

REL 461/PHI 427: Enlightenment between Islam and the European West
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Enlightenment between Islam and the European West

Description:

From its advent in the 18th century, Enlightenment has arguably been considered the most important intellectual movement in modern history by both its advocates and its critics. Many scholars consider it the consummation of the efforts of early modern thinkers in the 16th and 17th centuries to break away from the classical and scholastic heritages and their ethical, epistemological and political paradigms. Further most of the intellectual traditions in the 19th and 20th centuries shaped their projects either by way of furthering or critiquing the themes and claims of the Enlightenment, particularly its concern with humanism and the relentless attempt of its figures to establish the absolute foundations of 'science' and present it as the key to a better understanding of and way of living in the world.

Among the key points of departure of Enlightenment thought was the critique of ancient and medieval metaphysics in general and theological metaphysics in particular. On the level of the theory of knowledge and science, this critique crystallized in the question of the relation between physics and metaphysics. In this vein, many questions were posed including whether or not it is pragmatic or even possible to maintain a teleological understanding of nature that assumes a Creator who is both the efficient and the final cause of the world after the emergence of Galilean physics and Newtonian mechanics. On the political and social level, the critique of theological metaphysics was reflected in the question concerning the problematic relation between the public sphere of the society and private sphere of the individual and where, if it all possible, metaphysics would be located in the political domain. In turn this question led to the emergence of key concepts like that of the social contract, secularism and the separation between church and state and the relation between the religious and the moral dimensions. On the philosophical-anthropological level, the critique of scholastic metaphysics manifested itself in the call for humanism, that is the study of human nature to determine, through the identification of its structure, the basis of religious belief, ethics, knowledge and even taste and aesthetics. This 'humanistic' turn led to the emergence of many concepts and theoretical conundrums like that of natural religion, the problem of subjectivity and the paradoxical relation between the claims for a universal conceptions of human nature and the historicity of human life, culture, values and aesthetics.

But were these questions really posed for the first time by Enlightenment thinkers? Is this tradition which still shapes many aspects of our views of science, politics and the conception of who we are as humans an exclusive result of the intellectual exertion of European thinkers? This course is going to challenge this classical bias. Islam was among the key civilizations that had a radical influence on the formation and development of Western modernity and Enlightenment. We will thoroughly examine the stances of the Muslim thinkers at the height of Islamic civilization on the questions of: 1) the relation between physics and metaphysics, specifically in terms of the problem of causality, 2) the relation between the private and public spheres, 3) the question of humanism and the structure of human subjectivity. Via this examination we will investigate first how medieval Muslim thinkers and 18th century European defined enlightenment as a human condition and a way of life. The aim of such investigation is not merely comparative; rather the exploration of the stance of both traditions

on these three key questions is primarily intended to acquire a more profound perspective on their complexity and ramifications. Second and more importantly, this investigation aims at showing how both perspectives could possibly be combined to respond to key challenges posed by both the advocate and the critics of Enlightenment in contemporary thought.

Learning Outcomes:

After taking this course, the students will be able to:

1. Learning about the major themes and contributions of the Enlightenment movements and its far-reaching influence on our contemporary world and perceptions.
2. Recognizing the non-Western/Islamic roots of Enlightenment and critiquing the western centric claims about it.
3. Examining the way in which overcoming Enlightenment problems may shed different light on current social, scientific problems and point to more effective way of overcoming them.

Required Texts: All readings are available on Blackboard.

Requirements:

A. Two essay papers (Each Worth 25% of the grade; both worth 50%)

1. Each paper should be 1,500-2,000 words in length.
2. Essays must be double spaced in 12-pitch font.
3. Papers will be graded based on content, ability to show critical skills, organization and rigor of the argument.

B. Final essay paper (Worth 35% of the grade)

1. The paper should be 2,000-2,500 words in length.
2. The essay must be double spaced in 12-pitch font.
3. The papers will be graded based on content, ability to show critical skills, organization and rigor of the argument.

C. Class participation (15% of the grade)

Class attendance and participation

- a. Worth 50% of your participation grade.
- b. Regular attendance and constructive class participation are both course requirements. Your participation grade will be based on your attendance as well as on the quality and quantity of your contributions to class discussion.

Important Note: Missing more than 2 classes except for valid and documented conditions may result in your loss of the whole participation grade.

C. Letter/Number Grade Conversion Table for This Course:

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|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| | B+ 80-84 | C+ 65-69 | D+ 54-56 |
| A 90-100 | B 75-79 | C 60-64 | D 50-53 |
| A- 85-89 | B- 70-74 | C- 57-59 | |

Course Specific Policies on attendance, late work, make up work, examinations if outside normal class time, etc.:

Students must complete all of the course requirements by the end of the semester in order to receive a passing grade. Incompletes will be granted only in cases of actual emergency.

Additional Information

Academic Integrity

Syracuse University's Academic Integrity Policy holds students accountable for the integrity of the work they submit. Students should be familiar with the policy and know that it is their responsibility to learn about course-specific expectations, as well as about university policy. The university policy governs appropriate citation and use of sources, the integrity of work submitted in exams and assignments, and the veracity of signatures on attendance sheets and other verification of participation in class activities. The policy also prohibits students from submitting the same written work in more than one class without receiving written authorization in advance from both instructors. The presumptive penalty for a first offense by an undergraduate student is course failure, accompanied by a transcript notation indicating that the failure resulted from a violation of Academic Integrity Policy. The standard sanction for a first offense by a graduate student is suspension or expulsion. For more information and the complete policy, see <http://academicintegrity.syr.edu>.

____ Check if you will use Turnitin in this class. If so, include the following statement:
This class will be using Turnitin, a plagiarism prevention system. The ease of using the Internet has made it very easy for students to “cut and paste” material into papers that they are writing without proper citation. I will submit all/some/ papers that you write in this class to Turnitin, a service that identifies “matched text.” I will then interpret the originality report, based on your writing capability and writing style. In this class, you will also be given the opportunity to submit your own papers to Turnitin to check that all sources you have used are properly acknowledged and cited. Note that all submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers.

Disability-Related Accommodations

If you believe that you need accommodations for a disability, please contact the Office of Disability Services(ODS), <http://disabilityservices.syr.edu>, located in Suite 303 of 804 University Avenue, or call (315) 443-4498 or TDD: (315) 443-1371 for an appointment to discuss your needs and the process for requesting accommodations. ODS is responsible for coordinating disability-related accommodations and will issue students with documented Disabilities Accommodation Authorization Letters, as appropriate. Since accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact ODS as soon as possible.

Religious Observances Policy

SU religious observances policy, found at http://supolicies.syr.edu/emp_ben/religious_observance.htm, recognizes the diversity of faiths represented among the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holidays according to their tradition. Under the policy, students are provided an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or work requirements that may be missed due to are religious observance provided they notify their instructors before the end of the second week of classes. For fall and spring semesters, an online notification process is available through MySlice/StudentServices/Enrollment/MyReligiousObservances from the first day of class until the end of the second week of class.

Enter Week/Lecture, topic for that week/lecture, and required reading and assignment below:

Weekly Reading Schedule

Part I: Epistemology: Critique of Naturalistic Metaphysics and Theology & the Separation of Physics and Metaphysics

Tuesday 17th January through Tuesday 24th January

Way into the Meaning of the Enlightenment and Modern Condition

January 17th: Introduction

January 19th: Kant ‘What is Enlightenment’ & ‘What is Orientation in Thinking?’

Tuesday 24th January through Tuesday 31st January

January 24th: selections from Kant’s ‘Introduction’ to the *Critique of Pure Reason* and *Prolegomena*

January 26th: selections from Kant’s *Prolegomena*

Tuesday 31st January through Tuesday 7th February

January 31st: Selections from the *Critique of Judgment*—second part ‘Critique of Teleological Judgment’

February 2nd: Selections from the *Critique of Judgment*—second part ‘Critique of Teleological Judgment’

Tuesday 7th February through Tuesday 14th February

February 7th: **Class Cancelled**

February 9th: Selections from al-Ghazali’s *Incoherence of the Philosophers*

Tuesday 14th February through Tuesday 21st February

February 14th: Selections from al-Ghazali’s *Incoherence of the Philosophers*

February 16th: Selections from Averroes’s *Incoherence of the Incoherence*

Tuesday 21st February through Tuesday 28th February

February 21st: Selections from Averroes’s *Incoherence of the Incoherence*

February 23rd: Edmund Husserl *The Vienna Lecture: Philosophy and the Crisis of European Humanity* (42 pages)

Tuesday 28th February through Tuesday 7th March

February 28th: Edmund Husserl *Idealization and the Science of Reality* (14 pages); *The Attitude of Natural Science and the Attitude of Humanistic Sciences* (20 pages); *The Life World and the World of Science* (6 pages); *Denial of Scientific Philosophy and the Necessity of Historical Reflection* (12 pages); *Objectivity and the World of Experience* (10 pages)

First Paper Due on February 28th

Part II: Political Theory and Philosophy: The Relationship between the Public and Private Spheres

March 2nd: Selections from al-Farabi’s *On the Perfect State* (Chapters 13-15; 60 pages)

Tuesday 7th March through Tuesday 14th March

March 7th: al-Farabi’s *Book of Religion*

March 9th: Chapters 1-4 from Wael Hallaq’s *Introduction to Islamic Law*

Tuesday 14th March through Tuesday 21st March

Spring Break: No Classes

Tuesday 21st March through Tuesday 28th March

March 21st: Selected articles on Islamic Law and Political Theory

March 23rd: Selections from Hobbes's *Leviathan*

Tuesday 28th March through Tuesday 4th April

March 28th: Selections from Rousseau's *Social Contract* and *The Discourses*

March 30th: Selections from Rousseau's *Social Contract* and *The Discourses* March 31st

Tuesday 4th April through Tuesday 11th April

April 4th: Selections from Hegel's *Reason in History*

April 7th: Selections from Carl Schmitt's *Political Theology* and Wael Hallaq's *Impossible State*

Part III: The Human Subject, God and Freedom

Tuesday 11th April through Tuesday 18th April

April 11th: Selections from Schelling's *Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom*

Second paper due on April 11th

April 13th: Selections from Schelling's *Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom*

Tuesday 18th April through Tuesday 25th April

April 19th: Selections from al-Ghazali's *Niche of Lights*

April 21st: Selections from al-Ghazali's *Niche of Lights*

Tuesday 25th April through Tuesday 2nd May

April 25th: Selections from Muhamad Azadpur's *Reason Unbound*

April 27th: Selections from Foucault's *The Order of Things*

Tuesday 2nd May

May 2nd: Selections from Foucault's *The Order of Things*

Final Paper Due Date TBA