

Introduction to Intellectual History

This reading seminar will introduce undergraduates to the study of intellectual history. By reading, discussing, and writing about works that examine and exemplify different approaches to the historical study of ideas, students will become acquainted with the range of practices characteristic of the field. Students will also be guided through the stages of writing a critical essay on a topic of their choice. The course is designed primarily for current and future history concentrators, but it will be open for credit, with the consent of the instructor, to those with similar interests. In the past, students concentrating in History and Literature, Social Studies, Government, English and American Literature, Government, and Philosophy have also enrolled in versions of this course.

All titles preceded by a number sign (#) are available for purchase at the Coop and are on reserve in Lamont. All titles preceded by an asterisk (*) are available on the course i-site.

All students will be required to attend class each week and participate actively in discussion (30% of your grade) and write three papers during the semester (10%, 20%, and 40% of your grade, respectively). Unless you are ill and provide a signed explanation from the University Health Service, the grades of late papers will be lowered for each day they are late (e.g., a grade of B+ becomes a B if the paper is one day late, a B- if two days late, etc.). The first paper (2-4 pages), on methods of analysis in intellectual history, is due Monday, Feb. 15, by noon. The second paper (3-5 pages), on competing interpretations of the role of Enlightenment ideas in democratic revolutions, is due Monday, Feb. 28, by noon. The third paper (8-10 pages), a critical analysis focused on a topic of your choice concerning intellectual historians' interpretations of an issue, event, or individual, will be due Friday, May 6, at noon. Among the many possibilities, you might consider topics such as an aspect of the American or French Revolutions or issues relating to the thought of individuals such as Jefferson, Madison, Sieyès, Robespierre, Frederick Douglass, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Abraham Lincoln, or John Stuart Mill.

My office hours, in Robinson 201, will be Thursdays from 3:30 to 5:00. To make an appointment, please contact Elena Palladino (epalladino@fas.harvard.edu).

1. Jan. 27: Introduction: An overview of the history of intellectual history

2. Feb. 3: Varieties of intellectual history

*Arthur O. Lovejoy, "Reflections on the History of Ideas," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 1 (1940), 3-23.

*Quentin Skinner, "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas," *History and Theory*, 8 (1969), 1-53.

*Anthony Grafton, "The History of Ideas: Precept and Practice, 1950-2000 and Beyond," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 67 (2006), 1-32.

*Peter E. Gordon, "What Is Intellectual History? A Frankly Partisan Introduction to a Frequently Misunderstood Field," Harvard History Department website.

3. Feb. 10: What do Intellectual Historians Study?

*Robert Darnton, "Intellectual History or Cultural History," in Michael Kammen, ed., *The Past Before Us: Contemporary Historical Writing in the United States* (Ithaca, 1980), pp. 327-49.

*Martin Jay, "The Textual Approach to Intellectual History," in Jay, *Force Fields: Between Intellectual History and Cultural Critique* (New York, 1993), pp. 158-66.

*David A. Hollinger, "The MVHR, the JAH, and Intellectual History: From the Margins and the Mainstream," in Richard Kirkendall, ed., *One Hundred Years of Scholarly Journals of the Organization of American Historians* (Oxford University Press, forthcoming, 2010).

*James T. Kloppenberg, "Intellectual History, Democracy, and the Culture of Irony," in Melvin Stokes, ed., *The State of American History* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 199-222.

4. Feb. 17: The Place of Ideas in the Professionalization of History

#Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity" Question and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 1-46, 522-72.

*James T. Kloppenberg, "Objectivity and Historicism: A Century of American Historical Writing," *American Historical Review*, 94 (1989), 1011-30.

5. Feb. 24: Explaining Change: Can Books Cause Revolutions?

#Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*, rev. edn. (Cambridge, Mass., 1992), pp. 1-54.

*Keith Michael Baker, "On the Problem of the Ideological Origins of the French Revolution," in Baker, *Inventing the French Revolution: Essays on French Political Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 12-27.

*Roger Chartier, "Do Books Make Revolutions?," in Chartier, *The Cultural Origins of the French Revolution*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Durham, NC, 1991), pp. 67-91.

*Robert Darnton, "Do Books Cause Revolutions?," in Darnton, *The Forbidden Best-sellers of Eighteenth-Century France* (New York, 1995), pp. 169-97.

*Laurent Dubois, "An Enslaved Enlightenment: Re-Thinking the Intellectual History of the French Atlantic," *Social History* 31 (2006), 1-14.

6. March 3: Understanding Slavery, Antislavery, and Self-Mastery

#Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life*, 1845.

*John Stuart Mill and Thomas Carlyle on slavery, 1850.

* Elizabeth Clark, “‘The Sacred Rights of the Weak’: Pain, Sympathy, and the Culture of Individual Rights in Antebellum America,” *The Journal of American History* 82 (September 1995): 463-493.

7. March 10: Antislavery, Self-Mastery, and Union

#*The Portable Abraham Lincoln*, ed. Andrew Delbanco, selections.

8. March 24: Liberty and the Subjection of Women

#Mill, *On Liberty*, 1859; *On the Subjection of Women*, 1869

9. March 31: Self-Understanding and Self-Deception

#Mill, *Autobiography*, 1873

10. April 7: Reports on interpretations of Douglass, Stowe, and/or Lincoln

11. April 14: Reports on interpretations of Tocqueville and/or Mill

12. April 21: Intellectual History and Contemporary Politics

#James T. Kloppenberg, *Reading Obama: Dreams, Hope, and the American Political Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011).