

HONORS 2406
European Civilization from 1400 to 1789:
The Birth of the Modern World

Spring 2024



Lecture: W 3:30-5:00 pm, 135 French House

Seminar: 2406.60 (Stoner): W 5:00-6:20 pm, 200 French House

Seminar: 2406.900 (Ray): W 5:00-6:20 pm, 221 French House

Instructors:	Gabrielle Ray (Honors)	James Stoner (Political Science)
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Office hours:	T 12:30-2:30 pm, and by appointment	M 2:00-4:00 pm, W 9:00-10:00 am, and by appointment

Course Overview

HNRS 2406 is an interdisciplinary course that explores European thought and culture between the Renaissance and the French Revolution. Our focus will be on the invention of the idea of the modern individual and the emerging science of nature and the state.

HNRS 2406 will expand and deepen the knowledge students have acquired in HNRS 2000, *Critical Analysis*, by uncovering the historical and philosophical “back story” of contemporary debates that are shaping life in our time.

Classes will generally be divided into (1) a joint lecture by one of the instructors on the day’s text and its context, followed by (2) text-based discussion in seminar. Because thoughtful discussion and debate—with each other, with professors, with authors and texts—are essential to the processes of critical analysis, doing the assigned reading *before* class and regular attendance and active participation in class are expected. If you are unable to attend class, for whatever reason, notify your professor before the class begins.

REQUIRED TEXTS (Students should purchase only these translations for use in HNRS 2406; additional texts are posted on Moodle)

- Pedro Calderón de la Barca, *Life is a Dream* (Dover) [ISBN 9780486421247]
- Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais, *The Figaro Trilogy*, tr. David Coward (Oxford World Classics) [ISBN 9780199539970]
- René Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, tr. Richard Kennington (Focus Publishing) [ISBN 9781585102594]
- Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Edwin Curley (Hackett) [ISBN 9780872201774]
- Juana Inés de la Cruz, *Poems, Protest, and a Dream: Selected Writings* (Penguin) [ISBN 9780140447033]
- John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, ed. C.B. Macpherson (Hackett) [ISBN 9780915144860]
- Martin Luther, *The Freedom of a Christian*, tr. Tryntje Helfferich (Hackett) [ISBN 9780872207684]
- Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. Harvey C. Mansfield (University of Chicago Press) [ISBN 9780226500447]
- J. J. Rousseau, *Major Political Writings*, tr. John T. Scott (University of Chicago Press) [ISBN 9780226151311]
- William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, ed. Barbara A. Mowat (Folger Library Edition) [ISBN 9780743482837]
- Voltaire, *Candide, Zadig and Selected Stories*, trans. Donald Frame (Mass Market Paperbacks) [ISBN 9780451531155]

[available free online but can also be ordered in book form]

- Thomas More, *Utopia*, tr. Gerald Malsbary (CTMS Publications) [ISBN 9798218149123]

Integrative Learning Core and General Education: *Integrated learning allows students to make simple connections among ideas and experiences and across disciplines and perspectives. The LSU Integrative Learning Core (ILC) curriculum is designed to develop student abilities to transfer their learning to new situations and demonstrate a sense of self as a learner. A fundamental goal of the ILC is to foster students' practical and intellectual capacities associated with integrative learning in preparation for high competence and functionality in their post-baccalaureate careers. This course fulfills the BoR Area of Humanities and Social/Behavioral Sciences and provides students experience with the ILC proficiency of Intercultural Knowledge and Competence.*

Weekly Topics and Readings

Jan. 17 *LECTURE*: Introduction: Europe in 1450

READING: Walker Percy, “The Delta Factor,” sections 1-5 [Moodle]

I. RENAISSANCE AND REFORMATION

Jan. 24 *LECTURE*: Reimagining the World

READING: More, *Utopia*

Jan. 31 *LECTURE*: Real Worlds and their Rulers

READING: Machiavelli, *The Prince*

*****FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 2: ESSAY 1 DUE *****

Feb. 7 *LECTURE*: Of God and Man

READING: Martin Luther, *On the Freedom of a Christian*
John Fisher, “Sermon against the Pernicious Doctrines of Martin Luther”

Feb. 14 *LECTURE*: Shakespeare’s New World

READING: Montaigne, “On Cannibals” [Moodle]
Shakespeare, *The Tempest*

Feb. 21 *LECTURE*: Mastering the Stars: Virtue, Autonomy, and Man’s Manipulation of Fate

READING: Pedro Calderon, *Life is a Dream*

II. THE BIRTH OF MODERN SCIENCE

Feb. 28 *LECTURE*: A New Way of Knowing and New Things Known

READING: Descartes, *Discourse on Method*
Pascal, *Pensées* [excerpts on Moodle]

Mar. 6 **MIDTERM EXAM**

LECTURE: Man as Matter

READING: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Hobbes' introduction, ch. 6, 10-15

{SPRING BREAK MARCH 11-15}

Mar. 20 *LECTURE:* Sword & Scepter: The Sovereign as God's Lieutenant on Earth

READING: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ch. 17-18, 21, 26, 29, 37

Mar. 27 *LECTURE:* Equality & Science

READING: Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, "Response to Sor Filotea"

*****MONDAY, APRIL 1: ESSAY 2 DUE*****

Apr. 3 *LECTURE:* Life, Liberty, & Property: The Social Contract Reconstructed

READING: Locke, *Second Treatise*, ch. 1-5, 7-9, 13-14, 16-19
Declaration of Independence

III. THE ENLIGHTENMENT AND THE OLD REGIME

Apr. 10 *LECTURE:* Is This the Best Possible World?

READING: Voltaire, *Candide*

Apr. 17 *LECTURE:* Nature versus Nurture

READING: J. J. Rousseau, *A Discourse on Inequality*

Apr. 24 *LECTURE:* The Bounty of Enlightenment

READING: *Encyclopedia* [Moodle: selections]

*****MONDAY, APRIL 29: ESSAY 3 DUE*****

May 1 *LECTURE:* Presaging Revolution

READING: Beaumarchais, *The Marriage of Figaro*

Course Assignments:

Weekly Quizzes on the Readings (13)	10%
3 Essays (due Feb. 2, Apr. 1, Apr. 29)	35%
Class Participation	15%
Midterm Exam (W, Mar. 6, during class)	15%
Final Exam (Sa, May 11, 10:00 am - noon)	25%

Grading scale:

A+ (98%-100%), A (93%-97%), A- (90%-92%)
B+ (88%-90%), B (83%-87%), B- (80%-82%)
C+ (78%-80%), C (73%-77%), C- (70%-72%)
D+ (68%-70%), D (63%-67%), D- (60%-62%)
F (below 60%)

Attendance, Integrity, and Access

University education is a great privilege, offered to all with the ability and the willingness to learn, without obstacles based on race, sex, or other aspects of personal identity. Students would be foolish to squander their opportunity by unexcused absence from class or by academic dishonesty. Please consult the following LSU policies:

Attendance: PS-22, Student Absence from Class

https://www.lsu.edu/policies/ps/ps_22.pdf

Integrity: Code of Student Conduct, section 10.1

<https://www.lsu.edu/saa/students/codeofconduct.php>

Access: Division of Engagement, Civil Rights, and Title IX

<https://www.lsu.edu/engagement/index.php>

Students who are struggling in the course should first contact the instructors. Should students want additional assistance, they are encouraged to contact the [Center for Academic Success](#).