

Course Title: *Anxiety in the Age of Reason*
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Course Description

Many Enlightenment authors expressed confidence in the relentless progress of knowledge, but they also exuded skepticism and unease about reason. New questions about nature, and new approaches to studying it, unleashed fears about humanity's place in the world. Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz worried that the specter of infinite time might eliminate the need for God; David Hume doubted the necessity of cause and effect; Immanuel Kant limited reason to make way for faith. Each of these writers used reason to question the religious and metaphysical foundations of knowledge. But reason also created its own fears about faith and reason, about certainty and belief. This course is about those fears, and what lay behind them.

Secularism caused anxiety, even in the age of reason. That is the heart of the matter, and what we will be exploring in this course. Even as Spinoza and Kant and Leibniz sought to unify scripture with reason, their writings both reflected and unleashed fears about how new modes of knowing might undermine old ways of believing. It is the dynamic that we will examine.

Course Requirements

Do all the reading. Required books are available for purchase at Huntley Bookstore. Other readings will be available on the course website through Sakai. For these latter readings, please PRINT THEM OUT, since *I expect you to have the readings in hand* during class so that we can reference them.

Attendance

We meet only twice each week, so it is important that you to be in class. If you can't make it, please e-mail me ahead of time and tell me why.

Grading

Grades will be based on (1) class discussion and presentations (50%) and (2) your final paper (50%).

Plagiarism

The short answer is this: if you use other people's words or ideas, *ever*, you need to give them credit. That means: cite everything you use. I am tolerant about a lot of things; plagiarism is not one of them. If I find that you have plagiarized, I will fail you for the course. If it is a bad case, I will report it.

“You must put others' words in quotation marks and cite your source(s) and must give citations when using others' ideas, even if those ideas are paraphrased in your own words.” (<http://sja.ucdavis.edu/avoid.htm>)

And that includes URL addresses!! For more, see the website cited above.

Required Readings

- Gould, Stephen J. *Time's Arrow and Time's Cycle*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987.
- Hume, David. *A Treatise of Human Nature*. London: Penguin Books, 1969.
- Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Pure Reason*. Trans. Norman Kemp Smith. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1969.
- Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm. *Protogaea*. Edited and translated, with an introduction, by Andre Wakefield and Claudine Cohen. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008.
- Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm. *Philosophical Essays*. Edited and translated by Roger Ariew and Daniel Garber. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1989.
- Rossi, Paolo. *The Dark Abyss of Time*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1984.
- Schmidt, James, ed. *What is Enlightenment? Eighteenth-Century Answers and Twentieth-Century Questions*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996.
- Spinoza, Baruch (Benedict de). *Theological-Political Treatise*. Edited by Jonathan Israel; translated by Michael Silverstone and Jonathan Israel. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Reading Schedule

Course Introduction.

Part I: Time, Fossils, Metaphysics

Class 1: Gould, *Time's Arrow*, pp. 1-61.

Class 2: Gould, *Time's Arrow*, pp. 61-208.

Class 3: Rossi, *Dark Abyss*, 3-120.

Class 4: Leibniz, *Protogaea* [all]

Class 5: Leibniz, "Discourse on Metaphysics," 35-69.

Class 6: Leibniz-Newton Debate. In Leibniz-Clarke Correspondence, 11-97.

Part II: Reason, Faith, Skepticism: The Secular Challenge

Class 7: Leibniz, "Comments on Spinoza's Philosophy," in Ariew and Garber, eds. pp. 272-84; Spinoza, *Theologico-Political Treatise* (Elwes trans.), 1-11, chaps. VI-VII, XIV-XVI, XX.

Class 8: Hume, *Treatise*, 41-174.

Class 9: Hume, *Treatise*, 174-321.

Class 10: Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 7-62, 65-91.

Class 11: Kant, *Conflict of the Faculties*, 23-61, and "What is Enlightenment?"; (in Schmidt, ed.); Mendelssohn, "What is Enlightenment?"

Class 12: Hamann, "Letter to Christian Jacob Kraus," and Metacritique on the Purism of Reason," in Schmidt, ed., 145-67.

Class 13: Fichte, "Freedom of Thought," pp. 119-142 (in Schmidt, ed.)

Class 14: **Wrap up.**