RELIGION AND THE EUROPEAN ENLIGHTENMENT, 1650-1800

This course explores the relationship between the Enlightenment and the main religious traditions of Central and Western Europe—Catholicism, Protestantism, and Judaism—in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In the past, the Enlightenment has generally been viewed as a unified intellectual and cultural movement that was unrelentingly hostile to traditional religion, one that penetrated deeply into the European consciousness of the period and gave birth to modern secular thought and society. This course will equip students to evaluate that thesis in light of recent scholarship on the topic. Lectures and readings locate the Enlightenment in a variety of different national and political contexts and explore various ways in which religious thinkers, clerics, and "ordinary" religious believers responded to, appropriated, or disseminated enlightened ideals. We will engage such questions as: What was and is "enlightenment"? Is it useful to speak of degrees of enlightenment? How did the relationship of religious bodies to their respective political authorities shape their stances towards the Enlightenment? What use did Catholics, Protestants, and Jews—both orthodox and heterodox—make of enlightened thinking, and with what results for religious belief and for conceptions about the nature of religion? What was the relationship between "enlightened" faith and popular religion? What was the nature and strength of counter-Enlightenment forces in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries?

Students will be asked to read a number of primary sources from the period, many of them excerpts from longer works. Several twenty-first- and twenty-first-century writings have also been assigned in order to provide a glimpse into current interpretations of the religious history of the Enlightenment. Lectures will amplify those perspectives and provide a framework for interpreting individual texts. All students will be asked to write (1) a 5-page paper early in the semester (identifying and assessing Hazard’s thesis concerning religion and Enlightenment); and (2) a take-home final essay exam at the end of the term (dealing with the secularization thesis in light of the course as a whole) (8-10 pages). In addition (3) they may choose either to write a take-home midterm exam or to write a research paper (10-12 pages) on a topic selected in consultation with the instructor.

Course texts:
Course Reader [containing primary and secondary texts listed in assignments below]
Philip Jacob Spener, Pia Desideria, trans. T. G. Tappert (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1964 [orig. 1675])
John Locke, A Letter Concerning Toleration (Buffalo, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 1990 [orig. 1689])
Voltaire, Candide, and Related Writings, trans. David Wootton (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2000 [orig. 1759])
Henry Chadwick, ed., Lessing’s Theological Writings (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1957)
W. R. Ward, Christianity under the Ancien Régime 1648-1789 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999)
I. Introduction: Religion and the Enlightenment—Then and Now

1. What is Enlightenment?
   A. The enlighteners’ self-definitions
   B. Historians’ definitions

2. Recent approaches to problems of religion and Enlightenment
   A. The anti-religious Enlightenment and the secularization thesis (Hazard, Gay, Israel et al.)
   B. The Enlightenment as a religious phenomenon (Becker, Cassirer, Pocock, Sorkin et al.)
   C. Popular religion and the limits of enlightenment (Semmel, Delumeau, Bossy, Van Kley et al.)

Reading: Jonathan Israel, Radical Enlightenment (selection)
          Immanuel Kant, “An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?”
          Moses Mendelssohn, “On the Question: What is Enlightenment?”

II. Politics and Religion in Europe after 1648

1. The Peace of Westphalia and its legacies: Relationships of church and state
   A. Catholic Europe: Central and Southern Europe, France
   B. Protestant Europe: German states, Netherlands, England, Scotland
   C. The Jews and other religious minorities

2. The theory of religious toleration
   A. The case of the Netherlands; Collegialism
   B. The case of England: the Act of Toleration

3. Popular and elite religion in the seventeenth century: Orthodoxies, heterodoxies, and religious renewal movements
   A. Post-Tridentine Catholicism
   B. “Enthusiasm”—Catholic (Quietism, Spiritualism, Jansenism) and Protestant (Puritanism, Quakers)
   C. Protestant orthodoxy in Central Europe
   D. The beginnings of German Pietism
   E. Ashkenazic Judaism

Reading: W. R. Ward, Christianity under the Ancien Régime, chaps. 1, 3, 4
          Philip Jacob Spener, Pia Desideria
          John Locke, A Letter Concerning Toleration

III. The “Crisis of the European Mind”: Intellectual Ferment in the Second Half of the Seventeenth Century

1. New perspectives on the natural and social worlds
   A. Travel literature and the broadening of cultural horizons
   B. The Newtonian universe and the mechanical philosophy
   C. The natural law tradition

2. Philosophical watersheds
   A. Skepticism and its religious implications
   B. Rationalism: Descartes, Leibniz; Pascal’s response
C. Empiricism: Locke
3. The beginnings of natural religion
   A. Background: Arianism, Socinianism, and Unitarianism
   B. English deism: Toland, Collins, Woolston, Tindal
4. Biblical scholarship and the beginnings of historical criticism
   A. Spinoza
   B. Bayle, LeClerc, Simon
   C. The English deists

Reading: Paul Hazard, *The European Mind*, 1-197, 239-65, 304-18
         Baruch Spinoza, *Theologico-Political Treatise* (selection)
         John Toland, *Christianity Not Mysterious* (selection)

IV. The British Enlightenment: Reasonable Christianity and Protestant
    “Enthusiasm”
1. Politics and religion in the Restoration and Hanoverian periods
   A. The Church of England and its Dissenters
   B. Covenanters and Moderates in the Church of Scotland
2. The rise of “reasonable” Christianity
   A. Arminianism and the tradition of Christian humanism
   B. Cambridge Platonism
   C. The Tew Circle
   D. Locke’s *Reasonableness of Christianity*
   E. Latitudinarianism
3. The deist controversies: the growth and demise of a movement
   A. Anglican responses: Law, Berkeley, Butler
   B. Hume and skepticism redivivus
4. Thomas Reid and Scottish Common Sense
5. Popular religion: Methodism and the evangelical revivals
   A. The Semmel thesis
   B. The origin and spread of revival in Britain: Wesley and Whitefield
   C. Anglican responses: Warburton and Butler

         Enlightenment in England”
         Ward, *Christianity under the Ancien Régime*, 131-66
         John Locke, *The Reasonableness of Christianity* (selection)
         William Warburton, *The Alliance of Church and State* (selection)
         David Hume, “The Arguments for Natural Religion Reviewed”
         John Wesley, *Journal* (selection)

V. Catholics and Unbelievers: The French Enlightenment
1. Throne and altar: Absolutism and church-state relations in France
2. The philosophes’ critique of revealed religion
A. Fontenelle and the civil history of religion
B. Voltaire and the moral critique
C. Diderot, d’Alembert, and the Encyclopédie

3. Radical religious critique and the beginnings of atheism: d’Holbach, Helvétius

4. Responses to the critique of religion
   A. Jesuits and reasonable Catholicism
   B. Jansenism in the eighteenth century
   C. Rousseau’s revolt; the theory of civil religion

5. Popular religion and the extent of enlightenment
   A. A gradual process of de-Christianization? The French Enlightenment and the secularization thesis
   B. How wide-spread was the Enlightenment? Popular reading practices and the dissemination of the philosophes’ writings
   C. Religious origins of the French Revolution? Jansenism and politics

Reading: Jean Delumeau, Catholicism between Luther and Voltaire (selection)
          Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle, “The Origin of Myths”
          Voltaire, Candide
          Jean-Jacques Rousseau, “The Creed of a Savoyard Priest” in Émile

VI. The Aufklärung in Protestant Germany

1. The political and institutional contexts of the Aufklärung
   A. State-sponsored Enlightenment: the case of Prussia
   B. The social location of the Aufklärer
   C. Enlightenment universities: the cases of Halle and Göttingen

2. Intellectual and religious contexts
   A. Varieties of Orthodoxy and Pietism: Prussia, Württemberg, Moravia
   B. The legacy of Christian Wolff

3. Harmonizing reason and revelation
   A. Rational Orthodoxy: Löscher
   B. Theological Wolffianism: Baumgarten
   C. The neologists

4. The historical turn in German religious thought
   A. Biblical scholarship and historical criticism: Semler, Michaelis
   B. The Reimarus controversy and its consequences

5. Rational theology and the immanentization of Christianity: secularizing Protestantism from within
   A. Lessing and progressive revelation
   B. Kant’s religion within the limits of reason alone

6. The limits of Aufklärung
   A. Friedrich Wilhelm II and the Wöllner edict
   B. Counter-Enlightenment and “religious intuition”: Hamann, Herder
   C. Popular religion and the persistence of Pietism

Reading: Ernst Cassirer, The Philosophy of the Enlightenment, 134-96
         Joachim Whaley, “The Protestant Enlightenment in Germany”
         Ward, Christianity under the Ancien Régime, 112-25, 171-84
VII. The Catholic Enlightenment in German and Habsburg Lands

1. Enlightened Absolutism and Catholic Enlightenment: Maria Theresa, Joseph II
   A. The waning of *Pietae Austriaca*
   B. Ecclesiastical reform
   C. The Patent of Toleration (1781)
2. The legacy of the Counter-Reformation for popular and elite Catholicism in the early eighteenth century
   A. The role of the Jesuits; their suppression (1773)
   B. Catholic reform: Dominicans, Augustinians, Jansenists
3. The episcopal movement (Jansenism)
4. Educational reforms
   A. Monastic beginnings; clerical education
   B. The role of German Protestant universities
   C. Reforming Catholic universities
   D. Primary and secondary education
5. Intellectual and theological re-orientation
   A. Philosophical underpinnings: Wolff, Kant
   B. Rationalizing and “humanizing” Catholicism

Reading: T. C. W. Blanning, “The Enlightenment in Catholic Germany”
Ernst Wangermann, “Reform Catholicism and Political Radicalism in the Austrian Enlightenment”
David Sorkin, “Reform Catholicism and the Religious Enlightenment”
Ward, *Christianity under the Ancien Régime*, 184-201
[primary source]

VIII. The Haskalah: Reforming Central European Judaism

1. The political and social situation of Central European Jewry
   A. The autonomous community
   B. Toleration in England, Netherlands, Austria, and Prussia
   C. Ashkenazic Judaism: social structure and religious ideals
2. The Haskalah and the *Aufklärung*: Reception vs. creation
3. Traditions of renewal within Judaism
   A. The MaHaRAl and the Prague school
   B. Sephardic Judaism and educational reform
4. The early Haskalah: Intellectual renewal
   A. Philosophy, language, biblical exegesis, science
   B. Gumpertz, Mendelssohn, Wessely
5. The later Haskalah: Politicization
   A. The Berlin Court Jews and the question of rights
   B. Mendelssohn’s *Jerusalem*
C. Parting of the ways: religious and secular Jewish enlightenments

Reading:  David Sorkin, *The Berlin Haskalah and German Religious Thought* (selection)
Moses Mendelssohn, *Jerusalem, Or On Religious Power and Judaism*
[Anonymous in Sulamith], “Call for Religious Enlightenment”

IX. Conclusion: Enlightenment, Religion, and the Secularization Thesis
1. Varieties of secularization?
2. A unified Enlightenment?
   A. National contexts
   B. Religious traditions
   C. Moderate vs. radical Enlightenment
   D. Political and intellectual dimensions
3. The limits of Enlightenment
   A. Moderate Enlightenment and established religion
   B. Counter-Enlightenment
   C. Popular religion

No reading assigned
Curriculum Vitae

Eric Wilhelm Carlsson

CONTACT

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EDUCATION

Ph.D. Candidate, Department of History, University of Wisconsin—Madison, 1999
Dissertation: "Johann Salomo Semler: Enlightenment, History, and the Metamorphosis of German Protestantism"
Dissertation Adviser: Laurence Dickey
Preliminary Examination Fields: Renaissance and Reformation Europe; Early Modern Britain, 1485-1688; Europe in the 17th and 18th Centuries; European Cultural and Intellectual History, 1600-1800

M.A., History, University of Wisconsin—Madison, 1997
Thesis Advisers: Laurence Dickey, Robert M. Kingdon

M.Div. (Magna cum laude), Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Ill., 1994
Emphasis in New Testament Exegesis and Theology

B.A., History (High Honors in History with High Distinction), University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1991
Honors Thesis: "In Pursuit of Truth: Brooke Foss Westcott's Thoughts on Reason and Revelation"
Thesis Adviser: Stephen J. Tonsor

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Teaching Assistant, University of Wisconsin—Madison, 1997-2001
Communications-B/Writing Intensive Course
Supervising Professor: Laurence Dickey
History 220: Introduction to Modern Jewish History, Fall 2000  
Writing Intensive Course  
*Supervising Professor:* David Sorkin  
History 208: Foundations of Western Religious and Intellectual History, Fall 1998  
*Supervising Professor:* Laurence Dickey  
History 311: Schools and Learning in the Medieval World, Fall 1997  
*Supervising Professor:* William J. Courtenay

**Translator,** Swedish-English/English-Swedish, 1996-98  
Self-employed through UW-Madison Scandinavian Studies Department

**Editorial Assistant,** University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1995-97  
Editorial Department

**Editorial Assistant,** University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1994-95  
Acquisitions in Classics, History, and Political Science

**CONFERENCE PAPERS**


**BOOK REVIEWS**


HONORS, AWARDS, FELLOWSHIPS

Graduate:
DAAD-Center for German and European Studies Graduate Fellowship, 2001
Rolf und Ursula Schneider-Stiftung Fellowship, Herzog August Bibliothek,
Wolfenbüttel, Germany, 2001
American Friends of the Herzog August Bibliothek Travel Grant, 2001
Graduate Seminar Essay Prize, Department of History, UW—Madison, 1998
Vilas Graduate Fellowship, UW—Madison, 1997-98
History Department Fellowships, UW—Madison, 1996, 1998
H. B. Earhart Fellowship, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1991-92

Undergraduate (all awards conferred by the University of Michigan):
Bess History Award (Best Honors Thesis in Intellectual History), 1991
James B. Angell Scholar, 1991
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts Scholarship, 1990-91
Honors History Program, 1989-91
Class Honors, 1988, 1989, 1991
Freshman-Sophomore Honors Program, 1987-89

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

American Historical Association; American Society of Church History; Conference
on Faith and History; The Historical Society; International Society for Intellectual
History

PERSONAL

Birth: 26 April 1969, Stanford, California, U.S.A.
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Children: Anders Wilhelm (b. 1999)

REFERENCES

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