Reason and Freedom

Quest University Canada
2011-2012
April Block
Classroom: A.205
Monday-Friday, 12:20 pm – 3:20 pm
Tutor: André Lambelet
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About the course

This course emphasizes the foundations of the modern world. Reason and Freedom explores the self-conscious nature of modernity and its belief in reason, and explores the paradoxes of our position in history. It examines the tensions between science and religion, delves into the contradictions of freedom as understood by theologians, philosophers, and mere mortals, and investigates the revolutionary nature of reason in the context of history, literature, theology, and philosophy.

Please note that the syllabus is subject to change: you will be notified if there are changes, but it is your responsibility to check PowerCampus and your email regularly.

Required materials and texts:

Kant, Immanuel. *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals: With on a Supposed Right to Lie Because of Philanthropic Concerns*. 3rd ed. Hackett Pub Co Inc, 1993. Print.

Montesquieu. *Persian Letters*. Reprint. Penguin Classic, 2004.

Outram, Dorinda. *The Enlightenment*. 2nd ed. Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Wollstonecraft, Mary. *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*. Pearson and Longman, 2007. Print.

A bound notebook to keep a daily reading journal.

Assignments and Marks

Assignment	Weight
Journal	20%
Class participation	20%
Group presentation and handout	10%
Essay 1	15%
Essay 2	15%
Essay 3	20%
Total	*100%*

Journal: 20%

Your journal is the backbone of your work in this course. The journal is *informal* writing: you can write quickly, without excessive concern for the form or style of your writing. Nevertheless, your journal is serious work and will require significant and sustained effort.

Form and content of the journal:

- Your journal should be handwritten (unless you have an excellent reason for not handwriting – if you have such a reason, you must let your tutor know *at the beginning of the course*).
- You should begin each day's work on a fresh page, and indicate the date and topic.
- Because "reason" and "freedom" are the central themes of this course, you will write a paragraph (informed by your reading) for every class about those two terms.
- You must look up each of the authors we read this block, and jot down *basic* biographical information about each in your journal. (This includes – but is not limited to – year of birth and death, place of origin, and reason for this person's significance.) This can simply be a list of bullet points.
- You must respond in the journal to *every* assigned text. You should write down comments about the style or argument of the texts, and jot down questions the piece raises for you, either about its subject or about its rhetorical approach. (For the longer works—Montesquieu, Kant, Wollstonecraft—you must write something new for each of the days that the work is assigned.)
- On days where the schedule lists a "Journal Question (JQ)," you will write a paragraph in response to the question.

Use of the journal:

- You may be called upon to share your journal with classmates, either in breakout sessions or in the larger class. (Avoid doodles, inappropriate comments, material likely to cause you or others embarrassment, and so forth.)
- Impromptu presentation: You *may* be called upon to give a very brief précis of one of the assigned readings (or, in the case of the longer works, a précis of part of the work) based on your journal. You must be able to tell us about the author of the work, when it was written, what it says (summarize), and give us a very short assessment: not "I liked it," "It was boring," "The language was old fashioned," or even "I thought this was the best thing I'd read all week." Instead, tell us what you *think* about the document.
- You may (and should) use your journal to help you write your essays.
- You must be prepared to submit your journal when called upon to do so.
- You must turn your complete journal in on the last Tuesday of the course. You will receive marks for turning in the *complete* journal, but failure to turn in a complete journal is grounds for failing the course.

Participation

The tutor's role is to facilitate discussion and to act as a guide when necessary. Your responsibility is to be prepared to engage in serious discussion of the materials. Participation is a crucial part of this course — not only because you can show what you know and how you think, but also because your participation helps other students learn.

We will be working on writing and textual analysis in small groups; an essential part of what we will do is constructive critique. Part of your grade for participation will be based on your willingness to serve as a serious and constructive critic of other people's work.

You should come to class prepared to contribute to the discussion. This means that you must have read and reflected upon the assigned material; it also means that you should have formulated questions about the material. (It is good practice to write these questions down and bring them to tutorial. Your journal is an excellent place to write down these questions.)

Group presentation

You will be assigned to a group for a presentation. Your group will give a polished ten-minute (approximately) oral presentation on a topic from a list to be circulated by the tutor. You and your group must:

- concisely identify your subject;
- identify important *terms*, *concepts*, and *ideas* related to your subject;
- use relevant images or music;
- contextualize – i.e., tell the class why this subject is *relevant* and *important* to "Reason and Freedom" and to the reading we are doing on the day of your presentation;
- inform the class about *reliable scholarly sources* on your topic;
- provide the class with a handout / study guide for your topic. This handout must list at least four good scholarly sources about your topic – sources that someone wanting to know more about your subject should read.

Essays

You will write three longer essays in this course. We will "workshop" rough drafts in class – this means that you must have complete (even if rough) draft due on the assigned dates. Please note that writing is an iterative process; having a rough draft is a necessary part of your thinking process.

Doing well in this course

Reading

Reading is a vital part of your education. *It is not a passive activity*. You will be expected to understand and assimilate the assigned material. You will be asked to master the material in a comprehensive and sophisticated way.

Ask yourself the following questions when you read or study a work:

- Who wrote or created it? (If you don't know, look him or her up.)
- When was it written or produced? (Ditto.)
- What does the work say?
- How is the work structured?
- What is the form of the work?
- What kinds of imagery does the work use?
- What questions is it attempting to answer?
- What is the author's argument? What are the argument's strengths and weaknesses?

- What kinds of evidence does the author provide for her or his argument? What kinds of sources does the author use?
- To what kinds of arguments is the author responding?

Pay careful attention to the clues the author gives you:

- Read (and decipher) the title. What does it tell you about the piece you are reading?
- If the piece is a book, read the introduction and conclusion of the book; if the piece is an article or a chapter, read the first and last paragraphs. These should help you figure out what the piece's argument is. Ask yourself what the thesis of the piece is.
- Read the entire work (or all of the assigned portions). Try to decide which parts or passages are most important. If you own the work, make notes in the margins next to important or interesting parts. (Do not do this in library books!)
- Write down your responses to the work in a notebook. Think of note-taking as a way of organizing your thoughts. You need not write down everything; instead, jot down notes about interesting ideas, problems in the argument, or surprising aspects of the piece.
- Re-read the work. You will find that a second (and often, a third and fourth) reading greatly improve your understanding.
- Finally, summarize the author's argument in a few lines. If you can complete a sentence beginning "The author of this book/article argues…," you have read intelligently and productively.

If you do all this, you should be ready for *classroom discussion*.

Writing

The heart of literature, history and philosophy as intellectual disciplines is the written word. Successful students in these fields must be able not only to read carefully but write clearly. In other words, they must be able to understand and use words precisely. Sloppy expression — in writing and in discussion — is as big a problem in the humanities as getting formulae wrong is in chemistry; sloppy expression results in papers that fizzle out rather than illuminate.

You may consult your tutor if you have specific questions; we also urge all students to make use of the Learning Commons and Peer Tutors.

Writing well requires at least three things: *content*, *expression*, and *structure*.

Content: You need to have read carefully (and, it should go without saying, taken notes) before you begin to write. You must *think* about what you have read. You must *understand the question* you are asked to answer. And, of course, you must have something to say. All of this will give your paper *content*.

You must supply *evidence* in the form of (properly-cited) quotations. That evidence will, in the main, come from the assigned readings for this course. If you use evidence from elsewhere, you must be sure that the evidence is *reliable*. (Please do not think that Wikipedia, sources drawn haphazardly from the web, or other sketchy sources will help persuade your reader of the merits of your work!)

Expression: *How* you say things is crucial. If your writing obscures your meaning, then it is impossible for your reader to evaluate the content of your paper. Style matters: it makes your content accessible and your ideas intelligible.

Papers for this course must be written in formal, standard English. You must:

- punctuate properly;
- use proper grammar;
- make appropriate word choices.

If you are not certain of a word's precise meaning, look it up in a good dictionary before handing in your paper. (If you don't yet own a good dictionary, get one.)

Structure: Good papers will have a crisp **introduction**. This introduction will let readers know the topic or subject of the paper *and* will let readers what *problem* that the paper aims to discuss. (This is the *thesis statement*.) The introduction should let readers what the limits of the discussion will be.

Good papers will have a solid **conclusion**. A conclusion is not just a summary of what has been discussed before: it emphasizes the importance of the thesis statement, provides the essay with a sense of completeness (it *concludes*) the thoughts of the essay), and leaves the reader with a final sense of what the paper is about. (The conclusion should answer the dreaded "so what?" question — it should give the reader a sense of why s/he read it.)

Good papers will be built around solidly-constructed **paragraphs**. Paragraphs are the building blocks of good writing: they are are built around one thought or idea.

Moving from paragraph to paragraph also requires good **transitions**. Transitions connect the ideas in an essay, and allow the reader to understand the flow of your ideas.

Overall: It takes time and effort to write well. Good writing, you will scarcely need to be reminded, is *re-writing*. Plan to write at least two drafts before you submit an essay. And ask for help: ask your peers to read your drafts critically and unsparingly; get advice from the Learning Commons; and raise questions in class.

Course policies

Your tutor expects you to:

- Have read the syllabus and all handouts and therefore be aware of policies, homework, and due dates.
- Check PowerCampus and your Quest email account frequently; changes to the syllabus and to homework assignments will be posted there.
- Attend every class.
- Arrive on time.
- Be prepared.
- Make use of the tutor's office hours.
- Obtain notes and handouts in the event of an absence.
- Have a completed rough draft in hand on writing workshop days.
- Turn in assignments at the beginning of class on the due date given in the syllabus.

Please:

- Be courteous.
- Turn off your cell phone before class.
- Help keep the classroom neat and tidy.

Please do not:

- Bring food into the classroom. (Beverages are ok; library rules apply for the academic building. If you are not familiar with those rules, it's time to go to the library and ask.)
- Use laptops, iPads, electronic tablets, netbooks, smart phones, stupid phones, Wii controllers, Gameboys, or other devices in class unless specifically authorized to do so by the tutors. (If you have a special need, please discuss this with the tutor.)

If you have a disability for which you seek accommodation, please let the tutor know. If you have a physical disability, please consult the Dean of Student Affairs; if you have a learning disability, please consult the Director of the Learning Commons.

Communicating with the tutor

Email is a good and useful tool. Please remember, though, that you should treat email to your tutor as a formal means of communication, one that demands courtesy and respect: you must use proper salutations, forms of address, punctuation, grammar, and syntax. Good writing begins with everyday practices.

I check my email regularly. Do not, however, expect immediate replies, especially to late-night or weekend emails.

Absences

There are — infrequently — valid reasons to miss class: illness, family emergencies, war, famine, pestilence, and so forth. If you have a really good reason for missing class, your case will be stronger if you notify your tutor *before* you miss class. You are in any event responsible for obtaining notes, handouts, and assignments. Missing class without a valid excuse may result in an "F."

You must complete all assignments.

Failure to hand in all assignments will result in an "F" for the course. (This includes the journal, which must be turned in – complete—on the last Tuesday of the course.)

Academic integrity

As the Quest University Calendar notes, "Quest is committed to the principle of academic integrity, itself grounded in the fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility in all academic work." We depend on the honesty and responsibility of all of our members — scholars and teachers alike.

In keeping with the Quest Honour Principle, you will do your own work, and you will conscientiously and meticulously credit sources. Citing sources is not optional in academic work — it is a fundamental principle. As you should know, plagiarism is, broadly speaking, passing off someone else work or ideas as your own, failing to properly identify and credit the source of material you submit, or using cited material improperly. Please be aware that failure to observe the rules of citation will result in charges of plagiarism or academic dishonesty.

Charges of plagiarism or of academic dishonesty are not taken lightly, and may have dire consequences: failure on the assignment, failure of the course, and worse. To avoid this sort of unpleasantness, please be sure to read "University Policies: Quest Honour Principle and Protocol" in the University Calendar. If you have questions about citation, crediting sources, or anything else relating to academic integrity, please ask before you turn in the work. (Information about plagiarism can also be obtained from the Learning Commons.)

If the principle of citation is the same across academic disciplines, the particular format of citation varies from discipline to discipline, and even within disciplines. The practice in this course will be to use the MLA style.

Week	Date	Topic	Reading (to be completed before class)	Written work	Presentation
Week 1 - Reason & Freedom, Renaissance and Reformation	*Mon, Apr 2*	*Introduction – New Perspectives on the Human Condition*			
	Tue, Apr 3	*Humanism and Education*	Giovanni Boccaccio, (1313-1375), *The Decameron* - Introduction (1348-53) http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/boccacio2.asp Petrus Paulus Vergerius, The New Education (c. 1400) http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/vergerius.html Leonardo Bruni d'Arezzo, *De Studiis et Litteris* http://history.hanover.edu/texts/bruni.html (c. 1405) Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, *Oration on the Dignity of Man* (1486): http://cscs.umich.edu/~crshalizi/Mirandola/	Essay topics assigned **Journal Question (JQ):** What is a liberal education?	
	Wed, Apr 4	*Religion and Freedom*	Martin Luther, Address to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation (1520): http://history.hanover.edu/texts/luthad.html Martin Luther, Treatise on Christian Liberty (excerpts; 1520) http://history.hanover.edu/courses/excerpts/111luther.html John Calvin: On Double Predestination. http://www.fordham.edu/Halsall/mod/calvin-predestin2.asp John Calvin. "Eternal Election" (1541). The Library of Original Sources. Milwaukee: University Research Extension, 1907. 141-150. (On course website.)		
	Thu, Apr 5	*Other worlds*	Montaigne, "Of Cannibals" (1580). (On course website.) Optional (BUT HIGHLY RECOMMENDED, esp. for you science types): Galileo's "The Starry Messenger" http://www.bard.edu/admission/forms/pdfs/galileo.pdf Outram: *1. What is Enlightenment?*		Hieronymus Bosch
	Fri, Apr 6	*HOLIDAY*			
Week 2 – Science to Enlightenment	*Mon, Apr 9*	*From Natural Philosophy to Enlightenment (I)* ***Writing workshop***	Galileo, "Letter to Madame Christina of Lorraine, Grand Duchess of Tuscany, Concerning the Use of Biblical Quotations in Matters of Science" (1615) (On course website.) Outram: *2. Coffee houses and consumers: the social context of Enlightenment*	Rough (but *complete*) draft due in class	
	Tue, Apr 10	*From Natural Philosophy to Enlightenment (II)*	René Descartes, *Discourse on Method* (1637) http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/pdf/descdisc.pdf	First essay due; new essay topics assigned	
	Wed, Apr 11	*Toleration*	William Penn, "The Quaker Ideal of Religious Tolerance" (1675), http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/documents/documents_p2.cfm?doc=221 John Locke, 1632-1704. "A Letter Concerning Toleration" (1689) http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/etcbin/toccer-new2?id=LocTole.xml&images=images/modeng&data=/texts/english/modeng/parsed&tag=public&part=all Voltaire, "Religion," from Philosophical *Dictionary* (on course website) Outram: *8. The rise of modern paganism? Religion and the Enlightenment*		Versailles: Art and Architecture
	Thu, Apr 12	*Montesquieu, Persian Letters as literature*	Montesquieu's *Persian Letters* to be completed for today *Outram: 3. Enlightenment and government: new departure or business as usual?*		

	Fri, Apr 13	*Montesquieu, Persian Letters as historical evidence*	Review assigned selections of Montesquieu's *Persian Letters* (specific letters will be assigned) *Outram: 4. Exploration, cross-cultural contact, and the ambivalence of the Enlightenment*		Johann Sebastian Bach
Week 3 – Enlightenment and Revolution	*Mon, Apr 16*	*Montesquieu, Persian Letters as political philosophy* ***Writing workshop***	Review assigned selections of Montesquieu's *Persian Letters* (specific letters will be assigned) *Outram: 6. Enlightenment thinking about gender*	Rough draft of second essay due	
	Tue, Apr 17	*The problem of slavery*	John Wesley, "Thoughts Upon Slavery" (1774) http://new.gbgm-umc.org/umhistory/wesley/slavery/ *The Life of Gustavus Vassa* , by Olaudah Equiano (http://www.fordham.edu/Halsall/mod/Vassa.asp) Outram: 5. When people are property: the problem of slavery in the Enlightenment	Second essay due	
	Wed, Apr 18	*Kant*	*Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, Part 1		
	Thu, Apr 19	*Kant*	*Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, Part 2		Jacques Louis David
	Fri, Apr 20	*Kant*	*Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, Part 3 and "On a Supposed Right to Lie"		
Week 4 – Revolution and Right	*Mon, Apr 23*	*Reason and Revolution (tentative)* ***Writing workshop***	Jean–Jacques Rousseau, excerpts from *Emile* (1762) http://chnm.gmu.edu/revolution/d/470/ "Petition of Women of the Third Estate to the King" (1 January 1789) http://chnm.gmu.edu/revolution/d/472/ "Declaration of the Rights of Man" (1789) http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/rightsof.asp Olympe de Gouge: "Declaration of the Rights of Women," http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1791degouge1.asp Outram: 7. *Enlightenment and government: new departure or thinking as usual*		Rough draft of third essay due
	Tue, Apr 24		Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (excerpts) http://web.archive.org/web/20030420141445/www3.baylor.edu/BIC/WCIII/Essays/reflections.html Thomas Paine, *Rights of Man* (excerpts) http://history.hanover.edu/courses/excerpts/111pain2.html		
	Wed, Apr 25	*Wollstonecraft*	*A Vindication of the Rights of Women - selections TBA*	Final essay due	
	Thu, Apr 26	*Wollstonecraft*	*A Vindication of the Rights of Women - selections TBA*		Francisco Goya