.hist.cam.ac.uk/undergraduate/tripos-papers/part1papers-2011-12/paper20.pdf

Performance Evaluation

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<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tr>
<td>Final Examination:</td>
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<td>Final Essay:</td>
<td>45%  (2,500 to 3,000 words)</td>
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<td>Participation, Attendance, Portfolio:</td>
<td>10%</td>
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Detailed Lecture and Seminar List

Lecture 1: On Progress

Enlightenment Reader (Kramnick)
Vico, The New Science
Pope, An Essay on Man
d’Alembart, The Human Mind Emerged from Barbarism
Diderot, “Encyclopédie”
Dumarsais, Definition of a Philosophe
Turgot, On Progress
Smith, Four-Stage Theory of Development
Ferguson, Progressive Character of Human Nature
Priestley, “How glorious, then, is the prospect…”
Condorcet, “The Perfectability of Man” and Future Progress of the Human Mind
Kant, Perpetual Peace

Course Reader
Jefferson, Declaration of Independence
Lessing, Education of the Human Race
Kant, “What is Enlightenment?”

Lecture 2: On History

Enlightenment Reader (Kramnick)
Bolingbroke, The Utility of History
Hume, History as Guide
Gibbon, The Progress of Superstition
Voltaire, In Defense of Modernity

Course Reader
Louis XIV, Revocation Edict of Nantes
Hume, History of England
Goethe, Egmont
Schiller, Revolt of the Netherlands

Lecture 3: On Religion and Tolerance

Enlightenment Reader (Kramnick)
Pierre Bayle, On Superstition and Tolerance
Hume, Of Miracles and the Origin of Religion
Collins, A Discourse of Free Thinking
d’Holbach, “No need of theology…Only of Reason…”
Joseph Priestley, Unitarianism
Newton, An Argument for a Deity

Course Reader
Locke, A Letter Concerning Toleration
Voltaire, On Toleration
Voltaire, Sermon of the Fifty
Lessing, Nathan the Wise
Mendelssohn, Jerusalem
English Parliament Toleration Act, 1689
Joseph II, Edict for Toleration of the Jews, 1782
Virginia Act for Establishing Religious Freedom, 1786
France’s Cult of the Supreme Being, 1794
Jefferson, Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth
Franklin, Autobiography and A Witch Trial at Mount Holly

Lecture 4: On Being Human

Enlightenment Reader (Kramnick)
Descartes, “I think, therefore I am …”
Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding
Leibnitz, New Essays on Human Understanding
Voltaire, On Mr Locke
Hume, A Treatise of Human Nature
De La Mettrie, Man a Machine
Hartley, Of Ideas, Their Generation and Associations
Reid, The Philosophy of Common Sense
Condillac, Treatise on the Sensations
Mandeville, The Fable of the Bees
Hutcheson, Concerning the Moral Sense
Smith, The Impartial Spectator
Helvétius, Treatise on Man

Lecture 5: On Government I

Enlightenment Reader (Kramnick)
Locke, Second Treatise
Montesquieu, The Spirit of the Laws
Kant, Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals

Course Reader
Hobbes, Leviathan
Bentham, Principles of Morals and Legislation
Lecture 6: On Government II

Enlightenment Reader (Kramnick)
Voltaire, Political Essays
Rousseau, Discourse on the Origin of Inequality and The Social Contract
Frederick, Benevolent Despotism
Paine, Common Sense and The Rights of Man
Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen

Course Reader
Franklin, Rules by Which a Great Empire May be Reduced to a Small One
The Federalist Papers, 10 and 51
The U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights
Burke, Reflections on the Revolution

Lecture 7: On Science

Enlightenment Reader (Kramnick)
Bacon, The New Science (see Bacon and Newton sculptures in Trinity College chapel)
Newton, Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy
Cotes, The New Physics
Voltaire, On Bacon and Newton
Buffon, The Rat
Condorcet, The Utility of Science
Priestley, The Organization of Scientific Research
Franklin, Letter to Joseph Priestley

Lecture 8: Romantic Political Thought

European Romanticism Reader (Breckman)
Novalis, Christianity or Europe
Chateaubriand, The Genius of Christianity
Müller, Elements of Statecraft
Fichte, Addresses to the German Nation
Mazzini, the Duties of Man
Hugo, Cromwell
Michelet, Our Native Land: Are Nationalities about to Disappear?

Course Reader
Robespierre, Terror and Virtue
Napoleonic Code
Benjamin Constant, Liberty of the Ancients
Tocqueville, Democracy in America
Lecture 9: On Race

*Enlightenment Reader* (Kramnick)
Hume, “Negroes … naturally inferior to the Whites … “
“Negro~*, Encyclopaedia Britannica entry
Woolman, Considerations on the Keeping of Negroes
Kant, The Differences between the Races
Diderot, “Who are you, then, to make slaves …”
Long, “Bestial manners, stupidity and vices …”
Paine, African Slavery in America
Gibbon, Of Empires and Savages
Jefferson, On Indians and Negroes
Priestley, The Ends of Empire

*Course Reader*
Goethe, Iphigenia on Tauris
Wilberforce, Abolition Speech (see Wilberforce sculpture in St. John’s chapel)
Franklin, Sidi Mehemet and Letter
Humboldt, Letter

Lecture 10: On Class and Society

*Enlightenment Reader* (Kramnick)
Addison, The Royal Exchange
Franklin, Industry and the Way to Wealth
Hume, Of Luxury
Quesnay, The Physiocratic Fomula
Turgot, Economic Liberty
Smith, The Wealth of Nations
Montesquieu, The Severity of Criminal Laws
Beccaria, An Essay on Crimes and Punishments
Voltaire, On Torture and Capital Punishment
Howard, The State of Prisons
Bentham, “Cases unmeet for punishment …”
Locke, Some Thoughts Concerning Education
Rousseau, Children and Civic Education
Priestley, Education for Civil and Active Life

*Course Reader*
Carlyle, Labour
Marx, Estranged Labour
Lecture 11: On Gender

Enlightenment Reader (Kramnick)
Astell, Some Reflections upon Marriage
Rousseau, Duties of Women
Kant, The Fair Sex
Paine, Women, Adored and Oppressed
Macauley, Women’s Education
Constantia, On the Equality of the Sexes
de Gouges, The Rights of Women
Wollstonecraft, Vindication of the Rights of Women

Course Reader
Austen, Pride and Prejudice
Hardy, Tess of the D’Urbervilles
Eliot, Middlemarch
Brontë, Jane Eyre

Lecture 12: Performing Romantic Ideas I

Seminar List

Seminar 1: On Method

Seminar 2: Visualizing Enlightenment Ideas

Seminar 3: Performing Enlightenment Ideas, I

Seminar 4: Performing Enlightenment Ideas, II

Seminar 5: Enlightenment Political Concepts
Natural Law, Natural Rights, Utilitarianism, Liberalism, Republicanism

Seminar 6: On Romanticism
Romanticism Reader (Breckman): Wackenroder, Wordsworth, F. Schlegel, Günderrode, Goethe, A Schlegel, Hoffmann, de Staël, M. Shelley, P. Shelley, Stendhal

Seminar 7: Performing Romantic Ideas II

Seminar 8: On Civil Society
Course Reader: Mill, On Liberty, Austen, Persuasion