COURSE GUIDEBOOK

European Thought and Culture in the 19th Century

Part I

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European Thought and Culture in the 19th Century, Part I
Professor Lloyd Kramer

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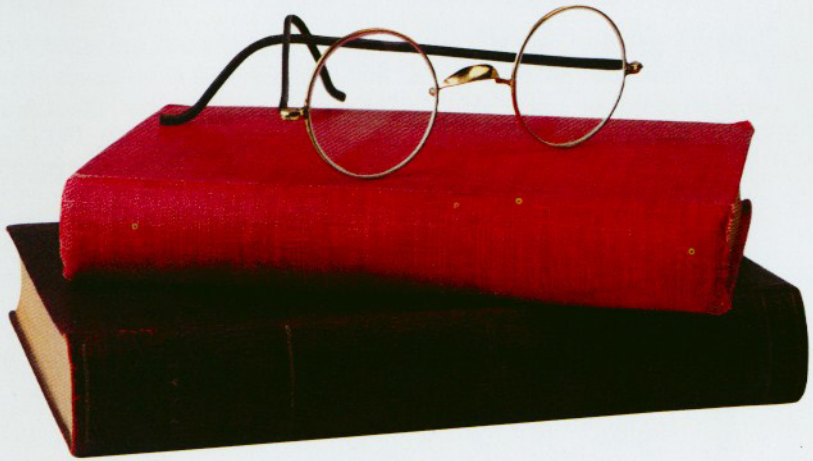
European Thought and Culture in the 19th Century

Professor Lloyd Kramer
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Part I



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Lloyd Kramer was born in Maryville, Tennessee, and grew up in Benton, Arkansas, and Evansville, Indiana. He received a B.A. from Maryville College and an M.A. in history at Boston College before going to Hong Kong to teach for two years at Lingnan College. After traveling widely in Asia and studying French in Paris, he pursued graduate studies in European intellectual history at Cornell University, where he received his Ph.D. in 1983.

Following completion of his graduate work, Professor Kramer taught for one year in the history department at Stanford University and for two years in the history department at Northwestern University. Since 1986, he has been a history professor at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, teaching courses on European intellectual history, the history of Western civilization, and modern global history. He has received two awards for distinguished undergraduate teaching at the University of North Carolina.

Professor Kramer's historical research has focused mainly on French intellectual history after 1800, with particular emphasis on cross-cultural intellectual exchanges. He has written numerous articles and books, including *Threshold of a New World: Intellectuals and the Exile Experience in Paris, 1830–1848* (1988), *Lafayette in Two Worlds: Public Cultures and Personal Identities in an Age of Revolutions* (1996), and *Nationalism: Political Cultures in Europe and America, 1775–1865* (1998). His book on Lafayette received the Gilbert Chinard Prize from the American Society for French Historical Studies and the Annibel Jenkins Biography Prize from the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies.

Professor Kramer has also edited or co-edited several books, including a book on historical education in America and (with Sarah Maza) the Blackwell *Companion to Western Historical Thought* (2002). He is also co-author (with R. R. Palmer and Joel Colton) of the ninth edition of *A History of the Modern World* (2002).

He has been a member of the School of Historical Studies at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton and has served as president of the Society for French Historical Studies.

Professor Kramer lives in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, with his wife, Gwynne Pomeroy, and their two children.

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European Thought and Culture in the Nineteenth Century
Part I

European Thought and Culture in the Nineteenth Century

Scope:

This course of twenty-four lectures examines major themes and authors in nineteenth-century European thought. We begin with a survey of the intellectual themes that emerged in the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, because this was the starting point for most of the important new nineteenth-century themes in philosophy, political theory, social thought, and literature. Our discussion of these themes will emphasize the links between the history of ideas and the history of the social, cultural, and political contexts in which influential new ideas appeared. This approach to the history of ideas rests on the assumption that ideas shape and influence all other aspects of the historical process, but it also stresses the importance of social, political, and economic realities in the formation and diffusion of all ideas.

The course describes nineteenth-century intellectual history as a set of overlapping dialogues with several key contextual influences on modern thought: (1) the response to the cultural legacy of the Enlightenment, (2) the political impact and legacy of the French Revolution, and (3) the broad social impact of the Industrial Revolution and the growth of modern cities. Important texts do not simply "reflect" the contexts in which they appear, but this course stresses the ways in which creative thinkers interpret, redefine, criticize, and influence the evolving historical world in which they live.

The lectures in the course trace this intellectual dialogue by looking at a number of important themes in modern European culture. After an introductory lecture on the characteristics of intellectual history, we will use three lectures to discuss the main themes of Enlightenment intellectual life and the Enlightenment's relation to the French Revolution. The following six lectures then examine the emergence of nineteenth-century political and cultural theories that developed in response to the French Revolution. These are the famous "isms"—conservatism, liberalism, Romanticism, and so on—that interpreted the new post-revolutionary social and political world.

Beginning with Lecture Eleven, we turn to the cultural impact of the other great revolution of the era, the Industrial Revolution. We will look at the social characteristics of this new industrial system and discuss the theoretical responses it evoked. Intellectual interpretations of the new economy ranged from the pro-capitalist responses of classical economists to the critiques of early socialists and the ideas of early Marxism. We then move on to discuss the emergence of early feminism and the widening movement for human rights in the new industrial society.

In the last seven lectures, we will survey a number of cultural responses to what might be called the new "mass culture" of modern urban societies: nationalism,

realism in literature, positivism, Darwinian science, Social Darwinism, and various philosophical critiques of modern, democratic cultural life. These lectures lead us back to the dialogue with the Enlightenment (its faith in science, reason, and progress), which marked the end of the nineteenth century, as well as its beginning.

Our goal throughout the course is to understand the ideas of influential nineteenth-century European intellectuals, to reflect on the interactions between ideas and social experience, and to think critically about how the ideas of creative nineteenth-century writers still raise questions for our own time. Intellectual history emphasizes the multiple dialogues among and between the people of other places and times, but it also stresses the importance of a continuing dialogue between the present and the past. This course seeks to expand our dialogue with the intellectual world of nineteenth-century Europe—a world of influential ideas that still enter most cultural debates at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Lecture One
What Is Intellectual History?

Scope: This lecture introduces the overall themes of the course and explains the nature of intellectual history as a subdiscipline within modern historical studies. It notes how intellectual historians study the influential ideas, writers, cultural movements, and cultural institutions of past societies. It also introduces the guiding assumption of this course, which stresses the interaction between social experience and the history of thought. Social and political realities influence the development of all ideas and creative thinkers, but ideas and human consciousness also shape all social and political realities. Finally, this lecture notes some of the methods that intellectual historians use to understand the work of influential writers and the diffusion of influential ideas.

Outline

I. Let's begin by defining intellectual history and modern historiography.
  A. This course examines the history of ideas and cultural contexts in European societies during the nineteenth century; it is, therefore, an example of what professional historians usually call "intellectual history."
    1. We'll look at the history of influential thinkers and ideas from the time of late Enlightenment thinkers, such as Voltaire and Rousseau, to the era of late nineteenth-century thinkers, such as Darwin and Nietzsche.
    2. We must begin with a general question about the kind of history we will pursue in this course: What is intellectual history?
  B. Intellectual history is the subdiscipline of history that deals most explicitly with systems of interpretation and meaning.
    1. That is, intellectual history takes as its object of study the ideas and symbols that people use to make sense of their world.
    2. The guiding assumption in the study of intellectual history emphasizes that human experience depends on the use of language and consciousness.
    3. This use of language gives meaning to individual lives and to all social realities or social experiences.
  C. The use of language can take the form of great books or works of art or of everyday conversations, beliefs, and fears.
    1. In all cases, people use ideas about reality to give structure to reality itself; theories are part of reality.

2. Intellectual history thus stresses the idea that what we call *reality* is, in various ways, an intellectual construction, and it analyzes how the meaning of reality changes across time.

II. This emphasis on the role of ideas, symbols, and language has often made intellectual history somewhat marginal among historians who prefer to focus on the cold, hard facts of political and economic life.

A. Intellectual history has often seemed vague to these historians because it is concerned more with interpretation and meanings than with the accumulation of facts; it seeks to explain how people interpret the facts that others describe.

1. The question, then, is not, for example, how or when did the King of France die during the French Revolution; intellectual historians want to know how did people interpret this event.
2. In what ways did people at the time and later give meaning to such an event and place it in a wider cultural or theoretical context?
3. Critics say that intellectual history becomes interpretations about interpretations and loses touch with reality.

B. I don't think this charge is correct, and, in fact, most historians have become much more interested in language and symbols and the influence of culture.

1. The new forms of cultural history stress the shaping influence of cultural mentalities and values in all historical eras.
2. The new cultural history, however, tends to give more attention to popular ideologies and popular culture and the values of daily life.
3. Intellectual history, by contrast, tends to give more attention to the ideas of elite thinkers or what were traditionally called great writers.

C. What cultural and intellectual history share, though, is an emphasis on the dialectical interaction between social reality or social forces and ideas.

1. Changes in the economy, political leadership, social relations, and warfare constantly change people's ideas about the world.
2. At the same time, their ideas about the world or about how the world should be affect their actions in the economy, politics, social life, and warfare.
3. To put it simply, social realities influence the development of all ideas, and ideas influence the development of all social realities.

D. In this course, we will approach intellectual history by emphasizing the constant interaction between social changes and changing ideas.

1. This approach to the history of ideas contrasts with many literary and philosophical approaches to texts, which tend to look more at the internal development of ideas.

2. Unlike most philosophers, most intellectual historians examine the relation between texts and social or cultural contexts.

E. Intellectual history seeks to bring out the complexity of human experience by investigating both the ideas of the past and the social-cultural experience or reality in which these ideas developed and made sense.

1. It requires that we take the ideas of the past seriously and that we allow those ideas to challenge or criticize our own interpretations of reality.
2. Because human reality can't be separated from our ideas about it, I see intellectual history as an essential component of the real world.
3. All our present interpretations of reality are based on ideas and symbols that derive from past intellectual history.

III. All intellectual historians are concerned with problems of meaning and interpretation, but they have developed many different methods for their work; intellectual history often draws on a wide variety of disciplines.

A. Let's examine briefly five of the major ways in which intellectual historians see the historical objective or methods of this field. Some of these methods have close links to cultural history; others don't, but all have connections to disciplines outside historical studies.

B. Some historians see intellectual history as an extension of social history or as a way to clarify what we know about the social and political history of the past.

1. In this view, intellectual history simply confirms other forms of history.
2. For example, if we know from the study of economics or social relations that a new social class of wage earners was developing in the nineteenth century, we can read novels to see if people noticed this change.

C. The second group of intellectual historians sees intellectual history as essentially the study of great books and abstract ideas about truth, beauty, literature, or human nature.

1. These historians might be called textual intellectual historians.
2. They stress the internal themes and ideas of major thinkers or authors.
3. Textual historians place little emphasis on the social context; they prefer to show how ideas move from author to author or from era to era.
4. They emphasize the careful reading of complex texts—like literary critics—and, since the 1980s, their work has been influenced by various literary theories and contemporary literary criticism.

D. The third group of intellectual historians puts more emphasis on the personal identities of individual authors; they analyze the psychology of writers.
   1. These historians see ideas and the books of writers as an attempt to resolve psychological anxieties or personal conflicts.
   2. They often write psychobiographies that show connections between an individual's life and his or her writings; they draw on psychology.

E. The fourth group of intellectual historians is most concerned with the study of collective cultural values or ideas; this is often called the study of mentality.
   1. These historians argue that the people of each era share certain beliefs about the world; these are the commonly held ideas in a culture.
   2. This emphasis on shared, unconsciously held ideas links this kind of historical study to cultural anthropology and is part of cultural history.

F. The fifth group of intellectual historians is more concerned with how ideas or cultural beliefs spread through a society than with the content of ideas.
   1. This approach has been called the social history of ideas, because it examines the institutions of intellectual life.
   2. This kind of research might study publishing houses, the history of printing or newspapers, or the development of universities.

IV. Each of these approaches to intellectual history will enter into our study of ideas and writers, but we'll emphasize the interaction between social or cultural contexts and creative intellectual figures; we'll look at both lives and ideas.

Suggested Reading:

George Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century: From Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge*, pp. 1–19.

Lynn Hunt, ed., *The New Cultural History*, pp. 1–22.

Questions to Consider:

1. Which aspect of history comes first or is most influential in human lives—social institutions, economic needs, language, or abstract ideas?
2. What do you think most influences a creative thinker's work: personal experiences, psychological conflicts, social contexts, or cultural and intellectual traditions?

Lecture Two

The Scientific Origins of the Enlightenment

Scope: This lecture begins with the general claim that nineteenth-century European intellectual history evolved as an extended dialogue with the leading ideas and thinkers of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment. To understand that dialogue, we must look at the shaping themes of the Enlightenment—a movement in European thought that grew out of the scientific revolution and sought to extend scientific methods and forms of knowledge to social and political life. This lecture briefly summarizes the development of the new science and the cultural influence of Isaac Newton. We then turn to the influential philosophical and political ideas of John Locke, a thinker who leads us into the key ideas of the Enlightenment tradition.

Outline

I. European culture in the eighteenth century is generally described as the Age of the Enlightenment; this era is usually viewed as the starting point of modern European intellectual history—though the themes of modern thought began to emerge earlier.
   A. During the Enlightenment, many of the debates about politics, society, and knowledge developed recognizable modern forms.
      1. This modernity can be attributed to a remarkable intellectual confidence in science, which was seen as the foundation for truth.
      2. The origins of Enlightenment thought can be traced in many ways to the influential scientific revolution of the seventeenth century.
      3. Belief in the truths of science is one of the key elements of modern thought in Europe—and in other areas of the world, too.
      4. Science became the model for knowledge about human beings and society, as well as the basis for knowledge about nature.
   B. European thought in the nineteenth century developed as a kind of extended dialogue with the Enlightenment; later thinkers both accepted and challenged the leading ideas of Enlightenment theorists, including the faith in science.

II. To see how the new science altered European intellectual life and shaped the themes of the Enlightenment, we'll survey three aspects of this cultural transition.
   A. First, we look at how the modern scientific form of thought developed in the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century.
   B. Second, we note the culminating event of the new science, Newtonian physics, and suggest why Newton's work was so influential.

C. Third, we discuss the implications of this new form of knowledge for social and political theory, noting especially the ideas of John Locke. The new science became decisive in intellectual history, because it created both new knowledge and a method for creating knowledge.

III. The form or method of scientific thought is especially important, because this method offered answers to that ancient philosophical question: How do we know what we know?

A. The classical Christian view of truth had stressed that ultimately truth comes from divine revelation, but religious conflicts had generated skepticism about such claims; people could not agree on what truths God had revealed.

1. The scientific revolution and the subsequent Enlightenment began with the idea that truth must rest on something other than revelation.
2. The new conception of truth was built on a belief in the reliability of empirical observation and mathematics.
3. One way to define the scientific revolution would be to say that scientists sought to confirm mathematical theories by observation and to confirm observations by mathematical theories.

B. This method of establishing truth was actually a synthesis of two rather different innovators in seventeenth-century thought: Francis Bacon (1561–1626) and René Descartes (1596–1650).

1. Bacon argued that knowledge must be based on empirical observation, specific evidence, and the use of inductive reason.
2. Knowledge grows as we observe, measure, and describe objects or natural phenomena; we must accumulate observed facts.

C. Bacon tended to underestimate the role of mathematics, which Descartes stressed in such works as his *Discourse on Method* (1637).

1. Mathematics was Descartes's model for truth; he believed that whatever can be established by mathematical proof can be taken as a secure truth.
2. Descartes was less empirical than Bacon, but he shared Bacon's belief that knowledge was cumulative and that general laws could be known.
3. The scientific method, as Bacon and Descartes defined it, thus linked inductive and deductive thought, empirical evidence, and mathematics.

IV. The full possibilities of this method were realized soon after Descartes when Newton published the *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy* (1687).

A. Newton (1642–1727) synthesized what had been observed about the motion of planetary and earthly bodies with the new study of mathematics.

1. He showed how all motion on earth or in the solar system could be explained by the law of universal gravitation.
2. Newton's explanation of this law emphasized that it was universal and that the workings of gravity could be measured and predicted.
3. Newton's book became one of the most influential scientific works ever published, despite the difficulty of understanding it.
4. It became the basis for a new faith in science and an almost sacred text for Enlightenment writers in the eighteenth century.

B. Newtonian science gave rise to the optimistic belief that everything in nature could ultimately be known—a claim that fueled a growing belief in progress.

V. The main themes of Enlightenment thought began to develop when people drew on the lessons of the new science for the study of people and society.

A. The scientific confidence in a method to discover reliable truths, the emphasis on empiricism, and the idea of progress were all carried from the study of nature into the study of human institutions and traditions.

B. This new interest in applying scientific insights to society spread rapidly in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, and it appeared in the work of John Locke.

1. Locke (1632–1704) was trained in medicine and science; he knew Isaac Newton and, like most thinkers of the era, he was concerned with epistemology and the nature of knowledge.
2. One of Locke's most important attempts to deal with this issue appeared in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690).
3. Locke argued for a radical empiricism; that is, he said that all knowledge comes from sensory experience and from observation.
4. Locke's key point was that we all come into the world as a *tabula rasa*, or a blank tablet, which means that our social environment shapes our beliefs, actions, and knowledge.

C. These epistemological assumptions had important social implications, because they suggest that changes in the environment will change ideas and behavior.

1. Such ideas contributed to a confidence in social reform and raised new questions about the purpose of government and laws.
2. Locke's empiricism was, thus, like Newtonian science, one of the foundations for Enlightenment thought and social theory.
3. Locke himself recognized the political implications of his philosophy when he wrote his *Two Treatises of Government*; this work was published shortly after the English Revolution of 1688 overthrew King James II.
4. Locke's *Treatises* shows his scientific inspiration, especially in his theories of natural rights and natural law.

D. Locke argued that natural laws exist among human beings, much as they exist in the natural world.

E. The reasonable goal for societies is, therefore, to bring their specific laws and government institutions into harmony with natural laws.

F. By the twentieth century, many theorists had rejected the belief in natural law and natural rights, and critics noted that such beliefs contradicted Locke's idea that people were born as blank tablets.

G. But Locke's ideas were crucial for the Enlightenment, for later political revolutions (including the American Revolution), and for many nineteenth-century liberals; they supported the belief that society can be changed.

VI. The prominence of such figures as Bacon, Newton, and Locke raises questions about the national origins of the Enlightenment.

A. In the eighteenth century, the most influential and famous writers on politics and society were mainly French, yet the French in this period often drew on earlier English writers and examples.

B. By the early eighteenth century, English thought had acquired a reputation for innovation, scientific rigor, and tolerance.

C. Writers such as Montesquieu and Voltaire developed the ideas of the Enlightenment when they turned the model of scientific knowledge and an idealized image of English political life against their own society in France.

D. This Enlightenment project, drawing on seventeenth-century science, epistemology, and conceptions of progress, shaped the whole intellectual context of modernity.

Essential Reading:

René Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, pp. 1–42.

John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, pp. 55–123 (Book one and book two, chapters 1–2).

Supplementary Reading:

Margaret Jacob, *Scientific Culture and the Making of the Industrial West*, pp. 15–50, 73–96.

Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, pp. 1–91.

Robert Nisbet, *History of the Idea of Progress*, chapter 5.

Questions to Consider:

1. Why would science gain particular appeal in the aftermath of religious wars and the European encounter with other cultures in the Americas and Asia?
2. Do you think the idea of progress remains a central theme in our own time?

Lecture Three

The Emergence of the Modern Intellectual

Scope: This lecture argues that the Age of the Enlightenment created the cultural identity of the modern "intellectual." Although the word *intellectual* was not used until the late nineteenth century, the group of critical writers called *philosophes* developed a self-conscious conception of how their writing and the "Republic of Letters" should influence modern societies. Most of these writers promoted a strong belief in reason, progress, and the harmonious laws of nature. This lecture discusses the Enlightenment's conception of the intellectual's social role, with particular attention to the lives and ideas of Montesquieu, Diderot, and Voltaire. Such figures created a model for the work of later writers and social theorists.

Outline

I. The eighteenth-century Enlightenment promoted an intellectual transition toward a widespread modern confidence in science and the possibilities for social reform.

A. At the same time, the new culture of the Enlightenment contributed to the development of a new social group—the modern intellectuals.

1. Although the term *intellectual* was not used at the time, the writers of the eighteenth century began to identify themselves as a group whose actions and ideas would give this term its modern meaning.
2. They viewed themselves as writers who wanted to change the world by using reason, knowledge, social criticism, and public commentary to alter public opinion and policies.
3. This was the activist theme of the *philosophes*, the famous writers who created a cultural model for the intellectuals of the nineteenth century.

B. Philosophes weren't really philosophers; they wrote plays, journalism, novels, poems, history, social theory, political theory, and science, all of which could influence public opinion.

1. They were far less specialized than most recent intellectuals, and they wrote huge quantities of material.
2. This vast production reflected the belief that the pen was somehow mightier than the sword, or at least a rival to the sword.

C. The pen was to be used as a weapon in social struggles. This was the role of intellectuals in society: to write texts that would affect the world.

1. The philosophes expressed the common belief that intellectuals should be critics—a kind of secular clergy, urging reforms.

2. This conception of the intellectual's social role may have become the most enduring legacy of the work of the philosophes.
3. They believed that words could reshape social and cultural realities.

D. I want to discuss the aspirations of the philosophes by noting some of the key concepts or words they used in their writing.
1. We should also note how these ideas influenced their desire to reform the state, their belief in social reform through education or learning, and their conception of intellectual freedom.
2. These three themes can be seen in the work of three major philosophes, Montesquieu, Diderot, and Voltaire; their lives and writings serve as examples of the wider Enlightenment culture.

E. These three philosophes were typical of the group as a whole in that they wrote literature, as well as social theory and history.
1. They also came to believe that they were part of a "Republic of Letters," which contrasted with the actual monarchy of princes.
2. The philosophes sought to transform the Republic of Letters into a real world society of enlightenment and equal intellectual opportunity.
3. Recent historical studies have stressed that eighteenth-century philosophes wanted to create a public sphere in which public opinion would be shaped by reasonable discourse and free debate.
4. This public sphere might be viewed somewhat like an ideal French salon—an intellectual meeting place, governed by rational debate.

II. This public culture was supposed to implement or defend various ideas and concepts.

A. The key philosophe ideas might be summarized in three related words: *reason*, *progress*, and *nature*. These ideas drew on Newton and Locke.

B. The emphasis on reason referred primarily to a method of thought. To think with reason meant to take nothing on faith. You must subject customs and ideas to doubt and reasonable investigation, much as scientists analyze nature. Reason is a tool for systematic analysis.

C. One of the great benefits of reason is that it ensures progress; it allows people to correct past mistakes and accumulate knowledge.
1. The faith in progress thus became a second key assumption of philosophe thought, and concern with the future on earth replaced the older theological concern with a future in heaven.
2. Diderot summarized this faith when he wrote: "Posterity is for the philosopher what the other world is for the religious man."
3. Philosophes knew that problems would continue to exist; they were not naïve, but they believed that many problems could be overcome.

D. The future social world that reason and progress would ultimately create should resemble the rational harmony of nature—that third key concept.
1. Using reason, people could develop orderly, clear laws that were as rational as the laws of nature, and the philosophes could point the way.
2. Most philosophes believed that God had started nature running like a great watchmaker starting a clock (a theme of eighteenth-century deism).
3. Similarly, humans might get the human world running like an efficient, well-designed machine that could be in tune with natural harmony.

E. These overlapping concepts of reason, progress, and nature shaped much of the philosophes' approach to politics, society, and religion.

III. One approach to politics appears in the work of Charles-Louis de Secondat, Baron of Montesquieu (1689–1755), who was from a noble family in southwestern France.

A. His family was influential in politics there, and he held a seat in the Bordeaux *parlement*, or law court, from an early age. He was also drawn to literature as an alternative to the law; he liked to read books and soon became a writer.

B. His first major work was one of fiction: *The Persian Letters* (1721), a satire on prejudices and social practices in contemporary France.

C. His later work focused on history and politics. Montesquieu is often called the first sociologist, because he wanted to understand the deep structures or underlying causes that shaped political life.

D. He spent a year and a half in England and seemed to develop an interest in Newtonian ideas; he wanted to explain the determining cause of actions in the social world, as Newton described gravity in nature.

E. This search for underlying causes is the theme of his most important political book, *The Spirit of the Laws* (1748). In one section of this book, he argues that the laws of nations are shaped by geography and climate.
1. More influential, though, was Montesquieu's argument that the law works best (i.e., harmoniously, as in nature) when the power to make laws is divided between various parts of government.
2. His model was England, which he believed divided political power effectively between the Parliament, king, and courts.

F. These ideas later helped to justify challenges to the absolute power of kings.
1. As a political theorist or sociologist, Montesquieu's greatest contribution was to stress the deep structures of society and the state.

2. Subsequent social theory and historical analysis returned to this emphasis, focusing on social structures rather than personalities.

IV. By the time Montesquieu published *The Spirit of the Laws*, other philosophes were beginning to develop an educational approach to reform.

A. This was the project of Denis Diderot (1713–1784), who came from eastern France near Dijon; his father was an artisan who made knives.

1. Diderot came from the class of skilled artisans rather than the nobility. He went to Paris to study in a Jesuit college.
2. There, he lost interest in religion and studied law, then science, then Greek, Latin, and English; then philosophy; and then literature. Because he could not get a job, he began to work as a translator and writer.
3. He wrote some stories about love and sex before gradually moving toward more theoretical concerns; he came to believe that science and learning could reform the world—a key theme of the Enlightenment.

B. Diderot developed the most famous of all philosophe projects: *The Encyclopedia*, which would summarize all knowledge about science, society, nature, politics, and economics

1. The goal was explicitly reformist; Diderot assumed that knowledge could transform the world, and the Republic of Letters would expand.
2. Diderot solicited articles from all the leading philosophes on various subjects. Despite censorship, late articles, and other problems, he published seventeen volumes of the *Encyclopedia* (1751–1772).
3. About 25,000 sets were sold before 1789. The work expressed a strong faith in reason, progress, and the laws of nature.
4. More generally, these books conveyed the philosophe message that writing had power and that it could change the social world.

V. This same faith in writing appears also in the work of Voltaire (1694–1778), perhaps because he had the most brilliant prose style of the century.

A. Voltaire's real name was François-Marie Arouet; he came from a wealthy family, but he was not from the nobility.

1. As a young man, he got into trouble for comments he made at the French court and spent eleven months in the Bastille. He later got into a fight with a young noble and was forced to flee to England (1726–1729).
2. Voltaire had experience with intolerance and repression in his own life, but the repression was not severe enough to silence him.
3. Much of his early writing was for the theater. He developed a reputation for witty, satirical plays and books.

4. His writings fill more than seventy volumes; after 1758, he lived on an estate near the Swiss border and wrote often on public controversies.

B. Although Voltaire wrote about almost everything, his main concern was freedom of thought. This was the main theme of his *Letters on England* (1734), a book that stressed the intellectual achievements and freedom of the English.

1. Voltaire believed that the Catholic Church was the greatest opponent of intellectual freedom, and he often condemned religious intolerance.
2. He argued that different interpretations of religion reflected different historical factors; therefore, they must be tolerated.
3. He campaigned to "*Ecrasez l'infame*"—"Stamp out the infamy"—and he wanted reason to prevail over superstition.

VI. The long-term success of the philosophes' project remains a subject of debate, but the ideas of the Enlightenment clearly influenced the French Revolution of 1789.

A. The philosophes' ideas continued to influence reform movements in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, though many later critics attacked the philosophes for their optimistic view of progress or for placing too much faith in human reason.

B. Despite the modern challenges to Enlightenment thought, the philosophes' conception of the intellectual has remained influential.

C. The key idea was that the intellectual should play a critical public role and help shape public opinion; the pen could be as mighty as a sword.

D. The philosophes created much of the modern intellectual's social identity, and Voltaire became an enduring symbol of this identity.

Essential Reading:

Voltaire, *Letters on England*, pp. 23–119 (letters 1–24).

Supplementary Reading:

Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation*, vol. 1, pp. 1–27; vol. 2, pp. 319–407.

Dena Goodman, *The Republic of Letters: A Cultural History of the French Enlightenment*, pp. 1–11, 90–135.

Roger Chartier, *The Cultural Origins of the French Revolution*, pp. 3–37.

Questions to Consider:

1. What makes Voltaire the typical or atypical modern intellectual?
2. Were the philosophes correct when they argued that human beings can use reason to change and improve the world?

Lecture Four

The Cultural Meaning of the French Revolution

Scope: The French Revolution became the most influential modern political and cultural event for virtually every nineteenth-century European social and political theorist and for many creative artists and novelists. This lecture describes the Revolution as both an expression and a destruction of Enlightenment ideas. It also discusses the important cultural influence of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, notes the various phases of the Revolution, and emphasizes the ways in which France's revolutionary events raised new, critical questions about the validity and legacy of Enlightenment theories.

Outline

I. The question of whether or how the Enlightenment influenced the French Revolution is one of the oldest debates in European history; it had emerged by 1790.

- **A.** All later European thinkers, especially in the nineteenth century, had to come to terms with the legacy of the French Revolution because it embodied ideas.
  1. The Revolution was much more than a transfer of political power from the French monarchy to a republic; it was also a decisive event in intellectual history.
  2. It shaped modern debates about political theory, the nature of historical change, the meaning of democracy, and the effects of social equality.
  3. The French Revolution achieved many goals or themes of the Enlightenment, but it also marked the end of the Enlightenment as a self-conscious movement.
  4. Revolutionary events brought out the diversity and tensions in the Enlightenment tradition and provoked debates about that tradition.
- **B.** This lecture discusses how the Revolution both completed and undermined the Enlightenment tradition.
  1. First, I will summarize new developments in the last phase of Enlightenment thought.
  2. Second, I want to suggest how the phases of the Revolution can be seen as expressions of various tendencies in Enlightenment thought.
  3. Finally, I'll examine how the Revolution affected the ways in which people began to interpret the meaning of the Enlightenment.

- **C.** The Revolution changed the intellectual meaning of the Enlightenment: It became the key modern political event for both radicals and conservatives.
  1. Indeed, the very terms *left* and *right* emerged in this era.
  2. The liberal and radical members of the French National Assembly sat on the left side of the meeting hall; conservatives sat on the right.

II. The conflicts among the revolutionaries reflect changing themes in the Enlightenment during the last decades before 1789 as some philosophes adopted more radical ideas.

- **A.** They moved beyond the earlier work of Voltaire and developed a new interest in political equality, stressing the radical equality of natural rights.
  1. Earlier philosophes were not much concerned with the lower classes and generally accepted the need for social hierarchies.
  2. They were also cosmopolitan thinkers, stressing the universal value of reason rather than the political rights of specific nations.
  3. Later philosophes were interested in equality and national sovereignty.
  4. These new patterns appeared in the work of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778), whose writings had enormous influence after about 1760.
- **B.** Rousseau wrote with passion and emotion. Unlike Voltaire, he didn't use humor, but he told emotional stories that helped prepare the way for Romanticism.
  1. He also loved nature, but more as a poet than as a scientist.
  2. Also unlike Voltaire, he was self-educated, poor, and a loner. He was born in Geneva, but his mother died at his birth, and his father had little interest in him. Jean-Jacques ran away from Geneva when he was sixteen.
- **C.** After wandering for many years, Rousseau eventually went to Paris, where he never fit into the salons, though he now had strong intellectual ambitions.
  1. By the late 1740s, he was living with an uneducated woman named Thérèse Levasseur.
  2. They had five children—all of whom were given to orphanages (a response to Rousseau's early loss of his own parents?).
- **D.** Rousseau was poor, but he became suddenly famous in the 1750s when he won a literary prize from the Dijon academy for his *Discourse on the Sciences and Arts*, which argued that civilization was a decline from the state of nature.
  1. Similar themes appeared also in the *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* (1754). This work is usually called the *Second*

Discourse; it claimed that people living in nature had been free and equal.

2. Rousseau also wrote novels, including the wildly popular *Nouvelle Heloise* (the story of a failed love affair) and a book about how to educate children in ways that foster their natural virtue (*Emile*).

E. Rousseau was most concerned with issues of social equality; he stressed that people were neither free nor equal in modern societies, but he believed they should be both.

1. His most famous political work, *The Social Contract* (1762), described the traits of an egalitarian society and began with a famous opening line: "Man is born free, but everywhere he is in chains."
2. Rousseau's argument stressed the idea of a link between liberty and equality; to be truly free, people must be equal—as in nature.
3. Rousseau's conception of equality suggested that nations are founded on the dignity of the common people rather than on hierarchies (though he said that only men should have a political role).

F. This assumption leads to the second key theme of the later Enlightenment, the belief that sovereignty lies in the whole nation rather than in kings or nobles.

1. This theme also appeared in the American Revolution and Declaration of Independence, which attracted wide attention in France.
2. The later Enlightenment of Rousseau and Jefferson added equality and new views of national sovereignty to earlier Enlightenment themes, such as the importance of reason and tolerance and the belief in progress.

III. The sometimes-conflicting themes in Enlightenment theory became more apparent after 1789, as claims for individual rights ran into claims for equality or the nation.

A. At first, all supporters of the Revolution united in endorsing the "Declaration of the Rights of Man"; most people wanted to dismantle the privileges of the old regime.

B. This agreement could be found in the famous slogan "*Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité*," which appeared later but linked the early and late Enlightenment.

1. Liberty suggests personal freedom and the exercise of political rights.
2. Equality suggests no legal distinctions on the basis of birth.
3. Fraternity suggests the unity of a sovereign nation—early nationalism.

C. The phases of the Revolution reflected different parts of this slogan and, hence, different aspects of the Enlightenment.

D. The first phase (1789–1792) was the era of constitutional monarchy, a moderate phase that produced a constitution and policies that implemented many of the classic philosophe goals.

1. In these years, the Revolution abolished special legal privileges and promoted freedom of speech, press, religion, and trade. The Catholic Church lost its traditional role in the French state.
2. Many believed that the rational progress predicted by the philosophes was arriving and a new era in human history had begun.

E. By 1792, many people believed that the Revolution had gone too far in abolishing the old regime. Opposition became more organized, but this growing opposition also radicalized many of the Revolution's supporters.

1. The second phase of the Revolution (1792–1794) became the most radical. King Louis XVI was deposed and executed, and a war with counterrevolutionary powers spread across Europe.
2. New leaders of the revolution, the Jacobins, emphasized equality and fraternity; they drew on Rousseau and claimed to express the will of the nation.
3. Facing violent opposition and claiming to represent the revolutionary will of the people, the Jacobins instituted the Terror (1793–1794).
4. Revolutionary tribunals sent about 40,000 people to die on the guillotine or by other means; many (but not the majority) of those executed were members of the old nobility and clergy.
5. The abstract emphasis on equality or the nation became more important than other human rights, but this push toward more radical views of equality and the nation alienated even many revolutionaries.
6. The most radical Jacobins were overthrown in July 1794, and their leaders were executed, including the famous Robespierre.

F. The overthrow of the radical Jacobins launched the Revolution's third phase (1794–1799), in which the leaders sought to re-establish the rights and order of the early Revolution and continue earlier reforms in such areas as education.

1. This third shift was possible because France's foreign enemies had been defeated, but there was also a growing reliance on the army.
2. Gradually, the theme of fraternity became more important than liberty or equality—a tendency that culminated in the coup-d'état of 1799 that brought Napoleon to power and essentially ended the Revolution.

IV. The Revolution played out many of the key themes of the early and late Enlightenment, though in ways that no philosophe could have anticipated.

A. By 1800, many of the rights of 1789 were again threatened or destroyed, and notions of radical equality had been rejected (though Napoleon often promoted people on the basis of merit).

B. The most obvious and perhaps enduring "survivor" among the themes of the late Enlightenment creed was the idea of nationalism or national sovereignty, which Napoleon claimed to represent.

V. What had happened to Enlightenment ideas by the end of the French Revolution?

A. The ideas of radical equality and a radical, philosophical rationalism were linked to the Terror and went into eclipse for a time.

B. The violence of the French Revolution made a great impression on everyone who lived through it and almost everyone who later wrote about it, though it was in fact less deadly than many earlier religious wars or crusades.

1. It promoted high ideals of human rights and was much less deadly than the revolutions and wars of the twentieth century, but the violence of 1792–1794 gave the French Revolution much of its haunting later meaning.
2. Yet it was also true that various legal and economic rights, including property rights, were better established; that government offered more support for education; and that ideas of national sovereignty had spread.

C. Thus, though the Revolution broke much of the late Enlightenment optimism and much of the confident belief in human rights, reason, equality, and social change, it also provided the great modern example of radical ideas in action.

Essential Reading:

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, pp. 1–71.

"Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen," in Lynn Hunt, ed., *The French Revolution and Human Rights*, pp. 77–79.

Supplementary Reading:

Jeremy Popkin, *A Short History of the French Revolution*, chapters 1–6.

Lynn Hunt, *Politics, Culture and Class in the French Revolution*, pp. 1–119.

Questions to Consider:

1. Do you think the Revolution enacted the main ideas of the Enlightenment, or do you think the revolutionaries corrupted and distorted these ideas?
2. Can liberty exist without various kinds of equality?

Lecture Five

The New Conservatism in Post-Revolutionary Europe

Scope: In this lecture, we begin a survey of the various intellectual and cultural responses to the momentous events in late eighteenth-century France. The modern political themes of conservatism arose as a strong intellectual reaction to the French Revolution, but the critique of the Revolution also evolved into a more general criticism of the Enlightenment and of all political attempts to restructure societies on the basis of theoretical abstractions. This lecture discusses the influential conservative ideas of Edmund Burke and Joseph de Maistre, both of whom argued for the social and political value of European traditions. It also notes how conservatism—which began as an attack on the danger of social theories—became a new self-conscious social and political theory.

Outline

I. The French Revolution represented ideas that its supporters believed were relevant to all other people; the revolutionaries assumed that their claims for human rights and for the social utility of reason expressed universal truths.

A. Many people outside France also believed that the Revolution expressed universal truths, but the Revolution soon provoked vehement opposition from critics who believed it threatened Europe's most valuable traditions.

B. This debate about the meaning of the Revolution helped produce the main political "isms" of the early nineteenth century: conservatism, liberalism, socialism, and nationalism.

1. The writers who advocated each of these "isms" held different views of the Revolution. We'll consider all these views, but we'll begin with the Revolution's harshest critics—the conservatives.
2. Conservatives attacked the revolutionary doctrines and activists much as sixteenth-century Catholic writers had attacked the Protestant Reformation.
3. The ideological disputes were as vehement as the earlier theological conflicts. In both cases, critics of the new movement claimed that it was destroying the accumulated wisdom of European culture.

C. There were different forms of conservatism, as there are different forms of every influential ideology, political theory, or religion.

1. We can discuss post-revolutionary conservatism by looking at the English conservatism of Edmund Burke and the conservatism of Joseph de Maistre on the Continent (he wrote in French).

2. Both of these writers strongly opposed the French Revolution, and both stressed the social value of tradition and inherited institutions.
3. They also ran into a similar theoretical problem because they wrote theories about social practices that they wanted to leave shrouded in mystery; they attacked theorists but became theorists themselves.
4. Despite these similarities, Burke and Maistre represented different conservatisms that developed in England and France and flowed widely across the Western world during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

II. The first sustained foreign analysis of the French Revolution came from England. The key figure here was Edmund Burke (1729–1797).

A. Burke was originally from Ireland, but he became an important figure in the British Parliament during the 1770s and 1780s.
1. Burke was one of the first Europeans to see that the French Revolution was both a social revolution and a revolution in doctrines and ideas.
2. He quickly decided that the Revolution's impact could not be confined to France; it would produce international conflicts.

B. For Burke, the international aspect came from the challenge to traditional social, political, and religious institutions (the aristocracy, monarchy, and Church).
1. In Burke's view, people must either adopt this system or fight it.
2. Burke thought it was an evil force that must be fought.

C. To describe the dangers, Burke wrote his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790)—the founding text of modern conservatism.
1. Defenders of tradition had not previously articulated their creed so systematically; they mainly affirmed the legitimacy of ruling powers.
2. Under the systematic challenge of the Revolution, Burke saw the need for a more systematic statement of anti-revolutionary theory.

D. Burke launched a full-scale assault on revolutionary doctrines, which of course came mostly from the ideas of the philosophes.
1. He totally rejected the idea that natural rights existed outside society or before history; he said that all rights derive from the history of the society in which they are exercised.
2. Rights are, therefore, not an abstraction but an inheritance from the past; this inheritance is built up over many centuries.
3. Each generation must pass these rights on to posterity, much as one passes on property. Government institutions are passed on in this same way—a kind of inheritance from earlier eras.
4. Rejecting the notion that society was like a machine that could be rebuilt, Burke compared it to a slowly growing plant or organism.

E. The great mistake of the revolutionaries, as Burke described them, was their attempt to break radically from France's own organic traditions.
1. He emphasized respect for the past; this is the source of all wisdom and provided much better guidance than theoretical abstractions based on reason—which Burke wanted England to avoid.
2. He said changes must come slowly; meanwhile, it was much better to accept the national inheritance as a mystery that expressed wisdom.
3. The only kind of revolution that might be justified would be one like the Revolution of 1688 in England, which *defended* national traditions.

F. Burke's conservatism broke with much Enlightenment theory; it rejected excessive rationalism and abstract natural rights and defended the value of tradition, prejudice, religion, and the mysteries of inherited institutions.

G. He also stressed the importance of historical continuities and argued for the importance of national ideas over universalizing abstractions.

H. Conservatism took its modern form as a repudiation of France's Revolution and as a justification of old regime privileges and traditions.
1. The tension here appeared in the fact that Burke had to use theories to attack those whom he criticized for using theory (philosophes).
2. Once conservatism became a theory, it could be analyzed and attacked like other theories; it was no longer simply reality itself but a theory about social relations that Burke did not want reduced to social theory.

III. Burke's ideas gained support in England, but by the early nineteenth century, a somewhat different conservatism was developing on the Continent.

A. Burke had stressed the importance of upholding traditions that were inherited from the past, but some of the traditions in France could be quite radical.

B. In France, the Enlightenment and the philosophes formed an important national tradition; other traditions (e.g., Protestantism) could be seen as threats to what Burke called the organic social community.
1. Burke had, of course, defended the Protestant tradition in England, but the major characteristic of the new conservatism in France and many other places on the Continent was its link to Catholicism.
2. This revision of Burke can be seen most notably in the work of Joseph de Maistre (1753–1821).

C. Until recently, Maistre was ignored by many modern historians or seen as simply a kind of proto-fascist; more recently, he has been seen as one of the first social theorists to recognize the role of violence in all political systems.

D. Maistre looked for the religious meaning in political events, and interpreted the Revolution as a divine punishment for French sins.
   1. He came from an aristocratic family in Savoy, a French-speaking area that was then part of Piedmont-Sardinia (now part of France).
   2. In his youth, he was attracted to Rousseau, then became interested in mystical forms of Christianity.
   3. He supported the early reforms of the French Revolution, but by 1793, he had turned against the revolutionaries. He went into exile after the French occupied Savoy; after 1803, he was in St. Petersburg, Russia.
   4. Maistre stayed away from Savoy until the final overthrow of Napoleon. After 1814, he returned to his native land and provided a kind of theoretical support for the restored French monarchy.

E. Maistre's ideas emerged in such works as *Considerations on France* (1796) and *Evenings in St. Petersburg* (1809). He had two main themes or objectives.
   1. One goal was to explain the meaning of the Revolution and discredit eighteenth-century French thought; the other goal was to describe the traits of what he hoped would be a new, stable social system.
   2. The recurring theme that connected the two sides of his work appeared in his religious attitude; he condemned modern secular thought.

F. In Maistre's view, the philosophes were extremely dangerous because they attacked the divine will as it had been expressed in the Catholic Church.
   1. By challenging inherited authority, especially the Catholic Church, the philosophes repeated the mistakes of Protestantism, brought new impurities into the world, and corrupted social elites.
   2. Because history plays out God's plan, Maistre saw the French Revolution as God's punishment for France's rejection of religion.
   3. The revolutionaries became the unwitting instruments of a huge purification process, a kind of massive ritual sacrifice that atoned for French sins and laid the foundation for a purified society.
   4. Maistre assumed that all political systems began in some kind of bloodletting, which was what had happened in France.

G. Maistre, therefore, found meaning in the violence of the Revolution, because only this process could purify the culture and lead to a restored society that would reject secularism, avoid dangerous individualism, and respect traditions.

IV. This reintegrated social community became the positive program in Maistre's conservatism.
   A. For Maistre, monarchy was the form of government in which divine will could be expressed without the egoism of individual interests.
      1. This kind of monarchical state, per Maistre, would not base its laws on rationalism or written constitutions but on religion; the Catholic Church would resume its central role in the social order.
      2. Maistre believed that the restored French monarchy would destroy the ghost of Voltaire, but he was disappointed when the Restoration did not do enough to follow his theories—a familiar problem for intellectuals.
   B. Despite his own frustrations, Maistre's philosophy provided an influential conservative explanation for what had gone wrong in modern France.
   C. As for Maistre himself, he faced the same problem one finds in Burke.
      1. He had to write about and explain a system that he wanted to be mysterious; he theorized about what he did not want to describe.
      2. To analyze is also to demystify, and conservatives in general preferred to keep the state's power shrouded in mystery.
   D. The French Revolution's attempt to implement Enlightenment ideals provoked the modern, systematic conservative defense of social traditions, inherited institutions, and religious authority.
   E. At the same time, it also stimulated a new defense of unique national traditions and histories—a pattern that appeared also in new forms of German thought that emerged during and after the French Revolution.

Essential Reading:

Excerpts from Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, in Isaac Kramnick, ed., *The Portable Edmund Burke*, pp. 416–474.

Joseph de Maistre, *Considerations on France*, pp. 3–61.

Supplementary Reading:

Isaac Kramnick, "Introduction," in *The Portable Edmund Burke*, pp. ix–xli.

———, *The Rage of Edmund Burke: Portrait of an Ambivalent Conservative*, pp. 3–38.

Richard Lebrun, *Joseph de Maistre: An Intellectual Militant*, pp. 110–154, 175–226.

Questions to Consider:

1. Did conservatives such as Burke and Maistre want to stop historical change?
2. Do you think people have "natural rights," or do all rights come to people through the specific traditions of their own societies?

Lecture Six
The New German Philosophy

Scope: The German philosophical critique of the French Enlightenment had begun even before the French Revolution, but it became much more influential in Germany during the early nineteenth century. This lecture examines the development of German Idealist philosophy and discusses the fusion of this philosophy with the new German nationalism that evolved rapidly in the first decades of the nineteenth century. It discusses how the French Revolution and Napoleonic wars fostered the spread of nationalist ideas across Europe, stressing the cultural influence of the German writers J. G. Herder and J. G. Fichte. These philosophers developed themes that contributed to the nineteenth-century cultural interest in distinctive national histories.

Outline

I. The spread of the Revolution and France's expansionary policies during the era of Napoleon contributed to numerous intellectual trends in the early nineteenth century.
   A. First, as we've seen, the Revolution contributed to the rise of conservatism as a systematic intellectual position—both in England and on the Continent.
   B. Second, it led to a strong critique of the Enlightenment and to criticism of the French dominance of eighteenth-century intellectual life. This challenge appeared in Romanticism, which we'll discuss later, and it was very important in Germany.
   C. Third, the response to the French Revolution contributed to the philosophical development of nationalism, especially in Germany but also in other places.
      1. Although France under Napoleon (1799–1814) was the strongest power in Europe and its ideas spread abroad, it lost its position as the intellectual leader of Europe in the early nineteenth century.
      2. The Napoleonic wars and repression undermined France's creative intellectual life. Germany came to be seen as the philosophical nation.
   D. The period between about 1780 and 1830 is often referred to as the era of the German "philosophical revolution." Its intellectual significance has been compared to the revolutionary upheaval of the French Revolution.
      1. To summarize some early themes of this German philosophical revolution, we'll note the key ideas of three important philosophers: Immanuel Kant, Johann Herder, and J. G. Fichte.
      2. These thinkers developed a critique of two central ideas of the Enlightenment tradition—sensory epistemology (Locke's theory about the basis of knowledge) and universalisms (Voltaire's view of reason).
      3. This new German philosophy became linked to later forms of Romanticism and to a new emphasis on cultural differences.
      4. In these ways, the German philosophical response to the French Revolution, which culminated in Hegel, helped to shape the new nineteenth-century interest in national histories and the ideas of nationalism.

II. German critics of the French Revolution became influential in the late 1790s, though many German intellectuals had at first welcomed the Revolution as a political defense of individual rights; many Germans had also supported the Enlightenment.
   A. But in the 1790s, much German thought moved away from Enlightenment epistemology and cosmopolitanism—a tendency that led toward a new philosophical Idealism, which stressed the role of the mind over the senses.
   B. The new patterns in German thought appeared in Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), though Kant also defended the Enlightenment and the importance of reason.
      1. Kant lived his whole life in Königsberg in east Prussia and never traveled, but he wrote complex, influential philosophical texts.
      2. He was interested in Enlightenment values, especially in the epistemological question: How do we know things about the world?
      3. Kant was bothered by the consequences of radical empiricism; he disliked the Lockean theory that knowledge comes from the senses.
      4. The eighteenth-century English philosopher David Hume had shown the weakness of this theory in his books *Treatise of Human Nature* (1739) and *Enquiry Concerning the Human Understanding* (1748).
      5. Hume said that we can't really know if something is true by observation because causality can't be proved in a reliable way; in short, the sensory base of knowledge is inadequate (this view led to skepticism).
   C. Kant recognized the force of Hume's argument and wrote a book to challenge Hume's skepticism—*The Critique of Pure Reason* (1781).
      1. He said that practical reason is possible; we can know certain reliable truths with reason—a practical reason.
      2. The key theme here and in Kant's other work is that the basic conditions of thought are not derived from sensory experience.
      3. These conditions are in the mind itself, a priori, in forms and categories that are present before sense perception takes place.

4. For example, the mind uses categories of time and space to organize the meaning of objects we encounter in the world, but these categories are not inherent in the objects our senses perceive.
5. The mind is, therefore, an active shaping agent, not simply the passive recipient of sensory input.

D. Kant thus challenged both Locke and Hume by putting great emphasis on the ways in which the mind shapes the meaning of the world, a theme that also emphasized the role of reasonable judgments (a link to the Enlightenment).
1. Kant assumed that reasonable people could reach similar judgments about enlightened actions or ethics, but his emphasis on the shaping role of the mind led to a more radical Idealism among his successors.
2. If the mind creates time and space, why not reality itself? Or the unique traits of each culture?
3. Such questions influenced the German Idealist challenge to the Enlightenment emphasis on empiricism and universalisms.

III. The philosophical challenge to philosophe concepts of universalism emerged in the work of Johann G. Herder (1744–1803)—one of Kant's former students.

A. Herder's themes appeared in his influential book *Ideas on the Philosophy of The History of Mankind* (1784), which argued that each nation has its own distinctive spirit, or *Volksgeist*, that is expressed in the common people.
1. According to Herder, it was wrong for any nation to take its institutions or ideas from another nation—such as from France.
2. He didn't say that Germany was better than France, but he argued that it was different and that this difference was both valid and important.
3. These ideas became popular in Germany around the beginning of the nineteenth century. They challenged the universalism of Kant but also the universalizing claims of the French Revolution and Napoleon.

B. At first, Herder supported the French Revolution, but he became a critic after the Terror and after France became an expansionist power.
1. Herder preferred to see institutions develop out of distinctive national traits and traditions; in this respect, he resembled Burke.
2. The trend in German thought (as represented by Herder) was thus to reject the earlier themes of French thought (universal rights).
3. Herder and others wanted to challenge the French ascendancy and to defend a distinctive German culture.

IV. After Kant had challenged Locke's epistemology and Herder had challenged Voltaire's universalism, the new themes in German thought came together in the early nineteenth-century work of Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762–1814).

A. Fichte challenged the Enlightenment conception of nature as simply "out there" for analysis; he went beyond Kant to stress a radical Idealism.
1. He said that the mind creates all knowledge of the world and is, thus, essentially responsible for reality itself; the mind constructs the world.
2. What we take to be objective reality "out there" is really our consciousness projected onto the world; our egos create reality.

B. These individual egos are in turn part of a universal spirit, but we participate in this spirit through our minds; we understand the world through an extension of our ideas to the external world.
1. For Fichte, the world is no longer simply a mechanism whose laws are understood through Newtonian science.
2. Instead, the world is an evolving creation of many minds or egos that glimpse some part of a supreme spirit in their own ways.
3. This Idealism places the mind rather than nature at the center of reality and goes beyond Kant in rejecting important themes of the philosophes, especially the belief in a universal form of knowledge.

C. Fichte believed that Germans could not express their distinctive egos or spirits after Napoleon conquered Prussia and other German states in 1806–1807.
1. Linking his Idealist philosophy to a new affirmation of German cultural identity, Fichte argued that the German spirit was restrained and denied expression when the French held Berlin.
2. Fichte combined the philosophical emphasis on the knowing mind or unique spirit with Herder's conception of the *Volksgeist*.
3. He argued that the Germans had a primordial spirit, different from that of the French, that comprehended the world in a different way.
4. Fichte explained these ideas in a series of lectures delivered during the French occupation of Berlin in the winter of 1807.
5. They were published the following year under the title *Addresses to the German Nation* (1808).

D. Fichte argued in these lectures that Germany had to express its national spirit, its own distinctive language (so different from Latin languages), its own philosophy, its own laws, and its own institutions.
1. In other words, German patriots should expose the myths of French universalism and defend their own national differences.
2. In making these claims for the German nation, Fichte developed the idea of national exceptionalism—the idea that one's own nation is the best or only expression of the highest ideals of humanity.

3. *The Addresses to the German Nation* turned Germany's defeat in the Napoleonic wars into arguments for national uniqueness that would reappear in all the later nationalisms of nineteenth-century Europe.

V. The French expansion into Germany during the Napoleonic era thus shaped the emergence of a new philosophical nationalism and historical consciousness.

A. The new German theories stressed the distinctiveness of German culture but also emphasized a culturally specific Idealism rather than the empiricism and universalism of the earlier Enlightenment.

B. The search for alternatives to the French tradition led Fichte and other thinkers to criticize the philosophes, especially the concept of universal ideas.

1. German Idealist philosophers differed from English conservatives (as exemplified by Burke) in their specific political responses to the legacy of the French Revolution, but they shared a new interest in history.
2. For post-revolutionary thinkers throughout early nineteenth-century Europe, history revealed a nation's distinctive spirit or cultural identity.

Essential Reading:

Johann G. Herder, *Reflections on the Philosophy of the History of Mankind*, pp. 3–78.

Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Addresses to the German Nation*, pp. 1–15, 78–91, 111–129.

(Note: The English language editions of these books are now out of print but are available in most good libraries.)

Supplementary Reading:

Isaiah Berlin, *Three Critics of the Enlightenment: Vico, Hamann, Herder*, pp. 168–242.

George Armstrong Kelly, "Introduction," in Fichte, *Addresses to the German Nation*, pp. vii–xxxii.

Questions to Consider:

1. How did the nationalism of German thinkers emerge as a critique of the French Revolution and Napoleon?
2. From the German perspective, what were the flaws in the French claim to represent universal principles?

Lecture Seven

Hegel's Philosophical Conception of History

Scope: This lecture examines the most influential German philosopher in the decades following the French Revolution and Napoleon. It discusses Hegel's complex relation to the Enlightenment, early German Romanticism, and the wider Western philosophical tradition. More specifically, this lecture summarizes Hegel's influential philosophy of history, which described the historical process as the dialectical "unfolding" of a transcendent spirit or idea in different societies and historical eras. Hegel's theories encouraged the study of historical conflicts and gave philosophical meaning to every historical event.

Outline

I. The revolutionary upheavals of the late eighteenth century strongly influenced the emergence of new conceptions of history, as well as new social and political theories.

A. The early nineteenth century was a period in which modern historical consciousness became a central component of intellectual life, somewhat similar to the emergence of science as a key element of thought at the end of the seventeenth century.

1. Of course, people had studied history since antiquity, especially since the Renaissance, and the Enlightenment produced important historical works (e.g., books by Voltaire and Edward Gibbon).
2. But many philosophes were more interested in universal or natural laws or in social critique; they had less interest in specific traits of past eras.
3. They did not ignore history, but they looked for signs of progress or for events leading toward their own view of the world.

B. The revolutionary events and wars, however, raised questions about the nature of progress and the alternatives to Enlightenment conceptions of truth.

1. History provided valuable intellectual resources for people who sought to explain the meaning of contemporary events or for those who wanted to challenge the legacy of eighteenth-century thought.
2. We've seen how Burke, Herder, and Fichte, for example, emphasized the importance of national uniqueness or cultural particularities.
3. Such ideas stimulated the search for historical knowledge about specific human societies—knowledge that showed the meaning and cultural value of the past.

C. Yet this knowledge would be only a mass of unrelated facts if it lacked some kind of philosophy to give it meaning or coherence.
   1. This was the intellectual achievement of Hegel (1770–1831), whose philosophy provided a way to identify universal historical meanings in specific national histories and historical eras.
   2. For Hegel and his many nineteenth-century followers, history revealed the highest truths of human experience and transcendent ideas.
   3. Hegel showed how every historical event carries higher meanings.

D. Hegel was both the culmination of developments in German thought and the starting point for the next half-century of philosophical theories.
   1. In this respect, Hegel was the German intellectual equivalent of the French Revolution—an "event" that influences future thought.
   2. He drew partly on the Enlightenment to stress the importance of reason, but he also drew on German Idealism to emphasize the power of the mind or the idea moving through history.
   3. Hegel was also influenced by other strands of German thought, especially the new Romanticism, which challenged the philosophes and stressed the organic unfolding of life and culture across time.

E. Hegel's influential conception of history can be described as an ambitious attempt to synthesize Enlightenment reason, German Idealism, German Romanticism, and Western metaphysics.
   1. This was an enormous philosophical project, but the range of its intellectual themes helps explain why it appealed to such a wide group of early nineteenth-century intellectuals and writers.
   2. Hegel described history as a process of endless change in which a transcendent spirit evolved with purpose and direction across time.
   3. This explanation for endless change and conflict gave meaning to the violent upheavals of the recent past, as well as the events of all former societies; it also suggests why Hegel became so influential after 1815.
   4. But to understand Hegel's influence, we need to look more closely at the specific themes of his philosophy.

II. Hegel developed his themes and achieved his fame as a professor in universities at Jena, Heidelberg, and finally, Berlin, where he delivered his lectures on the philosophy of history in the 1820s.

A. He was highly interested in the French Revolution, which he supported as a student, and he was fascinated by Napoleon, though he was neither a militant supporter of Napoleon nor a radical critic.
   1. Hegel's lectures drew large crowds, but he died during the cholera epidemic in 1831 before he finished his writings on history.
   2. His loyal students published the material from his lectures after his death in a book called *Introduction to the Philosophy of History*.

B. This work helps us see Hegel's influence on historical thought.
   1. Hegel drew on Romanticism in his emphasis on the evolution of history and the unfolding spiritual processes of cultural change.
   2. Many Romantics, however, became subjective idealists who argued that each individual must express transcendent or spiritual truths in his or her own way—an idea that led toward belief in an isolated genius.
   3. Hegel, on the other hand, favored a kind of objective idealism in which the individual must try to comprehend the rationality of a transcendent spirit and conform to its unfolding development.
   4. People shouldn't just do whatever they want to do; they should use philosophy to understand the spirit and follow its direction.

C. How do people know the meaning and direction of the spirit?
   1. They must look to history to see the unfolding of the spirit; this is why history is the source of knowledge.
   2. The spirit or idea embodies reason and freedom, which the philosopher can discern in history rather than in nature or the Bible.

III. These themes in Hegelian thought have been described as a restatement of the classical Western worldview in modern, secularized form.

A. Hegel believed (in concert with Christianity) that history has meaning even when it appears to be chaotic or without direction, and the events of history have a fundamental unity, because they express the unfolding of a world spirit.
   1. This spirit, which Hegel calls the idea of reason or freedom, became separated from itself and the historical process began.
   2. As in the Christian story, the spirit had an original unity, but then a separation occurred; the spirit became alienated from itself. History is the story of the spirit's journey back toward unity.
   3. Human history shows the growth of reason and freedom as the spirit evolves toward a higher and higher realization of itself in human societies, but this process of realization is filled with conflict.

B. History, therefore, reveals truth, because it always expresses some part of the evolving spirit; this is also a theme of Hegel's important book, *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807), which provides an intellectual context for his later work.
   1. Although the particular expressions of the spirit or idea differ in different historical eras, the process by which the spirit moves is always the same. This is the dialectical process of history.
   2. Hegel argues that reality is not stable or consistent, and history is always in movement.
   3. At every moment, history consists of contradictions and conflicts. Because these contradictions operate on the level of the idea, they

are described in intellectual terms; ideas "negate" or oppose each other.

C. This dialectical process of negation appears in the interaction of *thesis* and *antithesis*, which became a famous theme in the Hegelian view of history.

1. The thesis is challenged or negated by an antithesis; out of this conflict comes a higher synthesis, which preserves what is essential from each side and lifts it to a higher level.
2. This synthesis becomes the new thesis and, thus, expresses the advance or progress of the idea (reason, freedom) in history.

D. Hegel thought that history had meaning because it steadily accumulates more and more elements of the truth, of the idea.

1. Conflict is intrinsic to the historical process, but the conflict is useful in that it contributes to the advance toward a final harmony, or synthesis.
2. All this theory gives great support to the study of history. We may not see the idea or spirit operating clearly in our own moment or culture, but we can see it in the events of history.
3. As Hegel put it: "The Owl of Minerva flies at dusk," and we can only have wisdom at the end of the day (through history).

E. The philosophical comprehension of history can, therefore, turn to every historical period because every past era reflects some stage of the spirit.

1. This view fostered the concept of historicism, which stresses the distinctiveness and significance of each era in history.
2. The Middle Ages reveals aspects of the unfolding of the spirit, but the spirit also appears in the French Revolution and in Napoleon.
3. Each age has its own distinctive spirit, which historians can discover and describe—a *Zeitgeist*, or spirit of the times.
4. The leaders, institutions, and conflicts of every age show phases of the conflict that the spirit engenders in its progress across time.
5. Various aspects of reason and freedom face their antitheses, struggles develop, and new stages of history emerge from the conflicts.
6. Even the most terrible, dramatic events—a French Revolution, a vast Napoleonic war—are simply phases of a spirit unfolding in the world.

F. When Hegel talked about the idea in his own time, he tended to locate it in the Prussian state. Following the spirit in the 1820s could mean obedience to the government and laws in Berlin.

1. But it might also mean something else; Hegel said "The Real is Rational and the Rational is Real."
2. This could mean that the existing order is the rational expression of the spirit, but it could also mean that a rational idea could become more real in future institutions and moments of history.
3. These contrasting implications of the theory led to the emergence of Right and Left Hegelians, conservatives and radicals.

IV. The significance of Hegel, however, lay more in his descriptions of the historical process than in his specific commentaries on the current political situation.

A. Through Hegel and his followers, German thought became profoundly historical, seeking truth in history and historical studies.

1. Historical studies moved away from many of Hegel's abstractions in the course of the nineteenth century, but the confidence in history remained strong.
2. The modern historical profession emerged in Germany.

B. German conceptions of history carried several key beliefs.

1. History consists of unending change, but this change has meaning and the change reveals patterns of development.
2. This change comes about through permanent conflicts; conflict is a mechanism of progress.
3. These conflicts can be understood through analysis of a dialectical process in which all ideas face contradictions and negations.
4. All periods and places in history carry importance as part of the unfolding historical process and express distinctive characteristics.

C. All these ideas drew on Hegelian philosophy and entered widely into the modern historical study of the humanities, social systems, and politics. Indeed, this course on intellectual history exemplifies the Hegelian legacy as we trace the evolution of ideas in specific historical contexts.

Essential Reading:

G.W.F. Hegel, *Introduction to the Philosophy of History*, pp. 3–98.

Supplementary Reading:

Horst Althaus, *Hegel: An Intellectual Biography*, pp. 174–188.

Terry Pinkard, *Hegel: A Biography*, pp. 203–220, 469–494.

Questions to Consider:

1. Is the meaning of history simply imposed on the past by later interpreters? Do events carry an inherent meaning that historians and philosophers can objectively discern?
2. Do you think history is a reliable source of truth? Can we understand what is happening in public life or in our own lives while we are in the midst of complex events?

Lecture Eight
The New Liberalism

Scope: This lecture discusses another important "ism" that gained intellectual adherents in the early nineteenth century and sought to explain the meaning of the French Revolution. It stresses the liberal conception of individual liberty and human rights; it also notes contrasts between Britain's liberal utilitarian movement and the French liberals' quest for a stable, constitutional political system. These differences appear in the works of Jeremy Bentham and Benjamin Constant, whose lives and ideas are compared here as examples of the contrasting trends in British and French liberalism.

Outline

I. Many historians have argued that liberalism became the dominant post-revolutionary political "ism" in nineteenth-century Europe.

A. Its advocates claimed to be connected to the most dynamic social class of the era—the expanding middle classes—and many liberals were active participants in the new industrial economy.

1. Many liberals also identified with the reforms and ideas of the first phase of the French Revolution (1789–1791).
2. The economic side of liberalism appeared in the laissez-faire ideas of the classical economists, which we'll discuss later.
3. The political themes of liberalism stressed civil liberties and individual rights; liberals disliked revolutions and Jacobinism, but they liked the "Rights of Man," legal equality, free speech, and a free press.

B. Liberalism fit more readily than other "isms" into the historical conditions in Europe after the French Revolution and industrialization.

1. Conservatism was generally hostile to both the political and the economic "revolutions" because they both rejected key traditions.
2. Socialism, as we'll see later, tried to move beyond both the French and industrial revolutions toward the creation of social equality.
3. Most nineteenth-century liberals claimed to represent the best features of post-revolutionary societies: individual liberty and economic growth.
4. Liberals saw themselves as realists rather than as reactionaries or revolutionaries; critics called them apologists for the new system.

C. The term liberalism emerged in the 1820s and 1830s; it came from the Latin word *liberalis*, which meant "pertaining to a free man."

1. This was in fact the principal theme of liberalism: the importance of individual liberty or freedom, especially for men.
2. Liberals favored civil liberties, freedom of conscience, and a pluralistic, secular state; they favored the free competition of ideas and opposed attempts to link religion to the state.
3. Liberals also believed strongly in the idea of progress, but they believed that progress was embodied in institutions. They stressed the importance of legal procedures rather than revolutionary change.
4. They assumed that progress would come through rational reforms, a theme that linked nineteenth-century liberalism to the Enlightenment.

D. After the French Revolution, liberals generally dropped the idea of natural rights or natural law as the justification for reforms.

1. Like other nineteenth-century political groups, they tended to see rights and laws as something that emerge and evolve in history.
2. In this respect, many liberals resembled Burke, but liberals usually went far beyond Burke in emphasizing the value of political reforms.

E. Liberalism thus emphasized an open-ended process and a belief that the ends of freedom could not be separated from the means used to get there.

1. According to most liberals, the ends don't justify the means. You can't kill people to make them free; this was the Jacobins' big mistake.
2. Liberals assumed that rational reforms produce and protect freedom.

F. This liberal creed was strongest in Britain and France, though it took somewhat different forms in these places. Liberals could also be found in Germany, central Europe, Italy, and many other places.

1. In Britain, the most prominent form of liberalism was called utilitarianism, which was influential between about 1810 and 1830.
2. Utilitarians generally accepted the parliamentary and even monarchical framework in England, but they pressed for reform of the laws; they emphasized legal reforms within the system.
3. In France, on the other hand, the Revolution and the restoration of the monarchy caused many liberals to believe that the structures of the political system itself were not yet properly established.
4. French liberals tended to focus more on structural changes in the government and to see constitutionalism as the path to greater liberty.
5. Let us look more closely at the contrasts between early nineteenth-century English and French liberalism by discussing the utilitarianism of Bentham and the French theories of Benjamin Constant.

G. Bentham and Constant both favored reforms to protect individual liberty—the main liberal concern—but there were differences in their utilitarian and Romantic approaches to the liberal objectives.

II. Bentham (1748–1832) was in some respects the last theorist of the late Enlightenment, because he started writing in the 1770s.

A. His famous book, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1789), introduced his ideas on utility, but these ideas did not gain much support in Britain until the early nineteenth century.

1. Bentham was a great believer in rationalism; he wanted to rationalize society and the legal system.
2. He said that social problems could be solved scientifically. His goal was to make rational reforms that would create the greatest good for the greatest number of people.
3. This project would mean breaking with traditional habits or customs; Bentham was by no means a Burkean supporter of traditions.
4. For Bentham, the question was always: How good is a law or an institution, and how can it be improved?
5. His goal was enlightened self-interest, not natural law. He was inclined to pursue his ideas of rationalism in eccentric ways.
6. Bentham asked that his body be preserved after his death. The mummified body can still be seen at the University of London.

B. In specific terms, Bentham believed that the greatest good would come by minimizing pain and maximizing pleasure.

1. The point of politics is to calculate how the most people will get the most pleasure from any legal reform or law. This was a recurring theme in his writing.
2. To calculate the level of pleasure in various actions, Bentham developed what he called "felicific calculus"—a new method to measure pain and pleasure.
3. All this theory radically de-emphasized the emotional side of life, but it led to detailed proposals for reforming laws, improving schools, changing the prison system, and so forth.
4. Bentham assumed that individuals could know their own self-interest, and with the proper freedom, they could act on their interests.
5. Blind adherence to tradition would block the rational pursuit of interests, but rational laws could provide the necessary freedom. Utilitarians generally favored laissez-faire economic policies.

C. Many utilitarians also favored radical political reforms, including universal manhood suffrage; all men should vote to ensure their happiness.

1. If all men voted, the laws were more likely to produce the greatest happiness or the greatest good for the greatest number of people.

2. The utilitarian philosophy was optimistic because it assumed that the interests of all could coincide with the interests of each individual.
3. If all individuals pursued their own greatest happiness, then all would benefit; this was a kind of free-market model of social life.

D. Bentham's most famous supporter was the economist James Mill, father of John Stuart Mill—the most influential liberal theorist of the next generation in England (we'll discuss him later in this course).

1. As John Stuart Mill himself pointed out, the extreme rational emphasis in liberal utilitarianism left out a crucial emotional element of life; it assumed and expected rational self-control.
2. Other liberals turned to Romanticism to find a view of human beings that recognized the emotional or aesthetic side of life.
3. This more Romantic form of liberalism appears in Benjamin Constant.

III. Although the utilitarians stressed the importance of legal reforms in the British system, French liberals focused more on the structures of society.

A. Benjamin Constant (1767–1830) promoted such constitutional reforms, but he emphasized the importance of pursuing personal freedom.

1. Constant was from a noble family; he lived a complex personal life and was involved with numerous women, including Germaine de Staël.
2. He wrote about religion and love, as well as politics. His famous novel *Adolphe* portrays a relationship that falls apart, but it describes how people become obsessed with those they love (and then lose).
3. His writings on religion examined how religious feelings affect a person's perception of the world; he saw that feelings affect actions.

B. Constant wanted to find a political system that would ensure more liberty and provide a space for the private pursuit of human passions.

1. He favored a well-regulated constitutional monarchy as the system that would best protect the liberties of the French people.
2. Constant developed his theories in newspapers and in a famous essay, "Liberty of the Ancients Compared to That of the Moderns" (1819).
3. This essay stressed the commercial components of modern liberty and contrasted this liberty with liberty in the ancient Roman Republic.
4. Constant believed that France's modern revolutionaries and Napoleon made the mistake of looking to the ancient Roman Republic (Jacobins) or Empire (Napoleon) for political models that didn't fit a modern world.
5. Nobody understood how to protect modern liberties.

C. Constant argued that the French Revolution had shown that if the masses exercised power without limits, liberty would be destroyed.
   1. Jacobins had tried to replicate the ancient concept of liberty that required total adherence to the general will of the people.
   2. But the Restoration showed that if power were given to a king without limits, liberty would also be destroyed in this system.
   3. Constant argued for a balanced constitutional monarchy that would avoid the dangers of a radical republic and a reactionary king.

D. Constant's program for the legal, constitutional defense of individual liberty was the project of French liberalism during the Restoration (1815–1830).
   1. The Revolution of 1830 in France was led by such liberals, who wanted to reform the system and set up a constitutional monarchy.
   2. This revolution created the July Monarchy (led by King Louis Philippe), which allowed more participation in politics and created a more active legislature, but it still excluded most men and all women.
   3. Another revolution in 1848 overthrew the monarchy and created a new republic—which soon gave way to the Second Empire.

E. French liberals interpreted each revolution as a further step in the spread of liberty (until Napoleon III seized power); English liberals, by contrast, worked within the existing system to promote reforms.

F. Both liberalisms aimed to expand liberties, but many French liberals were more drawn to Romanticism—the new cultural and political movement that spread across much of Europe in the early nineteenth century.

Essential Reading:

Jeremy Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, pp. 11–50.

Benjamin Constant, "The Liberty of the Ancients and the Moderns," in *The Political Writings of Benjamin Constant*, pp. 309–328.

Supplementary Reading:

John Dinwiddy, *Bentham*, pp. 1–37.

Biancamaria Fontana, *Benjamin Constant and the Post-Revolutionary Mind*, pp. 48–67, 81–97.

Questions to Consider:

1. Do you think that Bentham's utilitarian goals offer a valid framework for shaping social policy?
2. Did post-revolutionary liberals such as Constant understand the complexity of the connection between public and private freedoms?

Lecture Nine
The Literary Culture of Romanticism

Scope: The nineteenth-century cultural responses to the French Revolution and the Enlightenment extended into the creative arts, literature, and poetry. The most influential cultural movement of this period became known as Romanticism, a term that refers to creative movements in a number of different countries and encompasses a wide range of literary and philosophical themes. This lecture notes why historians have increasingly turned to literature to understand nineteenth-century European ideas. It then describes the main themes of Romantic thought, stressing the ways in which it differed from the Enlightenment and gained influence in both philosophy and literature. It notes some differences between German philosophical Romanticism and English literary Romanticism, drawing on the examples of Friedrich Wilhelm Schelling, Germaine de Staël, and Lord Byron to suggest the diversity of Romantic thought.

Outline

I. Cultural histories of the early nineteenth century often describe this era as the "Age of Romanticism," but this is perhaps the most difficult post-revolutionary "ism" to define with either cultural or political precision.
   A. The themes of Romanticism began to emerge in the late eighteenth-century writings of such authors as Rousseau and Goethe, yet the Romantic movement had its greatest influence in European intellectual life between about 1800 and 1840.
      1. The movement was more of a literary and artistic movement than a coherent political movement, though it often became linked to politics.
      2. Romantics could be found in almost every political faction—liberal, conservative, socialist, and nationalist.
      3. They generally shared a critical view of the Enlightenment, or at least the scientific and rationalist themes of Enlightenment thinkers.
      4. Almost all Romantics also responded in some way to the French Revolution and joined many of the post-revolutionary debates.
   B. This lecture discusses the main themes of Romantic thought and notes some aspects of Romanticism by referring to three exemplary figures: Friedrich Wilhelm Schelling, Germaine de Staël, and Lord Byron.
      1. These writers represent the main cultural centers of early Romanticism: Germany, France, and England. They also represent some of the key philosophical and political themes of the movement.

2. Before turning to the ideas of Romanticism, however, I would like to suggest why literature is important for intellectual historians.

II. One of the important trends in the recent study of history has been an emphasis on the decisive role of language and symbols in every sphere of human life.

A. Meaning in history always depends on language. The narratives that explain human realities don't simply reflect reality; they also shape reality.

1. Historians in recent decades have looked at the use of language in both popular and elite cultures, but the history of literature, novels, and poetry offers one of the best ways to look at the use of language.
2. Intellectual historians look at literary texts, such as Romantic literature, as important historical "events"; they are events in the history of language and the development of cultural meanings.
3. Because language is an essential component of all historical events and all cultures, novels and poetry are as important to history as political conflicts, economic changes, wars, and philosophical movements.

B. The importance of literature and literary movements in the wider history of modern societies can be seen in the case of nineteenth-century Romanticism.

1. Romanticism helped to shape a wide range of social, cultural, and political values and offered imaginative literary expressions of a central theme in the revolutionary era: the quest for individual freedom.
2. Yet it redefined this theme in new literary and artistic styles, and it made the individual creative life a kind of modern form of "art."
3. Literary narratives of the Romantic life helped to create a new cultural sensibility, as well as the image of exiled Romantic heroes.

C. There were many forms of Romanticism, but in general, the Romantics emphasized the value and even the necessity of individual freedom.

1. Romanticism stressed the uniqueness of creative individuals and assumed that creativity usually flourished outside "normal" social life.
2. Romanticism was both a philosophy of life and an aesthetic sensibility, but amid this diversity, it is possible to identify several key ideas.

III. In most general terms, Romanticism challenged Enlightenment rationalism and the philosophes' influential views of reason, nature, and progress.

A. Rousseau was in some respects an early Romantic, but in the late eighteenth century, Romanticism developed mainly in Germany and England.

B. First, Romantics challenged the idea that reason provided the only valid path to truth; instead of celebrating reason, most Romantics argued that reasonable inquiry cannot adequately account for the mysteries of life or the human mind.

1. Romantics wrote about the irrational components of human desire and human feelings that reason alone could never fully describe.
2. This interest in the nonrational aspects of experience led to a new interest in religion—but usually not the religion of traditional churches.

C. Second, Romantics challenged mechanistic conceptions of the world that stressed general laws and the orderliness of nature.

1. Romantics loved to write about nature, but they did not view nature as a set of Newtonian laws; they saw nature as somewhat wild and mystical.
2. Nature for the Romantics was a place in which poets sought spiritual truths rather than rational laws; it offered consolation for despairing artists and a refuge from modern urban life.

D. Third, the Romantic fascination with nature, travel, and exotic cultures (for, example, "noble savages" in the wilderness) expressed a skepticism about the value of progress and modern urban society. Romantics helped to launch the modern critique of urban life and the modern nostalgia for rural communities or the Middle Ages.

E. Fourth, the Romantics attacked formalism in literature and art; they rejected the themes of classicism and order in culture (as in nature).

1. Aesthetic theorists and writers in the early Enlightenment tried to define general laws for creating classical beauty in the arts.
2. Romantics denied that one could define general laws for creative work; they wanted to break with traditions and pursue the unexpected.

F. Fifth, this conception of creativity led to strong claims for the creative genius of individual writers and artists; such persons must defy cultural conventions.

1. This theme suggested that creative persons were like the religious visionaries of other times; they have access to the transcendent or divine sphere of existence.
2. Romantic theory gave a special cultural role to artists and writers, and it drew on Idealist philosophy, which celebrated the creative mind.

G. Finally, Romantics argued that creativity unfolds through an organic process of change and "becoming." This is the creative pattern in nature, in art, and in individuals; nothing in nature or human life ever stays the same. This theme also encouraged the study of historical change.

H. No single individual defended or embodied all these themes, but I want to turn now to three writers (Schelling, Staël, and Byron) who promoted Romantic ideas or expressed the Romantic quest for individual freedom.

IV. Friedrich Wilhelm Schelling (1775–1854) was a German theorist who described the connection between nature and creative artists.

A. Schelling was a complex author and a close friend of Hegel in his youth.

1. He was influenced by Fichte's Idealist philosophy, which he extended to an analysis of art and creativity in such works as the *System of Idealism* (1800). These works were influential at the time but are rarely read now.
2. Fichte's Idealism located the spirit in the human mind; he thought that the mind is linked to the spirit in unique individual ways.

B. Schelling accepted this idea, but he said that the spirit also appears in nature, though nature is the unconscious expression of the spirit. This theory is often called *pantheism*, because it sees a spiritual element everywhere in nature.

1. The human mind, in contrast to nature, is the conscious expression of the spirit, which is why the artist is so important.
2. Schelling argued that artists bring the unconscious and conscious expressions of the spirit together in artistic objects, which unite nature and the mind; artists give material substance to the spiritual realm.

C. Schelling was part of the German Idealist philosophical movement that gave a theoretical foundation to the Romantic claims for the creative genius.

1. But for most people in early nineteenth-century Europe, the creative Romantic artist was a social rebel rather than an abstract philosopher.
2. This other side of Romanticism—the lived experience of the writer or artist striving to be free—appears in the lives of Staël and Byron.

V. Germaine de Staël (1766–1817) was born into a wealthy family (the banker Jacques Necker was her father) and was married at age nineteen to the Swedish ambassador in Paris.

A. She had literary ambitions from an early age and was writing books by her early twenties. She also broke with the conventions of marriage and began a series of affairs with unconventional men, including Benjamin Constant.

B. Staël wrote on the social dimensions of literature. She also wrote famous novels (including *Corrine*, the story of a woman in Italy), works about politics and the French Revolution, and works on German culture. Her works stressed the value of freedom.

1. Her book *On Germany* (banned by Napoleon before publication in 1810) contrasted the philosophy of Germany and France and explained the differences between Romanticism and Classicism.
2. This work and her novels helped to create French Romanticism, but it was her famous life that shaped a Romantic motif—exile, travels, persecution, love outside marriage, a quest for freedom.
3. Germaine de Staël linked the Age of Revolution to the Romantic portrayal of feelings and personal liberation.

VI. Lord Byron (1788–1824) embodied some of the same themes in England; he was also a friend of Germaine de Staël and notorious for his unconventional life, which included affairs with his half sister and many other women (and some men).

A. Byron's life expressed the Romantic challenge to traditional social norms, but his poetry, such as *Childe Harold* (1812), often made the same point. Like Staël, he called for personal freedom.

B. Byron's early death in the Greek Revolution of the 1820s gave him a permanent, symbolic status as the famous Romantic hero, defying traditions and fighting for freedom.

C. The stories of Lord Byron and Germaine de Staël helped to shape the cultural meaning of Romanticism and the modern Romantic writer.

Essential Reading:

Germaine de Staël, *Ten Years of Exile*, pp. 3–121.

Supplementary Reading:

Arthur O. Lovejoy, "On the Discrimination of Romanticisms," in Lovejoy, *Essays in the History of Ideas*, pp. 228–253.

Jonathan David Gross, *Byron, The Erotic Liberal*, pp. 79–96.

M. H. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature*, pp. 325–372.

Questions to Consider:

1. How would you describe the similarities and differences in the main themes of Romanticism and the Enlightenment?
2. How does the Romantic image of creative artists and writers continue to influence the image of creative artists in our own time?

Lecture Ten

The Meaning of the "Romantic Hero"

Scope: This lecture continues our discussion of early nineteenth-century European Romanticism by examining the literary construction of the new "Romantic hero." Such heroes became familiar characters in European novels and drama as writers sought to show how creative, unconventional artists or independent persons defied the norms of both aristocratic and bourgeois society. The Romantic hero eventually became a cultural cliché, but such characters also represented a literary response to a changing European social world in which the traditional aristocracy was losing its social and cultural significance. After discussing the general themes in this genre of writing, the lecture looks at specific examples in the works of Goethe (*The Sorrows of Young Werther*), Chateaubriand (*René*), and Victor Hugo (*Hernani*).

Outline

I. The Romantic movement influenced virtually every sphere of early nineteenth-century European culture—literature, art, architecture, music, philosophy, and historical work.

A. We have seen how it emerged as a literary and philosophical critique of the Enlightenment, though it also shared the Enlightenment concern with freedom and the challenge to traditions.

B. Many of the best-known Romantic writers were poets (including Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, and Shelley in England) or aesthetic theorists who wrote about poetry (Friedrich Schiller and Friedrich Schlegel in Germany).

1. Romanticism linked literature and philosophy, but its best- known works also provided a psychological portrait of personal identity.
2. Novels such as Germaine de Staël's *Corinne* or poems such as Byron's *Childe Harold* told stories of self-exploration and personal journeys.

C. Romanticism celebrated in literary form a cultural image of the unique, self-conscious Romantic hero, a cultural model that also emerged in the famous life stories of Romantic writers and artists themselves.

1. The Romantic hero's individualism is his or her most important trait, but this individualism could take many forms; most such heroes in Romantic literature were young men (women could not be so free).
2. Above all, Romantic heroes had to be different from the world of ordinary people, and all such heroes expressed intense feelings.

D. The popularity of Romantic literature made the Romantic hero a well-known cultural figure and created a lasting image of how creative persons must live a life of rebellion, alienation, or despair.

1. Some examples of this influential literary model can be found in works by Goethe, Chateaubriand, and Victor Hugo.
2. But first we need to look at the typical traits of the Romantic hero, a kind of alienated youth whom we still encounter in rock music or cafés.

II. The Romantic hero can be seen as a kind of transitional figure who combined the new individualist themes of liberal, bourgeois culture with the sense of superiority that had long been an important component of aristocratic cultures and identities.

A. In the first place, Romantic heroes were always introspective; they looked for their identities through prolonged, painful contemplation of the self.

1. Self-knowledge ultimately came through experience, never simply through books, education, or traditional social institutions.
2. The typical Romantic seeker had to wander, travel to exotic places, and somehow leave the practical world of work and careers.

B. Romantic heroes, however, did not wander as ordinary tourists; they brought heightened emotional sensitivities to every trip and every social experience.

1. Romantic writers and artists attempted to portray the meaning of such feelings and the self-conscious analysis that they provoked.
2. The classical hero—the kind of person who appeared in the classical seventeenth -century plays of Jean Racine—was someone who suppressed his feelings, followed codes of behavior, and maintained self-control.
3. The Romantic hero, by contrast, must express strong feelings and follow his impulses wherever they may lead.

C. Romantics believed that persons who expressed such feelings in their daily lives were superior to other people who conformed to social conventions. This sense of superiority justified revolts against society and explained the distinctive, personal vision of the Romantic hero.

D. But the revolt of the sensitive Romantic hero was often tragic because the rigid social structures of the world cannot tolerate such behavior. Indeed, Romantic heroes in literature and in life often died young in tragic situations; many ended by killing themselves.

E. In many ways, this image of the Romantic hero became the cultural image of the modern artistic personality; the artist is alone, rebellious, restless, sensitive, and misunderstood, but this is the fate of a genius.

F. Romantic ideology grew out of a new bourgeois culture that it also rejected and condemned. Like post-revolutionary liberals, the

Romantics viewed the individual as the autonomous, creative force in social and cultural life.

III. The Romantic hero reappeared often in novels, poems, plays, and autobiographies beginning in the late eighteenth century (Rousseau's *Confessions* also offered a model).

A. Famous examples of this new social figure can be found in Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774), in Chateaubriand's *René* (1802), and in Victor Hugo's *Hernani* (1830).

1. These writers became famous in different national traditions, but their lives all exemplified themes of the Romantic writer's life, much like Byron and Shelley in England.
2. Byron and Shelley lived as rebels and died young (like Keats).

B. Goethe, Chateaubriand, and Hugo lived long lives, but like good Romantics, they traveled to such places as Italy or America, and they all had numerous, intense love affairs. Chateaubriand and Hugo also spent many years in exile.

C. They all contributed to Romanticism by portraying famous literary characters who had difficult and tragic breaks with the social order.

IV. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832) was not a famous social rebel like Byron. He served for many years as the director of the official theater in Weimar.

A. But his youthful novel about the unhappy love life of young Werther became an all-time "bestseller" portrait of a Romantic figure.

1. Young Werther loved nature and seemed to revel in radical mood swings in which he felt either total ecstasy or total despair.
2. He falls madly in love with a young woman, Lotte, who is already engaged to marry another man; the other man is a practical, down-to-earth person—a lawyer.
3. Werther pursues this relationship with self-destructive intensity and expresses the most extreme feelings.

B. Feeling that his way is superior to the practical life of lawyers, he follows his feelings to the point of giving up his work and ignoring all reasonable limits, but the relationship is impossible, and the sad Werther ultimately kills himself.

1. Werther's extreme sensibility and existential angst were typical of the pure Romantic hero; he couldn't follow social conventions or fit into society, and he is driven to self-destruction by an impossible love.
2. He was also young and male, like most Romantic heroes, so he became an almost ideal type of a Romantic character.
3. Goethe himself seemed to view his novel as a kind of warning about the dangers of such behavior, but the novel could also be read as a powerful critique of the dangers of repressive social conventions.

V. Similar Romantic patterns emerged in the work of Chateaubriand (1768–1848), who became one of France's most influential literary figures in the early nineteenth century.

A. Chateaubriand never felt at home in any society. As a young man, he left revolutionary France (in 1791), visited America, then lived in exile in England.

1. His politics were conservative and royalist, but his literary values were radical and experimental, which created tensions for him.
2. Such tensions often appear in literary figures who may explicitly support conservative political principles but seem to undercut these values in their literary works (Balzac is another example).

B. Chateaubriand said that he longed for the orderly world of the old regime monarchy in France, but his short novel *René* depicted a rebel and misfit.

1. Most scholars see the novel as at least partly autobiographical.
2. Like other Romantic heroes, René has a tragic, blocked relationship with a woman, but this woman is his own sister, Amelia.
3. This passion is as hopeless as that of young Werther, and when his sister retreats to a convent, René goes more or less crazy.
4. He has always been a melancholy wanderer, but he now flees to the New World to escape his problems and seek a purer life.
5. Having decided that his European life is empty, René looks to the noble American Indian for meaning, but life in America does not live up to René's expectations. He is still alone and finally dies there.

C. Chateaubriand himself was somewhat like his novel's hero in that he could never settle comfortably into European social life; he saw himself as a man who would always be partly out of place in the nineteenth-century world.

1. He carried aspects of Rousseau's thought into nineteenth-century France, but he wrote about individual alienation rather than an ideal republic.
2. Chateaubriand continued to develop many of Rousseau's emotional and aesthetic themes, but he did not embrace the egalitarian themes in Rousseau's political writings.

VI. The more liberal political themes of French Romanticism appeared in the works of Victor Hugo (1802–1885), who became a prominent writer by about 1830.

A. Hugo was more liberal than Chateaubriand. He tried to connect Romanticism with a social and political agenda, supported the

revolutions of 1830 and 1848, and resisted Napoleon III (hence, his exile from 1851 to 1870).

1. Yet Hugo also shared the Romantic attraction to the exotic, unusual, grotesque, and extraordinary.
2. He wrote about strange-looking people or the misery of the poor; all this reflected his growing social and political concerns and appeared most famously in his later work, *Les Miserables* (1862).

B. Hugo's literary fascination with the grotesque and the bizarre also reflected the Romantic challenge to classicism.

1. Hugo wanted to defy the unities and order of classical art; he wanted to create art that expressed the artist's vision.
2. He believed the artist must create his own life and that the "aim of art is almost divine," a theme he developed in a famous essay that called for the pursuit of individual visions ("A Preface to Cromwell" [1827]).

C. Hugo's own literary challenge to classical symmetry came out in his play *Hernani*, which was first performed in Paris in 1830.

1. The play violated classical rules of theater (the story didn't unfold in a single place on a single day) and provoked a theatrical riot.
2. *Hernani* is another story about a Romantic hero who lives outside the codes of his society and ultimately kills himself.

VII. Romantic literary works created a popular following in Europe's literate classes, but by the mid-nineteenth century, such themes had become a cliché.

A. Younger writers began to mock or reject the Romantic tradition, but they couldn't ignore it.

B. Both the Romantic critique of the Enlightenment and the Romantic image of the heroic quest for a creative life have had an enduring cultural influence.

Essential Reading:

J. W. von Goethe, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, in Goethe, *Selected Works*, pp. 3–119.

René de Chateaubriand, *René*, in Chateaubriand, *Atala/René*, pp. 85–114.

Supplementary Reading:

Gerald N. Izenberg, *Impossible Individuality*, 3–17, 240–307.

Questions to Consider:

1. Has the belief in a Romantic hero disappeared from modern literature and culture?
2. What flaws do you see in the Romantic image of creative human beings?

Lecture Eleven

The Industrial Revolution and Classical Economics

Scope: In this lecture, we begin to discuss the cultural significance of the other great revolutionary changes as Europe moved from the eighteenth into the nineteenth century: the Industrial Revolution. We examine the social and economic characteristics of this great transformation in European societies, with special attention to the ways in which the growth of cities and the expansion of a new industrial working class attracted the interest of social theorists. This social change occurred first in Great Britain, where the theoretical works of political economy also began to appear. This lecture summarizes the ideas of the most influential early theorists, Adam Smith and David Ricardo. It also notes how the population theories of Thomas Malthus contributed to English economic theory in the early nineteenth century.

Outline

I. Historians often describe the era of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as the period of two revolutions: the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution.

A. We have discussed some of the ways in which the French Revolution spread the ideas of the Enlightenment and stimulated the development of a wide range of new political theories.

1. The revolutionary political changes also contributed to the spread of Romanticism, which became part of a wider challenge to tradition.
2. The Romantics and most other writers of the era could also see the effects of an evolving Industrial Revolution (though the term itself came later); this revolution also stimulated new social theories.
3. The great economic transformation eventually affected everyone in modern societies, even people who had no interest in politics.
4. The Industrial Revolution became a social context that elicited as much analysis as the political revolutions. We must turn now to both the context and texts of the new industrial age.

B. The Industrial Revolution developed first in England, expanding rapidly during the era of the French Revolution and Napoleon.

1. The main "take-off" period of the Industrial Revolution occurred between 1780 and 1830, but by the mid-nineteenth century, a new industrial economy was developing on the Continent and in Britain.
2. The theoretical response to the Industrial Revolution emerged in the rise of modern economics and social science.

3. The political and economic revolutions of the era also coincided with the German "philosophical revolution" and with early Romanticism, all of which shaped what we now call *modernity*.

C. The Industrial Revolution changed the social and economic relations between people, much as the French Revolution had altered such relations.
1. Both revolutions challenged the old order and the old nobility, but they seemed to produce different patterns.
2. Where the theory and practice of the French Revolution pushed toward the creation of political equality, the Industrial Revolution produced new forms of economic inequality, thus posing problems for theorists.
3. How could the ideas of political equality (the French Revolution) be reconciled with new economic inequalities (the Industrial Revolution)?
4. The search for answers to that question shaped many of the theoretical debates in nineteenth-century Europe and led to the rise of socialism.

D. To analyze the cultural significance of this economic transformation, we must note several important features of the Industrial Revolution.
1. Then we'll turn to the intellectual problem of how this new economy generated a new theoretical defense of the capitalist economy.
2. Although there were important economists in France and elsewhere in this era, the most influential theoretical defense of the new economy developed among the classical economists in Britain.
3. Their theories (as we'll see later) were often criticized, but the work of Adam Smith, Thomas Malthus, and David Ricardo created an intellectual framework for all later debates about modern economies.

II. The starting point for the new forms of social thought was, of course, the new industrial economic system.

A. In most general terms, the Industrial Revolution can be described as the transition from an economy based on hand tools and animal or human power to an economy based on machine tools and machine power.
1. The economic transformation was, thus, closely linked to a technological revolution and new methods for production.
2. This revolution has been almost continuous since the late eighteenth century, and we've been going through the latest phase in the computer revolution of recent decades.
3. The first phases were preceded by an agricultural revolution that placed land ownership in a shrinking class of large landowners.
4. This social change in the organization of agriculture was accompanied by new kinds of technology, fertilizer, and

machinery; fewer people produced more food—the basic pattern of modern agriculture.
5. Economists in eighteenth-century France (a group called the physiocrats) launched modern economic theory by studying this agriculture.
6. Writers such as Turgot and Quesnay argued that governments should allow free markets for grain production, a laissez-faire system.

B. These theories began to attract attention in Britain, where the changes in the agrarian system were producing a large supply of cheap labor.
1. People who left the farms needed work, but this search for work coincided with the arrival of cheap raw materials from Britain's empire.
2. The cheap labor and cheap raw materials could be put to productive use because of new machines, which were especially advanced in the new textile industry.
3. The textile industry brought together steam-powered machines, lots of workers, and the need for coal and cotton.
4. New towns formed near the coal mines in northern England; the most famous was Manchester, which grew from 25,000 people in 1770 to 455,000 in 1850.

C. The new towns were crowded, dirty, and filled with uprooted people who worked for low wages; most worked fourteen-hour days, and everyone in the family was employed—men, women, and children.
1. Most of this labor was low-skill work; there were frequent cycles of unemployment but very little regulation of work or markets.
2. This system produced unprecedented wealth for the owners of the new industries and a rapidly growing new class of workers.
3. People outside England became interested in this new economy, and English economists became influential.
4. English economists became famous for their laissez-faire theories, which both explained and justified what was happening.

III. Classical British economists were somewhat like French physiocrats; they shared the physiocrats' desire to find the natural laws of economic life.

A. The starting point for this method of economic analysis was the famous work of Adam Smith (1723–1790), *The Wealth of Nations* (1776).
1. Smith was a professor of moral economy at the University of Glasgow, but he had met such physiocrats as Turgot and Quesnay in France.
2. He liked their concept of laissez-faire economic policies, though he decided that labor was more important than land in producing wealth.
3. Smith argued that wealth could accumulate most efficiently if business activity were free of government intervention.

4. Natural laws of economic life could function in a free market; this market (like nature) was controlled by a kind of natural law of supply and demand.

B. Smith assumed that each nation had a "comparative advantage" in some area of the market; for example, sugar producers from the West Indies had an advantage in sugar, but they could not really compete with British pinmakers.
   1. Smith believed workers and owners of capital would benefit from the "invisible hand" of the market, but this must be exercised with moral restraint, and everyone should be allowed to benefit.
   2. His theory spread quickly in liberal intellectual and social circles in Europe; by the early nineteenth century, it had been translated into every language in Western Europe (except Portuguese).
   3. Smith had an optimistic view of economic markets and expected steady social progress to emerge from a free-market system.

IV. By the early nineteenth century, however, it was clear that most workers were not getting more wealth; they were living in almost subsistence conditions in crowded cities.

A. This situation seemed to call for new theoretical perspectives, which appeared in the work of David Ricardo (1772–1823), a wealthy English stockbroker.
   1. Ricardo's most important work was a long book called *The Principles of Political Economy* (1817), which explained why workers were poor.
   2. Ricardo drew on the population theories of his friend Thomas Malthus, who had recently published *An Essay on the Principle of Population*.
   3. Malthus (1766–1834) said that as workers gained wealth, they produced more children, then they didn't have enough food.
   4. Indeed, Malthus argued that the whole modern world was threatened by the rapid growth of population, an argument that has influenced much modern analysis of the world's social and economic problems.

B. Malthus argued that the population of modern nations was growing geometrically; the number of people was likely to double every few decades (1, 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, and so on).
   1. Malthus also claimed that the food supply was growing arithmetically (1, 2, 3, 4, 5…), and the population would outgrow the supply; there was bound to be famine in the future.
   2. Malthus became known as a prophet of gloom and doom because his theory suggested that when workers moved above a subsistence level, they inevitably began to have too many babies.
   3. This population pattern would lead to future food crises and death.

C. Ricardo drew on this population theory to describe what he called the "Iron Law of Wages."
   1. According to Ricardo, this "law" showed that wages should not rise above a subsistence level because an increase beyond this level results in too many children and, ultimately, an imbalance in the food supply.
   2. Wages are, thus, "naturally" at a subsistence level, which is why workers remained poor.
   3. Classical economics, as explained by Ricardo, assumed that the economic "laws" of the capitalist economic system necessarily make most people poor.

D. Ricardo's book quickly became a classic (and popular among industrialists, as well as economic theorists).
   1. Such theories helped to explain the reputation of political economy as the Dismal Science, because they showed that the conditions of the new industrial economy reflected natural, inescapable social laws.
   2. Some writers soon began to question the assumptions, or "laws," of Ricardo and other economic theorists, developing a critique of the new industrial system.

E. Some critiques emerged among the Romantic writers of the era, and others appeared in the new theories of early socialism. Indeed, various forms of Romanticism and socialism began to fuse into a new social critique of industrial capitalism, launching a debate about capitalism that would continue down to our own time.

Essential Reading:

Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, pp. 11–88 (Book I, chapters 1–8).

T. R. Malthus, *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, pp. 9–61 (chapters 1–7).

Supplementary Reading:

Robert L. Heilbroner, *The Worldly Philosophers* (7th edition), pp. 42–104.

Questions to Consider:

1. Does the classical economist's conception of the market continue to influence economic and social life in the modern world?
2. Do you think that Ricardo was correct when he argued that capitalist economies must adhere to an "Iron Law of Wages"? Has modern capitalism transformed the earlier wage system?

Lecture Twelve

Early Critiques of Industrial Capitalism

Scope: Rapid industrialization provoked social critiques of the new economic system and intellectual challenges to the works of the classical economists. This lecture notes the Romantic response to the new industrial cities and also examines the emerging socialist critique of laissez-faire capitalism. Social theorists in England and France began to develop their vision for a new socialist society, which would be built on the principle of cooperation rather than on the laissez-faire practices of unregulated economic competition. The most prominent early socialists were Robert Owen, Henri Saint-Simon, and Charles Fourier, all of whom are discussed in the last sections of this lecture.

Outline

I. The nineteenth-century industrialists and economic theorists who wrote in support of the new industrial capitalism saw the new economy as a remarkable example of modern human progress; economic progress came to be equated with general social progress.

- A. This idea became a permanent theme in European thought and has shaped the pervasive social belief in "modernization" since the nineteenth century.
  1. Since the early nineteenth century, industrialization has been viewed as the hallmark of a modern, productive social system.
  2. But the rise of industry in a capitalist market system also provoked the development of a new critical social theory.
- B. From the beginning, this critique took two rather different forms.
  1. Some critics looked back to an earlier agrarian age and complained that industrial progress was destroying the pastoral beauty of nature.
  2. This theme became prominent among some Romantic writers. It marks the beginning of what we might call *environmentalism*.
- C. Other critics were more willing to embrace industrialization, but they argued that the system must be reorganized to benefit the workers.
  1. This theme extended the egalitarian ideas of the French Revolution from politics into economic life and marked the beginning of what soon became known as *socialism*.
  2. Both the environmentalists (to use a more recent term) and the socialists believed that important aspects of an older world were disappearing—natural beauty and social community.
  3. Yet they were not simply nostalgic for a lost world; the socialists in particular developed numerous plans for a better *future* world.

- D. We'll look briefly at the Romantic critique of industrialization, then discuss three of the most influential early socialist theorists: Robert Owen, Henri Saint-Simon, and Charles Fourier.
  1. These writers all became known in intellectual history as *utopian socialists*, and they were all strongly criticized by later Marxist socialists, as well as by almost all conventional economists.
  2. Yet their critiques of the competition and inequality in modern capitalist economies also attracted the interest and support of many who worried about new social inequalities and miseries.

II. Romantic poets and philosophers complained that new industries and the cities that grew up around them were defacing nature; industry destroyed natural beauty.

- A. Romantics often stressed the spiritual elements of nature, but industrialization simply used nature as a source of raw materials and created ugly cities.
  1. Romantics said that such cities caused misery for people as well as problems for nature; all of this was somehow "unnatural."
  2. Romantic poets such as Shelley condemned the unnatural aspects of industry, which harmed the workers as well as nature.
  3. Shelley could see nothing "natural" in the new industrial system, and he wrote bitter poems about it; his "Song to the Men of England" later became a kind of a socialist lyric.
  4. The poem reminds workers that "The robes ye weave, another wears;/The arms ye forge, another bears," and it urged workers to assert their rights to a just reward for their work.
- B. Romantic writers who complained about the defacement of nature or the misery of workers didn't really work out a plan for social reform.
  1. Many poets (not Shelley) simply held sentimental views of an earlier world that was lost, such as the Middle Ages.
  2. From this perspective, industrialization itself was the problem, but most social theorists recognized that there was no going back to an earlier agrarian age.

III. The other critique of industrialization and of early political economists emerged among socialists who sought to change the industrial system because they understood that industries and cities were inevitably shaping a new social world.

- A. The term *socialism* became common by the1830s. Some socialists were like the Romantics in attacking industry itself; they preferred pre-industrial, agrarian communes.
  1. But most socialists argued that industrialization itself was not the problem; the problems emerged in the specific economic system that was developing the new industries—the capitalist market system.

2. Socialists generally argued against doctrines that said competition was the most "natural" form of human behavior.
3. They also rejected the claim that private ownership of property brought the most good to the most people.

B. Socialists sought to develop plans that stressed cooperation over competition. They believed that cooperation would bring more benefits to the whole society and was actually more "natural" than competition.
1. They argued that cooperation was the basis of human life in families, nations, and social institutions.
2. They also rejected the claims of Ricardo and Malthus, who had said that most people must live at subsistence-level wages.
3. Socialists said this was not natural. They went back to the ideas of such writers as Rousseau, who had said that equality is "natural."

C. Socialists also built their arguments on claims that went beyond social egalitarianism; they said that it would be more rational to create an economic system that avoided the chaotic economic cycles of a laissez-faire system.

IV. Many of these general assumptions appear in the famous works of early socialists: Robert Owen (1771–1858), Henri Saint-Simon (1760–1825), and Charles Fourier (1772–1837). These people differed, but they all criticized capitalism.

A. They shared the idea of creating more cooperative societies that would work for the common good rather than for private profits.
1. Owen was originally Welsh, but he became the owner of a cotton mill in Manchester, which made him a very wealthy man.
2. Owen became convinced that laissez-faire practices ruined the workers; the industrial environment destroyed their character.
3. He complained that neither the capitalists nor the churches did enough to improve the lives of workers.

B. Owen purchased a cotton factory in Scotland, where he created a new kind of ideal factory town with shorter work hours, better working conditions, cooperative stores, and a school for the children.
1. This community, called New Lanark, suggested the value of a more cooperative system because workers actually produced more (and better) cotton thread than the workers in other factories.
2. Owen wrote about his community and argued that a cooperative factory system would benefit the whole society.
3. He wanted to found other "New Lanark" factory communities around Britain (with government support), but his plans gained little support.
4. He went to America to create his ideal society at a place he called New Harmony, which was located in southern Indiana (1824).

C. This kind of utopian community depended on strong leaders, such as Owen, and it soon fell apart when he returned to England.
1. The community did not provide a general social model because it was an isolated village rather than a complex modern city.
2. This emphasis on isolated communities was a recurring problem for the early socialists, who seemed not to have plans for existing places.

V. Among the early contributors to socialism, Saint-Simon seemed to have the greatest appreciation for the actually emerging industrial economy.

A. He was from an old noble family in France and had served in the French army in America during the American Revolution.

B. He also supported the French Revolution and welcomed the end of the French nobility's privileges; he developed a deep interest in the new industrial economy, but he wanted it to operate more efficiently.

C. Saint-Simon opposed the laissez-faire theories of classical political economy, because he thought a well-planned economy would work better.
1. He assumed that this economy should be led by a talented elite of engineers and scientists who understood modern technology.
2. Such persons were, in his view, the best prepared to manage the new forces of social and economic life.

D. Unlike many of the early socialists, Saint-Simon had a more comprehensive view of history. He said that the world was entering an era in which new scientific elites were replacing the old elites of aristocrats, kings, and clergymen.
1. He saw the traditional social elites as basically useless in this new world, which would have to be directed by talented planners.
2. After Saint-Simon's death in 1825, he became something of a cult figure. His followers created a kind of Saint-Simonian "religion" that attracted many writers and artists.
3. Many Saint-Simonians became early advocates for women's rights; others eventually became technical managers in the French government.
4. The Saint-Simonians included an interesting mix of idealistic visionaries and practical, science-minded social planners.

VI. The followers of Charles Fourier, by contrast, tended to be the more purely utopian visionaries, which is how Fourier himself might be described.

A. In his youth, he worked for various provincial cloth merchants, and he supported the French Revolution, but he lived in obscurity until his publications began to attract attention in the 1820s and 1830s.
1. Fourier could be compared to Robert Owen in that he wanted to create small cooperative communities in France.

2. Each commune would be called a *Phalanx*, and each would include 1,620 persons (Fourier was obsessed with mathematical precision); these communes would develop a new "associative order."

B. Fourier believed that work must become more satisfying because most people in the modern world were unhappy in their jobs.

1. People in modern cities didn't work in jobs that interested them, but in the Phalanx, each person would work in ways that fit his or her own nature or passions.
2. This would create an ideal division of labor. For example, boys who liked dirt or debris would be in charge of the garbage, and people who liked fruit would manage the orchards; each job fit one's passion.
3. Everyone would also receive his or her fair share of the money that the community economy would generate.
4. Finally, Fourier (another early advocate for women's rights) wanted to create a community in which sexual desires were freely expressed.

C. Fourier's vision of the ideal community attracted the interest of intellectuals who believed it offered alternatives to the emerging industrial society.

1. Some Fourierists tried to establish new communities, including the famous Brook Farm community in Massachusetts in the early 1840s.
2. But Fourier's system (like Owen's) did not help people who had to live in modern cities, and it lacked a coherent theory of history; new historical theories came into socialism through the Hegelians.

Essential Reading:

Robert Owen, "Observations on the Effect of the Manufacturing System" and "Address Delivered to the Inhabitants of New Lanark," in Owen, *A New View of Society and Other Writings*, pp. 93–134.

Supplementary Reading:

Henri Saint-Simon, *Selected Writings on Science, Industry and Social Organisation*, pp. 257–278.

Jonathan Beecher, *Charles Fourier*, pp. 241–258, 274–296.

Questions to Consider:

1. Do most human interactions depend on cooperation or on competition?
2. Do you think that Saint-Simon's conception of the ways in which experts should lead or manage modern societies tells us anything about the economic or political systems of our own time? Are modern societies shaped by "planners"?

Glossary

Alienation: The belief that some part of the self is separated from one's own identity or from other people; for Marx, this meant that workers became separated from their own labor when capitalists gained the profit from the objects that workers produced.

Comparative advantage: An economic theory advanced by Adam Smith to explain why people in various nations or regions can profit more than other people from the sale of certain goods or products. Access to materials or skilled labor enables some people to produce specific goods more efficiently or cheaply and, hence, gain a comparative advantage in free markets.

Conservatism: A political and social theory that defends past traditions and inherited institutions as the best guide for present and future political or social policies; it seeks to conserve what is valuable from the past and typically condemns abstract or rationalist theories of social reform.

Constitutional monarchy: A political system in which the powers or actions of a king or queen and royal ministers are limited by laws, judicial systems, and elected legislative assemblies.

Context: A term used by intellectual historians to describe the political, social, economic, and cultural setting in which intellectuals or creative artists live and in which books, ideas, and ideologies must inevitably circulate. The context includes institutions and intellectual traditions, as well as public events, public conflicts, and each individual's personal world of family, friends, and social experiences.

Cultural history: An approach to historical study, influenced by anthropology and literary studies, that stresses the shaping role of cultural traditions, languages, symbols, and systems of communication in past and present societies. It often examines popular beliefs or the language of daily life, as well as the more self-conscious expressions of artists and writers.

Deductive reason: A method of logical analysis or philosophical thought that uses general assertions to explain or predict specific events or outcomes. For example, "All people are mortal; Socrates is a person; therefore, Socrates is mortal."

Deism: A popular eighteenth-century philosophy that described God as a kind of supreme watchmaker who created the world but never again intervened directly in nature or in the lives of human beings. Deists said that God set the world ticking like a well-oiled clock.

Dialectical: A term used to describe intellectual or social processes in which opposing ideas or social forces enter into debate or conflict. Dialectical change in history refers to a pattern in which every concept or social force gives rise to

its opposite, thus creating conflicts that carry an argument or historical culture to higher levels of development.

Empiricism: A philosophical tradition and research method that stresses the importance of sensory experience and observable material evidence in the creation of knowledge. Empiricism became important in seventeenth-century England and shaped the modern scientific method.

Enlightenment: An intellectual and cultural movement in eighteenth-century Europe, led by writers called *philosophes*. The main themes of Enlightenment thought included strong beliefs in reason, science, natural laws or natural rights, religious tolerance, the free exchange of ideas in public debates, and the rational advance of human progress.

Epistemology: The term used by philosophers to describe the study of the fundamental structures or categories of human knowledge. The key epistemological question is simply: How do we know what we know? This question appears implicitly or explicitly in most intellectual debates (and defies simple answers).

French revolutions: There were three important French revolutions. The Revolution of 1789 led to the overthrow of the Bourbon monarchy (Louis XVI) and the creation of the First French Republic. The Revolution of 1830 overthrew a restored Bourbon king (Charles X) and created the "July Monarchy," in which another branch of the French royal family (King Louis Philippe) held power. The Revolution of 1848 created the Second French Republic, which soon gave way to the Second Empire of Napoleon III.

Great Man theory of history: This theory argues that certain great figures in history are the most important forces in the evolution of human societies, governments, and cultures. This theory suggests that historians should mostly study those few exceptional persons who have had the greatest influence in changing the world.

Hegelianism: A philosophical movement in the 1830s and 1840s that debated the social implications of the ideas of the German philosopher G.W.F. Hegel. "Left Hegelians" believed these ideas showed the need for radical social changes that would promote the growth of reason and freedom in the world. "Right Hegelians" assumed that existing institutions generally embodied the reason and freedom that Hegel had described.

Historicism: A theory of history that stresses the distinctive spirit or characteristics of each past culture or historical era (rather than universal human traits). This view encourages historical studies of the specific beliefs or institutions in diverse societies and suggests that each historical era has unique social values and conceptions of truth.

Idealism: A philosophical theory that emphasizes the decisive, shaping role of human ideas in the construction of knowledge about the world. "Objective

idealists" argued for the existence of a universal idea that individuals should understand and promote in their lives and thought. "Subjective idealists" argued that because each person or culture has a unique understanding of the idea, specific ideas or forms of knowledge must be expressed differently in different cultures. Idealism emerged in late eighteenth-century Germany as a challenge to earlier arguments for the environment's role in the creation of knowledge.

Inductive reason: A method of logical analysis or philosophical thought that accumulates specific empirical evidence to make general assertions about past or future events in nature or history. For example, "Socrates and every other ancient Greek died; all Greeks were people; therefore, the evidence shows that all people are mortal."

Industrial Revolution: The transition in modern societies from economies based on hand tools and animal or human power to economies based on machine tools and machine power. New technologies led to the emergence of a new factory system in England after about 1770, and the new industrial economy spread rapidly across Europe and North America in the nineteenth century.

Intellectual: A person who writes about ideas, the creative arts, or society. The term *intellectual* emerged in late nineteenth-century France, but the modern identity of intellectuals developed much earlier. Intellectuals played two social roles: They produced (1) new knowledge and (2) new critiques of society, thus becoming "experts" or "critics" or both.

Intellectual history: A branch of historical studies that examines systematic statements of human ideas and of the people who produce or interpret ideas. In contrast to social or cultural history, intellectual history tends to emphasize the ideas of complex and original thinkers rather than the general intellectual themes of popular cultures or daily life. But in contrast to most philosophers and literary critics, intellectual historians tend also to emphasize the distinctive social or cultural contexts in which new ideas develop.

"Iron Law of Wages": An economic theory promoted by the nineteenth-century English economist David Ricardo and others. The "law" argued that workers' wages could never rise above a subsistence level, because higher wages caused a growth in the population, food shortages, and an oversupply of labor—which would result again in lower wages.

Jacobins: The most radical faction of revolutionaries during the French Revolution of 1789; the Jacobins supported a republic rather than a constitutional monarchy, led the revolutionary wars against other European powers, and organized the Terror in 1793–1794.

Laissez faire: A French term developed by the physiocrats during the eighteenth century to argue that the government should allow a free market for the sale of grain. Adopted by English economists, laissez faire (meaning, roughly, "let it do

as it wants to do") was used to describe economies that were free from government controls.

Liberalism: A nineteenth-century political theory that argued for individual rights, constitutional government, rational legal reforms, religious tolerance, and a free-market economy. Liberalism generally opposed revolutionary change but favored institutional reforms that would protect or enhance equal civil rights and personal freedom.

Messianic nationalism: An influential form of Romantic nationalism that describes a specific nation as the "messiah" among the peoples of the world. According to this theory, the sacrifices of a "messiah nation" bring salvation or freedom to other nations.

Metaphysics: A term used to describe the philosophical study of realities or ideas that go beyond the physical world. The metaphysical tradition goes back to ancient Greek philosophy and seeks to show the higher meaning of material existence or being.

Minerva: The ancient Roman goddess of wisdom.

Nationalism: The political and cultural ideology that stresses the unique traditions, ideas, language, institutions, territory, history, and identity of a specific group of people. It describes what these people share and how they differ from other peoples. Nationalism has generated numerous political movements demanding the creation of new national states in which people with shared traditions would have their own government. It also influences the policies of all established nation states.

Natural rights: The belief that human beings derive certain rights from nature itself, so that all living persons have a right to life, liberty, property, or the government of their society. The belief in natural rights became a key idea in Enlightenment political theory.

Natural selection: The theory developed by Charles Darwin and others to explain why certain variations in the biological development of each species enhanced or reduced an organism's chances of survival in a natural environment. Natural selection was the mechanism through which the evolution of species could take place.

Phalanx: A term used by the French social theorist Charles Fourier to describe small communes of 1,620 persons in which people would work at jobs that fit their passions and the income would fairly reward the labor they performed for the community.

"Philistines": The label that Matthew Arnold and other social critics used to describe middle-class persons who ignored complex ideas or the great creative works of the Western cultural tradition. Philistines were viewed as unthinking social conformists.

Philosophes: Writers and social critics in eighteenth-century Europe (mostly in France) who wrote in diverse literary genres, advocated the use of reason and the advance of scientific knowledge, and created a tradition of social critique that shaped the social or cultural identity of many later intellectuals.

Physiocrats: The economic theorists in eighteenth-century France who criticized government control of the grain markets and argued for the creation of a free-market, laissez-faire economic system.

Positivism: An intellectual movement that developed in nineteenth-century France. Positivism viewed science as the only "positive" form of human knowledge and described the development of science as the foundation for human progress. It argued that scientific studies of society should examine only behaviors that can be observed and measured.

Progress, idea of: One of the main themes of modern intellectual life, this idea rests on the belief that each generation has more knowledge and more advanced technologies than all previous generations. The idea of progress often refers to scientific knowledge, but it suggests that political and social institutions are also advancing or becoming more rational; for example, each generation acquires more civil rights, freedom, or education.

Realism: A cultural trend that developed in the post-Romantic era of the mid-nineteenth century. Realism condemned naïve sentimentality in literature and the arts. It often focused on the struggles of daily life rather than on the exotic adventures of heroes in distant lands. Realism sought to portray life as it was rather than life as it should be; it also described the greed and clichés of nineteenth-century social life.

Restoration, the: A term that refers to a previous government's or royal family's return to political power. The main nineteenth-century "Restoration" referred to the Bourbon family's return to the throne of France (1814–1830) after the French Revolution and Napoleon.

"Rights of Man and Citizen": The French Revolution's famous declaration of fundamental human rights (1789). Beginning with the claim that "men are born and remain free and equal in rights," the French declaration included rights to free speech, property, participation in government affairs, and legal equality.

Romantic hero: A prominent figure in early nineteenth-century Romantic literature, the Romantic hero was usually a young man who sought freedom from social constraints, traveled to exotic places, pursued a creative life and personal love in defiance of social conventions, lived with emotional passion rather than reason, found solace in nature, and died young.

Romanticism: An influential cultural movement in the arts and philosophy (developing between 1780–1840) that challenged Enlightenment beliefs in reason, classicism, and science. Romanticism praised human feelings, the mysteries of nature, the unique creativity of artists, and the organic unfolding of

life and history (rather than rational, abstract universal laws). Romanticism helped create the modern belief in art as the source of personal or cultural salvation.

Social Darwinism: A social theory that applied the concepts of biological evolution and natural selection to human history and social life. Often linked to racism and arguments for European superiority, Social Darwinism described human societies as a sphere of struggle in which only the "fittest" people could survive and flourish.

Socialism: A social theory that stresses social cooperation over social competition and calls for a more equal distribution of wealth and economic resources. Many nineteenth-century socialists argued for the creation of small utopian communes that would create a more egalitarian society. Others believed that a radical revolution would overthrow capitalism and create an economic order in which the workers controlled the means of production.

Terror, the: A term used to describe the judicial prosecution and execution of persons deemed to be "antirevolutionary" during the French Revolution. This systematic Terror lasted for more than a year in 1793–1794.

Text: The term that intellectual historians use to describe intellectual works, such as books, poetry, plays, or articles. Texts typically take the form of a written work, though intellectual historians sometimes refer also to the social world as a "text"; that is, the social world has to be "read" and interpreted like other aspects of culture.

Uniformitarianism: An important theory in early nineteenth-century geology, which argued that the surface of the earth has always changed slowly through the same uniform geological processes, such as erosion, earthquakes, volcanoes, or other climatic forces. This geological theme influenced new evolutionary theories about natural selection.

Universalisms: This term refers to the belief that certain ideas express truths that cross all specific national or cultural boundaries; for example, the ideas that all people can use reason or that all people have natural rights or that everyone has a soul rest on a belief in universal truths about human beings.

Utilitarianism: A liberal political and philosophical movement in early nineteenth-century Britain that called for rational reforms in laws and institutions so that the social and political system would produce the "greatest good for the greatest number" of people.

"Will to power": An important theme in the works of Friedrich Nietzsche, the "will to power" suggests that human beings have a deep drive to achieve power in both their personal and social lives. For Nietzsche and others who accept this idea, human beings channel deep biological and psychological instincts into a desire to control or dominate other people. In Nietzsche's view, this desire expresses healthy, noble human instincts.

Biographical Notes

Arnold, Matthew (1822–1888). English writer and cultural critic who criticized the complacency of middle-class culture. His book *Culture and Anarchy* (1869) called for the study of the "best which has been thought" as an alternative to the daily newspapers.

Bacon, Francis (1561–1626). English government official and scientific writer who contributed to the modern scientific method by arguing that the careful observation of empirical evidence provides the foundation for reliable scientific knowledge.

Balzac, Honoré de (1799–1850). French writer whose fictional portraits of post-revolutionary society became part of the new literary "realism" in nineteenth-century France. He wrote some ninety novels in a series that he called *The Human Comedy*. Much of his work portrayed the ambitious pursuit of money and social status in modern Paris.

Bentham, Jeremy (1748–1832). English social and political theorist who became the most influential figure in the liberal movement called utilitarianism. A strong believer in rational social policies, Bentham advocated reforms to bring "the greatest happiness to the greatest number" of people in modern societies.

Burke, Edmund (1729–1797). The most important theorist in the new English conservatism that emerged during the revolutionary era of the 1790s. Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790) defended the value of traditional institutions and rights, which he described as an "inheritance" that each generation must protect and pass on to posterity. Burke's writings became a classic conservative critique of attempts to reform society on the basis of abstract theories.

Byron, George Gordon, Lord (1788–1824). English Romantic poet whose unconventional life and love affairs attracted as much attention as his poems. In such works as *Childe Harold* (1812), Byron described his voyages of self-discovery and created images of the Romantic artistic identity. He died in Greece, where he had gone to join the Greek war for national independence from Turkey.

Carlyle, Thomas (1795–1881). Scottish-born historian and creative writer whose work promoted a "Great Man" theory of history. Carlyle described the achievements of exceptional persons in the past (most notably in his book *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* [1841]), but he worried about the egalitarian political and social trends in nineteenth-century European nations.

Chateaubriand, François René, Vicomte de (1768–1848). French writer who helped to create the Romantic literary movement in France. Born into the upper class, Chateaubriand went into exile during the French Revolution and often expressed a sense of isolation in his later life in nineteenth-century Paris. His

fictional works, such as *René*, portrayed the lonely, intense life of the Romantic wanderer.

Coleridge, Samuel Taylor (1772–1834). English Romantic poet and writer whose descriptions of the imaginative, visionary artist helped to define the aesthetic theories of Romantic literature.

Comte, Auguste (1798–1857). The French social theorist who developed the ideas of positivism, a sociological theory that promoted the scientific description and solution of modern social problems. Comte coined the term *sociologist* to describe the scientific elites whom he saw as the prospective leaders of a new scientific social order.

Condorcet, Marquis de (1743–1794). A French philosophe of the late Enlightenment whose famous book, *Sketch of the Progress of the Human Mind* (1794), described the optimistic view of human progress. Condorcet was one of the few men who advocated equal political rights for women in the political debates of the French Revolution, but he died in prison after his arrest for "antirevolutionary" activity.

Constant, Benjamin (1767–1830). The leading liberal theorist in France during the French Restoration (1815–1830), Constant argued for the expansion of civil rights and political freedom. He wrote on the history of religion and portrayed the complexity of human emotions in his novel *Adolphe* (1816). He linked liberal political themes with the cultural themes of Romanticism.

Darwin, Charles (1809–1882). The most famous scientist of the nineteenth century, Darwin developed the theory of biological evolution after traveling in South America and after many years of research in England. His book *The Origin of Species* (1859) argued that animal species evolve because specific traits give certain organisms a better chance to survive in various natural environments. His view of nature and the evolutionary process provoked religious and social debates throughout the late nineteenth century.

Deroin, Jeanne (1805–1894). An early French feminist who wrote for Saint-Simonian newspapers. During the French Revolution of 1848, she published a journal (*Women's Opinion*) and demanded equal social and political rights for women. She argued that women's distinctive social role as mothers made them essential, well-qualified participants in French political life.

Descartes, René (1596–1650). A French philosopher whose *Discourse on Method* (1637) helped to define the modern scientific method. He viewed mathematics as a valuable tool for scientific studies and science as the means to gain new knowledge that would ensure human progress.

Diderot, Denis (1713–1784). A French writer who developed plans for publication of the famous *Encyclopedia* of the French Enlightenment. Diderot believed that this seventeen-volume work could spread the knowledge and

values of the modern "Republic of Letters" and that writing could help create a more enlightened future society.

Dostoevsky, Fyodor (1821–1881). Russian novelist whose literary works portrayed the complex desires and nonrational drives of the human mind. He traveled widely in Europe but defended Russia's distinctive cultural and religious traditions; he was also critical of the optimistic nineteenth-century faith in modern science.

Feuerbach, Ludwig (1804–1872). An influential "Left Hegelian" in Germany during the 1840s, Feuerbach developed an anthropological explanation and critique of religious beliefs in *The Essence of Christianity* (1841). His analysis of religion influenced the early writings of Karl Marx.

Fichte, Johann Gottlieb (1762–1814). An Idealist philosopher who contributed to the emergence of nineteenth-century German nationalism by stressing the distinctive historical and cultural "spirit" of the German people. His *Addresses to the German Nation* (1808) urged Germans to defend their national culture after Napoleon's French army occupied Berlin in 1807.

Flaubert, Gustave (1821–1880). French novelist and critic of the cultural clichés in nineteenth-century French society. In such novels as *Madame Bovary* (1857), Flaubert criticized the Romantic literary tradition, developed a new "realist" style of literary narrative, and explored the complex relation between language and experience.

Fourier, Charles (1772–1837). A French "utopian socialist" who devised plans for cooperative communes called *Phalanxes*. Fourier wanted to create communities in which people would work at jobs that matched their personal interests or passions and in which each person would receive a fair share of the wealth that the community produced.

Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von (1749–1832). German writer whose novels, plays, poetry, and autobiographical works made him the most influential cultural figure of his generation (and in all of modern German literature). His early novel, *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774), helped to shape the image of Romantic heroes.

Gouges, Olympe de (1748–1793). The best-known French advocate for women's rights during the French Revolution. De Gouges wrote the "Declaration of the Rights of Woman" (1791), which described the political, social, and legal rights that women should receive in the new French society. She was executed for "antirevolutionary" activities.

Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1770–1831). The German philosopher who viewed history as the unfolding expression of a transcendent spirit. Hegel said that this spirit could be seen in the progressive development of reason and freedom, which advanced through the conflicts of world history. His ideas

encouraged a new cultural interest in human history and in the philosophical meaning of historical change.

Herder, Johann Gottfried (1744–1803). One of the early German critics of the French Enlightenment belief in universal truths and universal laws. Herder emphasized the diversity of human cultures and the distinctive spirit (or *Volksgeist*) of the people in every cultural tradition. This idea became a common theme in modern nationalism.

Hugo, Victor (1802–1885). An influential writer in the French Romantic movement and in later political debates, Hugo challenged the aesthetic theories of eighteenth-century classicism in controversial works such as the play *Hernani* (1830). He also expressed political sympathy for the lower classes (e.g., in his novel *Les Miserables* [1862]) and went into exile to oppose the authoritarian government of Napoleon III.

Hume, David (1711–1776). Skeptical Scottish philosopher who argued that the senses cannot provide reliable knowledge (thus challenging Locke). Hume's critique raised questions about the limits of both empiricism and reason.

Kant, Immanuel (1724–1804). The German philosopher whose influential book *The Critique of Pure Reason* (1781) responded to Hume's skeptical view of human knowledge. Kant said that human understanding does not rely solely on the senses, because the mind encounters and interprets the world with its own pre-sensory structures or categories of thought. He also argued that human beings can agree on various truths through the use of reason—a recurring theme in nineteenth-century liberal political theory.

Keats, John (1795–1821). One of the important English Romantic poets. Keats argued that truth emerges in poetry and beauty (not simply in philosophy or science). He died young in Rome, thereby contributing to the cultural image of a Romantic poet's fate.

Kierkegaard, Sören (1813–1855). Danish philosopher and critic of modern European Christian churches. Kierkegaard described the anguish of human existence—an experience of dread that emerges from recognition of the conflict between the desire for life and the inevitability of death. Rejecting the rituals and clichés of modern religion and culture, Kierkegaard said that human beings must take a "leap of faith" toward God.

Locke, John (1632–1704). English philosopher and political theorist who helped to shape Enlightenment thought in two ways: (1) his view that people gain knowledge through their environment (after being born as "blank slates") encouraged belief in the practical value of social reform and education; (2) his concept of natural rights and the implicit political contract between people and their governments encouraged belief in the right of people to change their governments.

Lyell, Charles (1797–1875). English geologist whose work helped Charles Darwin develop his theory of evolution. Lyell's *Principles of Geology* (1830) argued that the earth changed slowly over long periods of time through uniform geological processes.

Maistre, Joseph de (1753–1821). An influential conservative political theorist from Savoy (now part of southeastern France). Maistre interpreted the French Revolution as a divine punishment for the Enlightenment's rejection of religion. He strongly supported a stable social order and hoped that such stability might emerge in France through the restoration of the French monarchy and the religious influence of the Catholic Church.

Malesherbes, Lamoignon de (1721–1794). Prominent French lawyer who defended King Louis XVI at his trial during the French Revolution. Malesherbes was executed during the Terror. He was the great-grandfather of the historian and political theorist Alexis de Tocqueville, whose work analyzed the legacy and meaning of the Revolution.

Malthus, Thomas Robert (1766–1834). English social theorist and economist who argued that population growth was bound to outstrip the supply of food, thus causing famine and social crises. His *Essay on the Principle of Population* (1798) influenced classical economic theory and later debates about the social effects of population growth.

Marx, Karl (1818–1883). German social theorist who developed many of the historical and economic theories that came to be called *communism*. Marx worked out his main ideas in Paris and London by drawing on French political concepts of revolution, English economic accounts of capitalism, and German Hegelian descriptions of historical change. He both used and redefined all these traditions in such works as *The German Ideology* (1845) and *Capital* (1867), which argued for a materialist view of history and social revolution.

Michelet, Jules (1798–1874). A prominent French historian and nationalist writer. Michelet taught history in Paris at the Collège de France and described the exceptional French sacrifices for freedom in various books, including *The People* (1846).

Mickiewicz, Adam (1798–1855). A Polish poet who lived in exile in Paris from the 1830s to 1850s. He lectured on Slavic literature at the Collège de France in the early 1840s and promoted the ideas of messianic nationalism. He argued that Poland was the Christ of nations; like Christ, Poland had been put to death, but the Polish nation would rise from the dead (also like Christ) to bring freedom and salvation to Europe.

Mill, James (1773–1836). A close friend of Jeremy Bentham and a leading advocate of British utilitarianism. He sought to implement his ideas by raising his son (John Stuart Mill) in accordance with strict utilitarian principles.

Mill, John Stuart (1806–1873). The leading liberal theorist in mid-nineteenth-century England. Mill argued for individual rights and for the tolerance of unpopular ideas and persons in his book *On Liberty* (1859). He also worked with Harriet Taylor—whom he eventually married—to develop an argument for women's rights. He summarized this argument in the influential book *On the Subjection of Women* (1869).

Montesquieu, Baron of (1689–1755). A French nobleman from the region around Bordeaux, Montesquieu developed an important Enlightenment-era political argument for the division of government powers in his book *The Spirit of the Laws* (1748). His work focused on the structures of government rather than on personalities.

Napoleon I (1769–1821). The military leader who seized power in France in late 1799, thus bringing an end to the republican government that had emerged during the French Revolution. Napoleon's military expansion created a large French-controlled empire, which lasted until 1814 and introduced legal reforms to many parts of Europe. New forms of nationalism and liberalism emerged among the opponents of Napoleon.

Napoleon III (1808–1873). His full name was Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, and he was the nephew of the first Napoleon. He was elected president of the Second French Republic after the Revolution of 1848, but he destroyed the Republic in late 1851 and became the emperor in the authoritarian government of the "Second Empire."

Newton, Isaac (1642–1727). The most acclaimed scientific genius of the scientific revolution. Newton described the law of universal gravitation (1687), thereby giving later European writers great confidence in science and an optimistic faith in the human ability to explain the mysteries of nature. This belief in scientific knowledge shaped the main themes of Enlightenment thought and the modern idea of progress.

Nietzsche, Friedrich (1844–1900). German philosopher and social critic. Stressing the "will to power" and the importance of instinctual drives, Nietzsche challenged the Western philosophical conception of reason, as well as the traditions of Christian morality. He celebrated the virtues of a small philosophical elite that might define its own moral values and create its own noble truths. His books, such as *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886), influenced later critiques of the Enlightenment and democratic cultures.

Owen, Robert (1771–1858). An English industrialist and "utopian socialist" who favored the creation of new industrial communities in which the workers' children received a good education and the workers themselves worked shorter hours for better wages. He created such communities with mixed success at New Lanarck in Scotland and New Harmony, Indiana.

Proudhon, Pierre Joseph (1809–1865). An early French socialist who once described private property as a form of "theft" and who promoted various plans to protect the economic interests and freedom of artisan-workers.

Quesnay, François (1694–1774). One of the French physiocrats, the eighteenth-century economic theorists who said that government should not interfere in the workings of the grain markets; the physiocrats used the term *laissez faire* to describe this idea.

Ricardo, David (1772–1823). The English economist whose book *The Principles of Political Economy* (1817) described an "Iron Law of Wages." According to this "law," workers' wages must remain low in capitalist economies, because higher wages would allow workers to have larger families, which would soon cause food shortages and social instability.

Robespierre, Maximilien (1758–1794). A prominent leader of the radical Jacobin faction during the French Revolution. Drawing on ideas from Rousseau, Robespierre wanted to create a Republic of Virtue. He supported the Terror as a means to defend the republic, but his execution in July 1794 ended the Revolution's most radical phase.

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques (1712–1778). The most influential French writer of the late Enlightenment. His arguments for equality and republicanism in such works as *The Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* (1754) and *The Social Contract* (1762) influenced the French Revolution and later political theorists. His writings on nature and education contributed to the emergence of early Romanticism.

Ruge, Arnold (1802–1880). A "Left Hegelian" journalist and social critic. Ruge worked with Karl Marx in Paris to produce the *German-French Yearbooks*, a radical journal that collapsed after the publication of one issue in 1844.

Saint-Simon, Henri, Comte de (1760–1825). French social theorist who argued that modern societies should be managed by expert planners. He claimed that engineers and scientists contributed far more to social progress than either the nobles or the clergy, and he envisioned a future society that scientists would run on the basis of enlightened scientific principles. Saint-Simonian groups promoted his ideas in Paris after his death.

Sand, George (1804–1876). Her real name was Aurore Dupin, but she wrote books under the pen name of George Sand. Her novels became popular throughout much of nineteenth-century Europe, and her life attracted as much attention as her books. Sand defied the gendered social conventions of her era, called for the legalization of divorce, and came to symbolize a new kind of creative, independent woman.

Schelling, Friedrich Wilhelm (1775–1854). German philosopher whose Idealist philosophy contributed to Romantic aesthetic theories. Schelling said that artists give material expression to the higher realm of the spirit. His ideas suggested

that artists played a unique cultural role because they helped other people understand the spirit.

Schiller, Friedrich von (1759–1805). German playwright, poet, and aesthetic theorist. His plays portrayed struggles for liberty, but he also helped to shape Romantic aesthetic theory in writings that stressed the need to reconcile beauty, morality, and the sublime.

Schlegel, Friedrich von (1772–1829). German aesthetic philosopher and the editor of an influential Romantic journal. Schlegel described Romantic poetry as an expression of change or "becoming," thereby drawing contrasts with classical art and shaping the early nineteenth-century conception of Romanticism.

Shelley, Mary (1797–1851). English writer and daughter of the feminist author Mary Wollstonecraft, the wife of a prominent Romantic poet. She wrote important fictional works, most notably the novel *Frankenstein* (1818).

Shelley, Percy Bysshe (1792–1822). English Romantic poet and political radical. A close friend of Lord Byron, Shelley identified with the French Revolution, wrote critical poems about the conservatism of British politics, and died young in a boating accident.

Smith, Adam (1723–1790). British economist and professor at Glasgow University. Smith's book *The Wealth of Nations* (1776) helped to shape the modern belief in the social and economic efficacy of free markets and laissez-faire capitalism.

Spencer, Herbert (1820–1903). British social theorist who promoted the ideas of Social Darwinism. Spencer argued that human societies resemble nature in that they evolve from lower to higher forms of organization. He also believed that human progress came about through struggles that resulted in the "survival of the fittest" (as in nature).

Staël, Germaine de (1766–1817). French writer who defended the liberal ideals of the French Revolution, defied the authoritarian empire of Napoleon Bonaparte, and contributed to French Romanticism in both her novels (e.g., *Corinne* [1807]) and cultural commentaries (e.g., *On Germany* [1810]). She was forced to live in exile in Switzerland, but her life and writings made her an enduring example of Romantic liberalism and the independent woman writer.

Stendhal (1783–1842). French novelist who criticized the superficial social and intellectual life of post-revolutionary French society. His novel *The Red and the Black* (1831) provided an influential literary depiction of modern (hollow) personal ambition.

Strauss, David Friedrich (1808–1874). German theologian and Left Hegelian philosopher whose controversial book *The Life of Jesus* (1835–1836) described what he called the "mythical" aspects of early Christian accounts of Jesus.

Taylor, Harriet (1807–1858). English writer and advocate of women's rights. She was a close friend of John Stuart Mill, who became her second husband in 1851; she worked closely with Mill to develop the themes of *The Subjection of Women*, the book he eventually published more than a decade after her death.

Tocqueville, Alexis de (1805–1859). French historian and political theorist. Seeking to understand the complex connections between liberty and equality, as well as the modern development of democracy, Tocqueville examined the social and political history of *liberty* in such works as *Democracy in America* (1835, 1840) and *The Old Regime and the Revolution* (1856).

Turgot, Jacques (1727–1781). French writer and one of the physiocrats—the economic theorists who advocated creation of a free (laissez-faire) market for the sale of grain in France. Turgot served in the 1770s as a reform-minded minister of King Louis XVI, but his laissez-faire economic policies provoked opposition and he was forced to resign.

Voltaire (1694–1778). French writer whose lively prose style and critiques of intolerance made him one of the most famous eighteenth-century philosophes. His descriptions of English science and intellectual life in his book *Letters on England* (1734) defined the main themes of Enlightenment thought. More generally, Voltaire helped to create the modern identity or cultural role of the "intellectual"—partly through his defense of reason and partly through his literary interventions in public debates or conflicts.

Wallace, Alfred Russel (1823–1913). English scientist who, while living in southeast Asia, developed a theory of biological evolution through the processes of natural selection. He sent a description of these ideas to Charles Darwin, thus prompting Darwin to publish his own long-developing ideas on evolution in *The Origin of Species* (1859).

Wordsworth, William (1770–1850). English Romantic poet whose celebration of nature and descriptions of human emotion helped to establish recurring themes in nineteenth-century Romantic literature.