

# Personal Politics and Political Reform in the Enlightenment

ID 1: Critical Inquiry, Section 11  
Fall 2006  
Tuesday and Thursday 11:00-12:15  
Hahn 216

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European society in the eighteenth century was riddled with inequalities of all kinds: religious bigotry and political despotism, as well as new forms of racism, slavery, and class strife. The writers and artists associated with the European Enlightenment proposed radical ways to address these problems. These proposals addressed both the political and social realms, imagining new forms of friendship and marriage, as if those relationships might constitute analogies to politics itself. In doing so, they blurred the lines between the governmental and the social, the political and the private, and established a moral foundation for our modern era. Readings will include primary works from the period by such authors as Rousseau, Voltaire, Diderot, Montesquieu and Richardson.

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| Tu  | August 29 | <b>Convocation in Bridges Hall of Music (Little Bridges)<br/>Class Held During Lunch in Frank Private Dining Room</b>   |
| Th  | August 31 | Montesquieu, <i>Persian Letters</i> , Letters 1-31<br>Chesterfield, Letter 7 [Ashley Smart]   |
| Tu  | Sept 5    | Montesquieu, <i>Persian Letters</i> , Letters 48,50,54,55,63,64,66,<br>80,83,92,100,102,104,107,117,122,131 [Ansel Bencze]<br>Chesterfield, Letter 9 [Mark Simon] |
| Th  | Sept 7    | Montesquieu, <i>Persian Letters</i> , Letters 147-161 [Charles Bufalino]<br>Chesterfield, Letter 11 [Nathaniel Schier]  |
| Mon | Sept 11   | <b>Paper #1 Due</b>   |
| Tu  | Sept 12   | Voltaire, <i>Philosophical Letters</i> , Letters 1-11 [Jacob Cohen]<br>Chesterfield, Letter 17 [Dan Maftai]   |
| Th  | Sept 14   | Voltaire, <i>Philosophical Letters</i> , Letters 12-24 [Andrew Greenfeld]<br>Chesterfield, Letter 20 [Connor Lewis]   |

Mon	Sept 18	<b>Paper #1 Returned</b>
Tu	Sept 19	<b>No Class</b> – Gary Out of Town
Th	Sept 21	Voltaire, <i>Philosophical Letters</i> , Letter 25 [Megan Hunter] Chesterfield, Letter 23 [Jacob Levi]
Mon	Sept 25	<b>Revised Paper #1 Due</b>
Tu	Sept 26	Voltaire, <i>Candide</i> , pp. 1-79 [Nicholas Jones] Chesterfield, Letter 26 [Ellen Le]
Th	Sept 28	“The Lisbon Earthquake...,” in <i>Candide</i> , pp. 95-122 [Ellen Le] Chesterfield, Letter 28 [Nicholas Jones]
Mon	Oct 2	<b>Paper #2 Due</b>
Tu	Oct 3	Samuel Richardson, <i>Pamela</i> , pp. 11-89 [Jacob Levi] Chesterfield, Letter 30 [Megan Hunter]
Th	Oct 5	Samuel Richardson, <i>Pamela</i> , pp.182-259 [Connor Lewis] Chesterfield, Letter 32 [Andrew Greenfeld]
Mon	Oct 9	<b>Paper #2 Returned</b>
Tu	Oct 10	Samuel Richardson, <i>Pamela</i> , pp. 267-332 [Dan Maftei] Chesterfield, Letter 32 [Jacob Cohen]
Th	Oct 12	Samuel Richardson, <i>Pamela</i> , pp. 443-457; 505-519 [Nathaniel Schier] Denis Diderot, “In Praise of Richardson” (distributed) Chesterfield, Letter 35 [Charles Bufalino]
Fri	Oct 13	<b>Revised Paper #2 Due</b>
Tu	Oct 17	<b>No Class:</b> Fall Break
Th	Oct 19	Denis Diderot, <i>The Nun</i> Chesterfield, Letter 41 [Ansel Bencze] <b>Special Lunch Meeting in Frank PDR on The Nun</b>
Tu	Oct 24	Denis Diderot, “Rameau’s Nephew” (pp. 3-87) [Mark Simon] Chesterfield, Letter 42 [Ashley Smart]
Th	Oct 26	Diderot, “Supplement to Bougainville’s Voyage” (pp.179-228) [Ashley Smart] Chesterfield, Letter 45 [Mark Simon]

Tu	Oct 31	Denis Diderot, “D’Alembert’s Dream,” Part I (pp. 89-108) [Ansel Bencze] Chesterfield, Letter 46 [Charles Bufalino]
Th	Nov 2	Diderot, “D’Alembert’s Dream,” II and III (pp.108-175) [Jacob Cohen] Chesterfield, Letter 50 [Andrew Greenfeld]
Mon	Nov 6	<b>Paper #3 Due</b>
Tu	Nov 7	Jean Jacques Rousseau, “ Discourse on the Sciences and the Arts” (pp. 1-21 ) [Megan Hunter] Chesterfield, Letter 52 [Nicholas Jones]
Th	Nov 9	Jean Jacques Rousseau, “Discourse on the Origin of Inequality” [Ellen Le] Chesterfield, Letter 56
Fri	Nov 10	<b>Paper #3 Returned</b>
Mon	Nov 13	<b>Rewrite Paper #3 Due</b>
Tu	Nov 14	Jean Jacques Rousseau, <i>The Social Contract</i> , Books 1 and 2 [Jacob Levi] Chesterfield, Letter 84
Th	Nov 16	Jean Jacques Rousseau, <i>The Social Contract</i> , Books 3 and 4 [Connor Lewis] Chesterfield, Letter 86
Mon	Nov 20	<b>Paper #4 Due</b>
Tu	Nov 21	Choderlos de Laclos, <i>Les Liaisons Dangereuses</i> , Letters 1-80 [Dan Maftai] Chesterfield, Letter 87
Th	Nov 23	<b>No Class:</b> Thanksgiving Holiday
Mon	Nov 27	<b>Paper #4 Returned</b>
Tu	Nov 28	Laclos, <i>Les Liaisons Dangereuses</i> , Letters 81-115 [Nathaniel Schier] Chesterfield, Letter 95
Th	Nov 30	Laclos, <i>Les Liaisons Dangereuses</i> , Letters 116-140 [Mark Simon] Chesterfield, Letter 108
Fri	Dec 1	<b>Revised Paper #4 Due</b>
Tu	Dec 5	Laclos, <i>Les Liaisons Dangereuses</i> , Letters 141-175 [Ashley Smart] Chesterfield, Letter 112
Wed	Dec 6	<b>Paper #5 Due</b>

Th Dec 7           **No Class:** Reading Day

Required Texts (available at Huntley Bookstore):

Montesquieu *Persion Letters*, trans. C.J. Betts (Penguin)  
Voltaire *Philosophical Letters*, trans. Ernest Dilworth (Dover)  
Voltaire, *Candide and Related Texts*, trans. David Wootton (Hackett)  
Samuel Richardson, *Pamela; or, Virtue Rewarded*, ed. Thomas Keymer and Alice Wakely (Oxford)  
Denis Diderot, *The Nun*, trans. Leonard Tancock (Penguin)  
Denis Diderot, *Rameau's Nephew and Other Essays*, trans. Jacques Barzun and Ralph H. Bowen (Hackett)  
Jean Jacques Rousseau, *The Basic Political Writings*, trans. Donald A. Cress (Hackett)  
Choderlos de Laclos, *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, trans. Douglas Parmée (Oxford)  
Lord Chesterfield, *Letters* (Oxford)

You should come to class not simply having read the reading assignment, but also having a sense regarding its historical and cultural context and knowing something about its author. Sometimes the introductions to our editions will help. Other times you may want to do a few minutes (that's really all it takes!) of outside reading. From your desktop, through the Databases area of our library homepage, you can browse the relevant articles in Britannica Online or the Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

Another excellent source for background is a series of televised lectures by Professor Alan Kors of the University of Pennsylvania, produced by The Teaching Company. This DVD is available for you to check out anytime from the History Department Library in the bottom floor of Pearson's Hall.

### Required Assignments:

**Five Four-Page Papers:** A "4"page essay on a theme of your choice related to the reading that helps to explain the book's cultural and historical significance. Your papers for this class should be well written with a clear argument or interpretation that is supported by well-chosen and compelling pieces of evidence. Your grade will largely be determined by the imaginative quality of your thesis, as well as your ability to draw upon concrete evidence that relates to your interpretation. All papers must be typed, double-spaced, and page numbers should be on each page. Your essays should include an imaginative title that signals or implies something about your thesis. Your papers must include a reference to a scholarly article (those presented in class are appropriate for this purpose). Each paper may draw on Lord Chesterfield's letters, as you find appropriate.

This is an exercise in expository writing, not expressive or creative writing. The goal is to persuade the reader of the veracity of a particular interpretation of the reading assignments. "The reader" should be envisioned as a prepared member of our class. He or she has carefully read the primary source and participated in class discussion, but

he/she is certainly no expert and does not necessarily appreciate everything read or discussed. You are trying to teach this student about the meaning of what he or she has recently read. Please have in mind a reader who tends to disagree with your viewpoint. If you are socially liberal, for example, imagine writing to a reader who is somewhat more conservative. If you already gravitate to Voltaire's anti-religious attitudes, imagine a reader who is a bit put off by them. To be sure, the clarity and expression of your ideas are important. More significant, however, is your ability to convince the reader that your interpretation is, in fact, correct. This will require not simply clarity of expression, but well-chosen and sufficient supporting evidence to make your interpretation appear convincing. An interpretation, or thesis, or argument serves expository writing something like plot in fiction: while the reader may not notice its presence, it is never absent. There is no such thing as "background," in which the argument disappears for a time. Rather, the interpretive mode determines the structure and organization of the paper.

Paper 1 focuses on Montesquieu

Paper 2 focuses on Voltaire.

Paper 3 focuses on Richardson and Diderot

Paper 4 focuses on Rousseau

Paper 5 focuses on Laclos

Grading: the first submission of the paper is not graded, but comments will help you see its strengths and weaknesses. Papers will be returned (via email) one week after submission, and a final rewrite is due a few days after that. The rewrite is graded and returned usually within 10 days. Each of the first four papers counts 15% towards your course grade.

All papers are submitted electronically as Word attachments and emailed both to [gkates@pomona.edu](mailto:gkates@pomona.edu) and to [Claire.Nytrom@pomona.edu](mailto:Claire.Nytrom@pomona.edu). We will usually read and comment on your papers on line, and return them to you electronically.

The final fifth paper is special for three reasons: First, You will not submit a draft, and so, there will be no rewriting opportunity. Second, you must reference two scholarly articles: One from JSTOR and one not included in JSTOR, but found in the library. For this purpose, you should meet with Adam Rosenkrantz during the latter portion of the semester for tips on bibliographical research. Finally, this paper will count 20% towards your course grade.

**Oral Presentations:** Every student will deliver three ten-minute oral presentations (see your name above in brackets for your particular assignment). At least one will be on a scholarly article found in an academic journal related to the reading for that particular class period. You must find a suitable scholarly article. The full bibliographical reference of your article should be emailed to all class members by midnight of the evening preceding our class. In class, you should identify and evaluate the significance of the article's argument, and explain to us why the article merits value.

The most difficult part of this assignment is finding an appropriate scholarly article. You may need to cruise through several scholarly articles to find the right one. Basically, you are trying to find an article that helps you and your classmates better understand and appreciate the significance of the reading assigned for that day. Many articles are simply too narrow and/or too esoteric to do this effectively, especially for novice undergraduates. Many of you will use JSTOR, an electronic database accessible through the library's homepage. At our first class, you will learn how to use JSTOR. Once you have found an article, you need to figure out how to present it to the class. Do not think of the presentation as simply a description of what the article is about (i.e., first she said this, then she said that, and so on). That's boring, and usually not helpful. Rather, organize your presentation analytically around two central questions: First, what is the central argument of this article? That is, why was it published? What is the significance and originality of that argument? Addressing this question may involve some summary and description, but the more you focus on addressing these central issues, the better. Second, how does this argument help your fellow students to better understand the reading assigned for class. If you had not read the article, and if we were unaware of the argument, how would that affect our appreciation of the book? After all, the article may be brilliant and full of originality, but if it cannot help us understand the assigned reading (either for that day, or more generally, for our course as a whole), then it is irrelevant to us and your presentation will be less effective. So, make your presentation relevant to those who just finished the day's reading assignment. Put yourself in the place of your classmates, who are wondering why they should care about the article that you just read.

The other oral presentation will be on one of Lord Chesterfield's letters to his son. Each class session will begin with your reading all or parts of the letter and providing a commentary on its significance. This is intended to be the most creative, personal, and expressive assignment in the class. What I am after here is your personal reaction to Chesterfield's ideas. What do you think of his advice? What are its ethical/moral implications about the world? Do you admire Chesterfield? Despise him? What if he were your dad? Indeed, do your parents give you advice like this? What advice would you give to your own children? I am also interested in more academic issues, such as how his ideas connect to Enlightenment thought, and especially and specifically to the books that we are reading. But those more academic issues can remain in the background, or be added to your papers. In this oral presentation, I want to see your own engagement with Chesterfield's advice. Please begin the presentation by reading all or some of the letter assigned to you. Also, if you don't like the letter, or don't get anything from it, you can choose instead any of the letters not found on our syllabus.

Each oral presentation grade is worth 10% of your course grade; only your two best grades will count towards the final grade.

**Class Format:** The class will be taught in a seminar style. Much of the time I will engage students in discussion, and this is why it is very important that every student attend class regularly and come to class prepared to discuss the reading assigned for that day. Although general oral participation is not formally evaluated for a grade, I feel free

asking random students about their impression of the reading assignments. Poor class attendance may affect your course grade.

**Grades:** When deciding between two grades, improvement over the course of the semester can help raise your grade.

When evaluating your papers, I will apply the following criteria:

1. **Focus on the Issue** -- does the essay deal with the question?
2. **Adequate evidence** -- is there data to support the writer's position?
3. **Coherence**--does the argument hold together and move in a straight line?
4. **Scope** -- does the essay deal with all the important aspects of the question?
5. **Originality:** defined as any idea outside of the text itself and what has already been discussed in class.

I define grades in these terms:

- A--excellent (insightful, coherent, and original)
- B--good (covers the material well but in a conventional manner)
- C--fair (adequate, but flawed by errors, irrelevance, or limited scope)
- D--poor (more errors or incoherence than understanding)
- F--fail (no evidence of understanding the issues raised in the Question)

**Office Hours:** Students are welcome to visit office hours to discuss issues that stem from the class or anything else. I urge everyone to visit me at least once during the first two weeks of the semester, and then again after receiving the grade for your first paper. Because I am Dean of the College, I have no traditional time period set aside for office hours. Simply make an appointment with my administrative assistant, Ilene Campbell (18137 or [Ilene.Campbell@pomona.edu](mailto:Ilene.Campbell@pomona.edu)). Feel free to call me at home (447-6490) anytime *before* 10:00 p.m. I also welcome e-mail at [gkates@pomona.edu](mailto:gkates@pomona.edu). I prefer email to phone calls.

**Academic Integrity Policy:** Plagiarism includes passing off the work of others as your own. It is not tolerated in this class, and violators will be dealt with as indicated in policy. If you have doubts about whether your work may violate standards of academic integrity, please ask. In this class, you are welcome and encouraged to seek editorial help from your peers for all written work, so long as your submitted work is all your own.

**Writing Tutor:** Claire Nystrom is a junior Gender and Women's Studies major who took this class during her first year. She will fully participate in all class discussions and

will read and comment on all your papers. Her primary purpose is to help you with your writing.

**Librarian:** Adam Rosenkranz ([Adam.Rosenkranz@libraries.claremont.edu](mailto:Adam.Rosenkranz@libraries.claremont.edu)) is available in the library to help you with all of your bibliographical needs. He will be introduced to you during our first class session. You are expected to have a least one meeting with him prior to the submission of your final paper.

**Student List:**

[to email your colleagues, please use the Pomona global list]

Ansel Bencze  
Charles Bufalino  
Jacob Cohen  
Andrew Greenfeld  
Megan Hunter  
Nicholas Jones  
Ellen Le  
Jacob Levi  
Connor Lewis  
Dan Maftai  
Nathaniel Schier  
Mark Simon  
Ashley Smart