Reason and Freedom

Quest University Canada
2011-2012
December Block
Monday-Friday, 9 am – 12 pm
Classroom: A.305
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	Required
Class participation	15%
Consulting pitch (group)	20%
Essay 1	30%
Essay 2	35%
Total	*100%*

Journal: Required

Your journal is the backbone of your work in this course. The journal is *informal* writing: you may 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.
- 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* required 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.)

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; tell us what questions the document answers or raises; or tell us what is challenging about the document.
- You may (and should) use your journal to help you write your essays and to prepare your group work.
- 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. The journal is a pass-fail venture, 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.)

Strategic Advisory Competition

You will be assigned to one of four groups. Each group represents a strategic consulting firm. Three times during the block, each firm will present its "pitch" on a predetermined subject. (A fourth group will act as a jury, and will make recommendations to the tutor about the competition.) The pitch will consist of:

- An oral presentation lasting a maximum of eight minutes.
- A brief (two page) executive summary of the arguments your group is making.
- A one-page bibliography of material relevant to your argument.
- A brief question-and-answer period after the presentation.

Be careful to avoid anachronism; be sensitive to what your audience might know.

Remember to:

- Concisely identify your position.
- Provide strong and historically relevant reasons for your client to adopt your position.
- Use the texts assigned for this class.
- Make use of the library and of electronic databases to bolster your evidence.

The "jury" group will:

- Listen and take careful notes during each of the presentations.
- Deliberate for fifteen minutes, considering the quality of the presentation, the soundness of the argument, the use of evidence and the difficulty of the challenge posed to each group.
- Present an evaluation/recommendation to the class and to the tutor.

First Competition: Thursday, November 29, 2012

The small German principality of Fredonia is ruled by a prince who is advised by a small council. Your task is to convince the prince that he should adopt your religion.
Group 1 – Adopt Lutheranism
Group 2 – Adopt Calvinism
Group 3 – Remain Roman Catholic
Group 4 – Jury

Second Competition: Tuesday, December 4, 2012

The town of Monamipierrot, isolated for centuries from the currents of European strife by virtue of the sheer cliffs that drop down from the town's edges, has just received an intrepid visitor carrying a shipment of documents: the writings of Bruni, Vergerius, and Pico; Luther, Calvin, and Loyola; Galileo and Descartes; and Penn, Locke, and Voltaire. Most of Monamipierrot's inhabitants haven't given much thought to ideas, much less to education; now, though, they are torn. They think they want to give education a place in their world – but they don't quite know what its purpose is.
Group 1 – Jury
Group 2 – Education is primarily civic
Group 3 – Education is primarily religious
Group 4 – Education is necessarily both

Third Competition: Friday, December 14, 2012

Theme: Slavery and freedom; details TBA
Group 1 –
Group 2 – Jury
Group 3 –
Group 4 –

Fourth Competition: Wednesday, December 19, 2012

Theme: Reason, Freedom, and Gender; details TBA
Group 1 –
Group 2 –
Group 3 – Jury
Group 4 –

Essays

You will write two longer essays in this course; topics will be distributed well before the due dates. 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.

Schedule

Note that you *must* read *all* of the primary sources for each class attentively. In addition to the primary sources, there are secondary sources. For some days, several items are listed. You should strive to read at least one of those sources: this will help you get a sense of the context for the primary sources, and will help you make a better strategic presentation and help you write better papers.

Assignment	Due date
First Competition	November 29, 2012
Second Competition	December 4, 2012
First essay: Rough draft for workshop	December 7, 2012 at beginning of class
First essay: final draft	December 10, 2012 at beginning of class
Third Competition	December 14, 2012
Second essay: Rough draft for workshop	December 17, 2012 at beginning of class
Second essay: final draft	December 18, 2012 at beginning of class
Fourth Competition	December 19, 2012

Week 1

Day 1: Introduction

Syllabus

Day 2: The Liberal Arts

Primary sources:

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/

Context/background reading:

Braudel, Fernand. "Christianity, Humanism and Scientific Thought." Translated by Richard Mayne. In *A history of civilizations*. 333-72. New York: Penguin, 1995.

Kelly, Joan. "Did Women Have a Renaissance?" In *Women, History, and Theory: The Essays of Joan Kelly*. 19-50: University of Chicago Press, 1986.

Wiesner, Merry E. "Individuals in Society, 1450-1600." Chap. 2 In *Early modern Europe, 1450-1789*. 44-77. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Day 3: Reformation

Primary sources:

Martin Luther, *Address To The Nobility of the German Nation* (1520):
http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/luther-nobility.asp

Martin Luther, *Treatise on Christian Liberty* (excerpts; 1520)
http://history.hanover.edu/courses/excerpts/111luther.html (The complete version is available: Martin Luther, *On the Freedom of a Christian*, http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/luther-freedomchristian.asp)

John Calvin. "Eternal Election" (1541). The Library of Original Sources. Milwaukee: University Research Extension, 1907. 141-150. (On course website.)

Ignatius of Loyola, “On Perfect Obedience,” (1553) http://woodstock.georgetown.edu/ignatius/letter25.htm

Context/background reading:

Dickens, A. G. “Reformation and Counter-Reformation.” In *The age of humanism and reformation : Europe in the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries*. 143-92. London: Prentice-Hall, 1977.

Rublack, Ulinka. “Calvinism.” Chap. 3 In *Reformation Europe*. 104-45. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Wiesner, Merry E. “Religion.” Chap. 6 In *Women and gender in early modern Europe*. 207-51. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Day 4: Others – and the First Strategic Advisory Competition

Primary sources:

Montaigne, “Of Cannibals” (on CHP)

The New Laws of the Indies (1542): http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1542newlawsindies.asp

Day 5: Thinking in two worlds

Primary sources:

Galilei, Galileo. “Letter to Madame Christina of Lorraine, Duchess of Tuscany.” In *Discoveries and Opinions of Galileo*, edited by Stillman Drake. 175-216. New York: Anchor Books, 1957. (On course website.)

Week 2

This week, we turn to the Enlightenment. Our central text is Montesquieu’s *Persian Letters*, which you should have completely finished by Wednesday, when we will begin to discuss the novel.

Background reading for this week and next:

Outram, Dorinda. *The Enlightenment*. New Approaches to European History. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

On some days, specific chapters of Outram are listed out of order because they are particularly relevant, but it behooves you to read the whole book in order.

Day 6: Doubt

Primary sources:

Descartes, René. *Discourse on Method* (1637) http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/pdf/descdisc.pdf

Context/background reading:

Outram, Ch. 7 – “Science and the Enlightenment: God's order and man's understanding”

Day 7

Primary sources:

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)

Context/background reading:

Outram, Ch. 8 “The rise of modern paganism? Religion and the Enlightenment”

Second Strategic Advisory Competition

Day 8

Primary sources:

Montesquieu’s *Persian Letters* as novel: plot, characters, form, style

Context/background reading:

Outram: 4. “Exploration, cross-cultural contact, and the ambivalence of the Enlightenment”

Day 9

Primary sources:

Montesquieu’s *Persian Letters* as historical evidence

Day 10

Primary sources:

Montesquieu’s *Persian Letters* as political theory and social critique

Context/background reading:

Outram: 3. “Enlightenment and government: new departure or business as usual?”

Outram: 6. “Enlightenment thinking about gender”

Week 3

This week’s biggest hurdle: Kant’s *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*. We will be reading this on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, and doing very close readings on all of those days.

Day 11

Primary source:

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)

Context/background reading:

Outram: 5. When people are property: the problem of slavery in the Enlightenment

Selections from Hugh Thomas (TBA)

Day 12

Primary sources:

Kant: *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, preface and first section. Do read the introduction; it is very helpful – and note that there is a list of terms at the end of the book.

Day 13

Primary sources:

Kant: *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, second section.

Day 14

Primary sources:

Kant: *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, third section and "On a Supposed Right to Lie because of Philanthropic Concerns"

Day 15

Primary sources:

Readings from the French Revolution (TBA)

Third Strategic Advisory Competition

Final week

Day 16

Primary sources:

Wollstonecraft, Mary. Selections from *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*.

Day 17

Primary sources:

Wollstonecraft, Mary. Selections from *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*.

Day 18

Fourth Strategic Advisory Competition

Wrapup.