





# Humanities (HUMN) 407

## The Enlightenment (Revision 2)

**Status:** Replaced with new revision, see the [course listing](#)  for the current revision 

**Delivery mode:** [Individualized study](#) 

**Credits:** 3

**Areas of study:** Arts or Humanities

**Prerequisites:** None. Before registering, it is strongly recommended that students have previous university-level history studies experience. This course is designed primarily for students in the last year of a BA major in History.

**Precluded:** HIST 405. HUMN 407 is a cross-listed course—a course listed under two different disciplines—with **HIST 407**. (HUMN 407 may not be taken for credit if credit has already been obtained for either HIST 405 or HIST 407.)

**Challenge:** HUMN 407 has a challenge for credit option.

## Overview

What exactly was the intellectual and cultural movement called the Enlightenment? In what way was it a continuation of the Scientific Revolution? How did it reflect changes in the structure of eighteenth-century European society and politics? Did Enlightenment ways of thinking result in the undermining or repudiation of Christianity? And did the Enlightenment philosophes succeed in creating the "science of freedom" for which some of them strove?

HUMN 407 examines the intellectual history of eighteenth-century Europe in the context of its social and political history, drawing upon the writings of leading historians of the subject as well as studying the works of leading French, German, and British thinkers from the period.

The course is divided into three parts. The first part of the course provides an overview of European political, social, intellectual, and cultural life in the seven decades before the outbreak of the French Revolution. The second part gives an introduction, interpretation, and analysis of the Enlightenment, relying on the work of one of the leading historians of this intellectual movement, Peter Gay. The last part examines Enlightenment thought first hand, using a wide variety of primary sources written by such thinkers as Voltaire, Rousseau, Helvetius, Diderot, Montesquieu, Swift, Hume, Smith, Kant, and Condorcet.

## Outline

### **Part I: Europe in the Eighteenth Century**

- Unit 1 – The Eighteenth Century: State and Society
- Unit 2 – The Eighteenth Century: Culture, Religion, and Rationalism

### **Part II: Interpreting the Enlightenment**

- Unit 3 – Interpreting the Enlightenment I: The Rise of Modern Paganism
- Unit 4 – Interpreting the Enlightenment II: The Science of Freedom

### **Part III: Enlightenment Thought: Primary Sources**

- Unit 5 – Primary Sources on Science, Religion, Ethics, and Epistemology
- Unit 6 – Primary Sources on Politics and Economics



## **Objectives**

This course aims to help you to understand the nature of the Enlightenment as an intellectual and cultural movement by exploring both the scholarly literature on eighteenth-century European thought and the original writings of influential philosophes.

After completing the course, you should be able to meet the following objectives:

1. Research and write effectively about the Enlightenment.
2. Outline the social and political background to the Enlightenment in Britain and on the continent of Europe.
3. Explain the main phases in the development of the Enlightenment as an intellectual movement.
4. Indicate the intellectual contributions made by each of the major philosophes.
5. Discuss the impact of Enlightenment thought on contemporary forms of Christianity.
6. Discuss the influence of Enlightenment thought on political developments during the eighteenth century, including the French Revolution.
7. Explain how some later Enlightenment thinkers anticipated the Romantic movement.

## **Evaluation**

To **receive credit**  for HUMN 407, you must achieve a course composite grade of at least **D (50 percent)**  and a grade of at least 50 percent on the final examination. The weighting of the course assignments is as follows:

Activity	Weight
Essay 1	25%
Essay 2	35%
Final Exam	40%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>


The **final examination** for this course must be requested in advance and written under the supervision of an AU-approved exam invigilator. Invigilators include either ProctorU or an approved in-person invigilation centre that can accommodate online exams. Students are responsible for payment of any invigilation fees. Information on exam request deadlines, invigilators, and other exam-related questions, can be found at the [Exams and grades](#) section of the Calendar.


To learn more about assignments and examinations, please refer to Athabasca University's [online Calendar](#).

## Materials

Gay, Peter. *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation. Volume 1, The Rise of Modern Paganism*. New York: Norton, 1977.  (Print)

Gay, Peter. *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation. Volume 2, The Science of Freedom*. New York: Norton, 1977.  (Print)

Anthony Pagden, *The Enlightenment and Why It Still Matters*. New York: Random House, 2013.  (Online)

Woloch, Isser, and Gregory S. Brown. *Eighteenth-Century Europe: Tradition and Progress, 1715-1789* (2nd ed.). New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2012.  (PDF)

## Other Materials

The course materials include a Study Guide, Course Information, and online articles.

## Challenge for credit

### Overview

The challenge for credit process allows you to demonstrate that you have acquired a command of the general subject matter, knowledge, intellectual and/or other skills that would normally be found in a university-level course.

Full information about **challenge for credit** [↗](#) can be found in the Undergraduate Calendar.

### Evaluation

To **receive credit** [↗](#) for the HUMN 407 challenge registration, you must achieve a grade of at least **D (50 percent)** [↗](#) on the entire challenge examination.



[Challenge for credit course registration form](#)

### Important links

- › [Academic advising](#) [↗](#)
- › [Program planning](#) [↗](#)
- › [Request assistance](#) [↗](#)
- › [Support services](#) [↗](#)

Athabasca University reserves the right to amend course outlines occasionally and without notice. Courses offered by other delivery methods may vary from their individualized study counterparts.

*Updated November 14, 2023*

View **previous revision** 

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