**Fall 2021**

*Course Title, Section Number*: The Enlightenment and the Other (PHI 400/LSH 440-0001)

*Course Meeting Dates*: 8/30-12/10

*Course Meeting Times*: T/Th 11 am -12:15 pm

*Course meeting room*: Payson-Smith 42-P

*Instructor name*:Prof. Robert B. Louden

*Email*: [Louden@Maine.edu](mailto:Louden@Maine.edu)

*Office phone*: 780-4248

*Office location*: Payson-Smith 122G-P

*Office hours*: T/Th 12:30 pm – 1:30 pm; 3:30 pm-4:30 pm, & by appointment

**The Enlightenment and the Other**

Accustomed to look on all the various tribes of men, as entitled to an equal share of my good will, and conscious, at the same time, of the rights which I possess in common with every individual among them, I have endeavoured to make my remarks with a retrospect to our general improvement and welfare; and neither attachment nor aversion to particular nations have influenced my praise or censure.

Georg Forster, *A Voyage round the World* (1777)

Above all one must be *impartial* like the genius of humanity itself; one must have no preferred race, no *Favoritvolk* on the earth.

Johann Gottfried Herder, *Letters for the Advancement of Humanity* (1793-97)

I. ***Course Description***

How did eighteenth-century European philosophers conceptualize non-Europeans – Asians, Africans, Native Americans, Pacific Islanders, etc.? How accurate were these conceptualizations, and to what extent were they distortions or projections caused by their own hopes and fears? To what degree is accurate understanding of others even possible? But is it possible to understand ourselves if we do not understand others? (Does self-understanding presuppose other-understanding?) How can we think better about others? The Enlightenment is remembered as a time of strong intellectual outreach and scientific growth, but it is also marked by the introduction of harmful racial and ethnic classifications that continue to haunt us at present. What can we learn from Enlightenment authors’ mistakes? What positive messages concerning human cross-cultural understanding can we uncover from this vitally important period of human thought? In an attempt to grasp the diversity of Enlightenment thought on these issues, we will examine a number of different works primarily written by German, French, and British philosophers. Authors to be studied include Leibniz, Malebranche, Wolff, Voltaire, Lahontan, Diderot, Rousseau, Hume, Amo, Kames, Kant, Forster, Herder, and others.

II. ***Course Materials & Books***

*Required Texts*

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Writings on China*, trans., with an Introduction, Notes, and Commentaries by Daniel J. Cook and Henry Rosemont, Jr. Chicago: Open Court, 1994.

*Kant and the Concept of Race: Late Eighteenth-Century Writings*, trans. and ed. Jon M. Mikkelsen. Albany: SUNY Press, 2013.

All texts are available for purchase through eCampus, USM’s textbook provider (<https://usm.ecampus.com/>). You should purchase these required texts immediately, if you have not already done so.

*Note:* Many of the readings for this seminar are free *e-texts* available in the “Course Reserves (Ares)” section of the USM website. I will show you how to access these readings in class. These readings are marked as “*e-text*” in the following *Reading Schedule.*

III. ***Reading Schedule***

T 8/31 Introduction to course. Read through syllabus together. Discuss course content, goals, reading materials, assignments, etc.

*The Enlightenment and China*

Th 9/2 Leibniz (1646-1716), “Preface to the *Novissima Sinica*” (1697/99) (in Leibniz, *Writings on China*, 45-60).

(Recommended: Cook and Rosemont, “Introduction” (in *Writings on China*, 1-44).

T 9/7 Leibniz, *Discourse on the Natural Theology of the Chinese* (1716) (in *Writings on China*, 75-97).

Th 9/9 Leibniz, *Discourse*, con’t. (in *Writings on* China, 97-138).

T 9/14 Malebranche (1638-1715), *Dialogue Between a Christian Philosopher and a Chinese Philosopher* (1708)(65-101, *e-text*).

(Recommended: Dominick Iorio, “Introduction,” 1-30, *e-text*).

Th 9/16 Wolff (1679-1754), *Discourse on the Practical Philosophy of the Chinese* (1721/26) (*e-text*).

(Recommended: Louden, “What Does Heaven Say? Christian Wolff and Western Interpretations of Confucian Ethics” (*e-text*).

T 9/21 Voltaire (1694-1778), “China” (= pp. 10-29 of *An Essay on Universal History* – 1756) (*e-text*)*.*

*The Noble Savage? (Native Americans, Pacific Islanders*)

Th 9/23 Lahontan (1666-1716), “A Conference or Dialogue between the Author and Adario, A Noted Man Among the Savages, Containing a Circumstantial View on the Customs and Humours of that People” (pp. 90-135 in vol. 2 of *New Voyages to North America* – 1703) (*e-text*). (*Hurons and Algonquins*.)

(Recommended: Launay, “Savage Critics: Lahontan, Rousseau, and Diderot” (*e-text*).

T 9/28 Lahontan, “A Conference or Dialogue,” con’t. (= pp. 135-80 in vol. 2 of *New Voyages*) (*e-text*).

Th 9/30 Rousseau (1712-1788) *Discourse on Inequality* (1751), Part II (*e-text*).

T 10/5 Diderot (1713-84), *Supplement to Bougainville’s “Voyage”* (1771/1796) (*e-text*). (*Tahitians, Pacific Islanders.)*

Th 10/7 Voltaire, “The Peopling of America” [in *Philosophical Letters* (1733) – *e-text*].

T 10/12 No class. Fall Break.

*Africa and the Enlightenment*

Th 10/14 Hume (1711-76), “Of National Characters” (1748) (*e-text*)

T 10/19 Voltaire, “The Negro” (from *Philosophical Dictionary* – *e-text*).

Th 10/21 Amo (c. 1703-c. 1759). (An African philosopher in Enlightenment Germany.) Smith, “Introduction” (in *Anton Wilhelm Amo: Basic Writings*) (*e-text*).

*Race Theory and the (mostly) German Enlightenment*

T 10/26 Kames, (1696-1782), *Sketches of the History of Man* (1774 – “Preliminary Discourse” (*e-text*).

Th 10/28 Blumenbach (1752-1840), “On the Natural Variety of Mankind” (1st ed., 1775 – *e-text*)

T 11/2 Kant (1724-1804), “Of the Different Human Races” (1775), in Mikkelsen, *Kant and the Concept of Race*, 41-54.

(Recommended: Mikkelsen, “Translator’s Introduction,” 1-32.)

Th 11/4 Kant, “Determination of the Concept of a Human Race” (1785), in Mikkelsen, 125-41.

T 11/9 Forster (1754-94), selections from *A Voyage Round the World, in his Britannic Majesty’s Sloop, Resolution, Commanded by Capt. James Cook, during the years 1772, 3, 4, and 5* (1777). (*e-text*). (*Hawaiians*.)

Th 11/11 No class. Veteran’s Day.

T 11/16 Forster, “Something More About the Human Races” (1786), in Mikkelsen, 143-67.

Th 11/18 Kant, “On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy” (1788), in Mikkelsen, 169-94.

T 11/23 Meiners (1747-1810), “Of the Varieties and Deviate Forms of Negroes” (1790), in Mikkelsen, 195-207.

Th 11/25 No class. Thanksgiving break.

T 11/30 Girtanner (1760-1800), *Concerning the Kantian Principle in Natural History: An Attempt to treat this Science Philosophically* (1796), in Mikkelsen, 209-32.

*A Way Out? Herder and the Specter of Relativism*

Th 12/2 Herder (1744-1803), *Outlines of the Philosophy of the History of Man* (1784-91) (selections – *e-text*, 141-66).

*Recommended*: Sikka, “The Question of Moral Relativism” (*e-text*).

T 12/7 Herder, *Outlines*, con’t. – (*e-text*, 194-201, 202-08, 218-25, 239-44, 290-99).

Th 12/9 Kant, “Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose” (1784) and “The Character of the Species” (conclusion to *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* (1798 – *e-text*).

IV. ***Course Format***

*Mixed lecture/discussion*. I will present an informal lecture on each of the assigned readings – at least until we begin the student discussion leader sessions and student presentations on critical essays. But because this is a seminar designed primarily for philosophy & LSH majors in their final year of study, it is expected that *everyone will actively participate* in the discussions about the readings and student essays throughout the semester.

V. ***Course Aims*** *(“Learning Outcomes”)*

* To improve students’ reading, writing, and critical reasoning skills.
* To raise students awareness of some of the challenges of cross-cultural understanding.
* To introduce students to a wide variety of Enlightenment texts concerning conceptualizations of non-Europeans.
* To introduce students to some central texts in the Enlightenment legacy of racism.
* To develop students’ capacity to think philosophically – viz., to improve their ability to raise insightful philosophical questions of their own, and to improve their skills in recognizing, criticizing, and constructing philosophical arguments and positions.

VI. ***Course Requirements***

* *Critical essay*. This is the major graded assignment for the seminar. Each participant is required to write a critical essay dealing with some aspect of one of our assigned author’s views on his conceptualization of non-Europeans. In your paper you must make use of at least one recent secondary source that analyzes your author’s views otherness. Paper topics should be chosen in consultation with the instructor, and must be selected and approved by me on or before **Th 10/7.** Titles, abstracts, and bibliographies for critical essays are due on **Th 10/28**. Final papers are due on or before **Th 12/9**. Minimum length: 12 pp., typed, double-space.
* *Class presentation on critical essay*. Each participant is also required to give an oral presentation (15-30 minutes) to the seminar that summarizes the argument of his/her critical essay. Audience members are encouraged to offer constructive criticisms of each essay based on these oral presentations. Class presentations on critical essays will begin on **Th 11/4**.
* *Discussion leader on assigned reading*. Each participant is required to lead the discussion on one of the assigned readings. On the day of your discussion leader presentation, you are also required to distribute a short, typed paper to fellow seminar members which summarizes the main points in the reading and contains a list of what you believe are the three most important questions to ask about the text. Discussion leaders should be prepared to distinguish correct from incorrect answers to their questions during discussion, and to provide correct answers when needed. Student-led discussions will begin on **T 9/21**. (Both oral and written performance will be taken into account in grading this assignment.)
* *Short take-home essay*. One short (3 pp., typed, double-space) essay dealing with a few issues in one or more of the assigned readings will also be assigned in the third week of the seminar. Due date: **Th 9/23**.

*Grading breakdown*:

* Critical essay: 30%
* Class presentation on critical essay: 20%
* Discussion leader session on assigned reading: 20%
* Short take-home essay: 20%
* Overall quality of class participation: 10%

VII. ***University Policies and Resources***

*Disability Accommodations*: USM is committed to providing students with documented disabilities equal access to all university programs and services. If you think you have a disability and would like request accommodations, you must register with the Disability Services Center. Timely notification is essential. The Disability Services Center can be reached by calling 2070780-4706 or by email [dscusm@maine.edu](mailto:dscusm@maine.edu). If you have already received a faculty accommodation letter from the Disability Services Center, please provide me with that information as soon as possible. Please make a private appointment with me asap so that we can review your accommodations.

*Tutoring and Writing Assistance*: Tutoring at USM is for *all* students, not just for those who are struggling. Tutoring provides active feedback and practice, and is available for writing, math, and many more subjects. Walk-in tutoring is available at the Glickman Library in Portland, the Gorham Library, and the LAC Writing Center. For best service, please make an appointment at <https://usm.maine.edu/learningcommons/schedule-tutoring-appointment>. Questions about tutoring should be directed to Naamah Jarnot at 207-780-4554. If you are interested in becoming “a more effective, efficient learner,” please see <https://usm.maine.edu/agile>

*Counseling*: Counseling is available at USM. The best way to schedule an appointment is to call 780-5411. More information is available at <https://usm.maine.edu/uhcs>

*Recovery Oriented Campus Center (ROCC)*: A peer support community for students in recovery from substance abuse or other mental health conditions is available at USM. More information may be found online at <https://usm.maine.edu/recovery> or by contacting ROCC at 207-228-8141.

*Nondiscrimination Policy*: The University of Southern Maine is an EEO/AA employer, and does not discriminate on the grounds of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, transgender status, gender expression, national origin, citizenship status, age, disability, genetic information or veteran’s status in employment, education, and all other programs and activities. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding non-discrimination policies: Amie Parker, Interim Director of Equal Opportunity, The Farmhouse, University of Maine Augusta, Augusta, ME 04333, 207-581-1226, TTY 711 (Maine Relay System).

*Statement on Religious Observance for USM Students*: Absence for Religious Holy Days: The University of Southern Maine respects the religious beliefs of all members of the community, affirms their rights to observe significant religious holy days, and will make reasonable accommodations, upon request, for such observances. If a student’s religious observance is in conflict with the academic experience, they should inform their instructor(s) of the class or other school functions that will be affected. It is the student’s responsibility to make the necessary arrangements mutually agreed upon with the instructor(s).

*Title IX Statement*: The University of Southern Maine is committed to making our campuses safer places for students. Because of this commitment, and our federal obligations, faculty and other employees are considered mandated reporters when it comes to experiences of interpersonal violence (sexual assault, sexual harassment, dating or domestic violence, and stalking). Disclosures of interpersonal violence must be passed along to the University’s Deputy title IX Coordinator, who can help provide support and academic remedies for students who have been impacted. More information can be found online at <http://usm.maine.edu/campus-safety-project> or by contacting Sarah E. Homes at [sarah.e.holmes1@maine.edu](mailto:sarah.e.holmes1@maine.edu) or 207-780-5767.

If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, the following resources are available on and off campus: University Counseling Services (207-780-4050); 24 Hour Sexual Assault Hotline (1-800-871-7741); 24 Hour Domestic Violence Hotline (1-866-834-4357).

*Covid Statement*: The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has upended many aspects of daily life, including university work. Although it is my intent to teach this course in as normal a manner as possible under the current circumstances, this is obviously contingent on my health as well as yours. Please do your best to stay healthy. Per current university policy, everyone is required to wear a face covering in class.