Unit Three: The Eighteenth Century, Enlightenment and Revolution, 1715-1815
The Eighteenth century culminated the movement toward modernity that started in the Renaissance era. Advances in agriculture and the resulting demographic shifts caused varying social, intellectual, cultural and political changes to occur. These shifts included a religious reform period, shifts in family patterns and practices, changing views towards children and popular education, shifts in and among dynastic wealth and power, and of course the Enlightenment and its consequent revolutionary ideals. The century began relatively quietly and ended with two political and social revolutions in North America and in France. These Revolutions ushered in the nineteenth century that would early on witness in Napoleon the creation of an empire built on enlightenment concepts yet strangely reminiscent of earlier despotic regimes.

The historically prominent aspect of this century centered on the work of the philosophes. These philosophes attacked medieval otherworldliness, dethroned theology from its once-proud position as leader of the sciences, and based their understanding of nature and society on reason alone, unaided by revelation or priestly authority. Eighteenth century philosophies were particularly influenced by the seventeenth century social contract theories proposed by Englishmen Thomas Hobbes and John Locke. Religious toleration, individual liberty, and the place of the state became the center of political and economic debate ending eventually in the American and French Revolutions.

Overall the eighteenth century Enlightenment expressed basic principles of the west’s modern outlook: certainty in the self-sufficiency of the human mind, conviction that individuals possess natural rights that states should not violate, and the desire to reform society in harmony with rational principles. These principles would form the basis of nineteenth century conflict and debate starting with the contentious wars of revolution and the resultant Napoleonic Empire.
Life in the 18th Century: More modern than not?

Class 1 & 2: Eighteenth Century Economics, or Big, Fat Cow is not an insult
Purpose: Does one event or “discovery” have the ability to change society alone?
Readings: The Expansion of Europe, McKay (6) 629-656, (7) 629-656, (8) 629-656
Tasks: Complete two of the four sections below:

Section One: Agriculture
1. What problems faced peasants in the 17th century? What solutions were proposed and attempted?
2. What did it take for an 18th century peasant family to survive?
3. Compare the picture on page 632 and page 635. How do these pictures represent agriculture in the 17th century?

Section Two: Population
1. What were the limits on population growth prior to the 18th century?
2. Account for the dramatic population increase in Europe in the 18th century.
3. In what way does the photograph on page 635 account for the population increases as seen in charts 19.1 and 19.2?

Section Three: Proto-industrialization
1. How did the “putting out” system work in the European countryside?
2. Describe the manufacture of textiles in the cottage.
3. Describe the lifestyle of the family in the painting, the Weaver’s Repose.
4. In what way were weavers similar to 20th century students?

Section 4: Economic Development
1. Summarize the relationship among European nations in terms of mid-Atlantic trade.
2. Describe the economic revival in Colonial Latin America.

Class 3: New Life for an Old People
Purpose: What are the characteristics of a successful civilization?
Readings: The Changing Life of People, McKay (6) 661-685, (7) 661-685, (8) 661-685
Tasks: 1. Take notes on two of the following areas.

Section One: Marriage and the Family
Purpose: How did the European family change in this period?

Section Two: Children and Education
Purpose: What was it like being a child in the 18th century?

Section Three: Food and Medical Practice
Purpose: How did improving health and life expectancy impact Europe?

Section Four: Religion and Popular Culture
Purpose: How did church authorities react to popular religious practice?
2. Be prepared to share your notes in class.

Before potatoes were abundant beyond South America, turnips were everyday staples, particularly in Europe during the Middle Ages. The origins of the turnip are vague but it may have come from northeastern Europe or Asia many thousands of years ago. Thriving in a cold, damp climate, turnips were the food of Europe’s poor, the majority of the population. At some undetermined point in history, the less nutritious turnip gave up its role as everyday vegetable to the more nutritious spud.

In 1730, Charles “Turnip” Townshend, a British politician, imported Dutch-grown turnips. He wanted to see if his livestock could survive in good health throughout the winter on a diet of turnips. In those days it was expensive to grow and store hay all winter so most people killed their livestock in the fall. This practice left people with too much meat, all at one time. Townshend proved that with turnips, easy to grow and store, farmers could fatten cattle through the winter and slaughter only as needed.

Class 4: Changes in Elite Thinking, or Shake, Rattle and Change

Purpose: Was the Lisbon Quake of 1755 the cause the change of or reinforce of the change in thought of the elite?

Readings:
- *The Enlightenment*, McKay (6) 604-611, (7) 605-612

Tasks:
1. What are the three reasons the Enlightenment reached its height in France?
2. Take notes on the ideas of the following people:
   - Voltaire
   - Condorcet
   - Diderot
   - Rousseau
   - Hume
   - Kant
3. What role did women play in the Enlightenment?

Class 5: Enlightenment Documents: Kant, Wollstonecraft and Beccaria

Purpose: Which author do you consider most significant to concerns today?

Readings:
- Kant, “What is Enlightenment?”, Reader IX, pp. 343-346
- *The Vindication of the Rights of Women*, Reader IX, pp. 342, 346-349

Tasks:
Read one of the three excerpts listed above. Make notations for class discussion.

Class 6: Frederick, Catherine and Maria Theresa, Absolutely Despotic and Enlightened Thinkers

Purpose: Do these rulers follow Machiavelli’s ‘be feared’ precept or is this just ‘tough love’?

Readings:
- *The Enlightenment and Absolutism*, McKay (6) 614-623, (7) 615-624, (8) 615-623

Tasks:
1. Summarize the actions of Frederick, Maria Theresa and her son, and Catherine.
2. You are Paris in his unenviable task. Approached by Frederick of Prussia, Maria Theresa and Joseph of Austria and Catherine of Russia, you are asked to determine which ruler was the best Enlightened Despot. Good Luck. Be prepared to read your answer in class.

**Continental Cafes and Coffee-houses**

Because English coffee-houses provide the most well-documented and instructive example of the political history of European coffee-houses, most ... analysis focuses on England. However, a brief history of French coffee-houses, ... will demonstrate the differences between the political role of coffee-houses on the continent and those in England. Cafes were very different from the traditional coffee-house; they served food and liquor, were decorated with large mirrors and extravagant wall-hangings to create an atmosphere of luxury for their almost exclusively elite, upper-class clientele. Patrons from the cultural elite, including women, frequented Parisian cafes to appear fashionable and to showcase their etiquette. Although economics, literature, and politics often became topics of discussion, Parisian cafes did not have a reputation of being the hub of news and debate like English.

Parisian coffee-houses developed with a unique character, both in terms of their atmosphere and their function within the French political scene. They emerged quite a bit later than their English counterparts, not gaining widespread popularity until the early eighteenth century. Women are mentioned more often in accounts of French coffee-houses than those of English coffee-houses, but it is unclear whether this meant a significant difference in the inclusion of women in political discussions. Before the volatile years leading up to the French Revolution, most of the intense political debate, economic interaction, and scientific and literary discussions that were common in English coffee-houses were taking place in salons, Masonic lodges, academic institutions, and debating clubs. Leading French intellectuals were known to host weekly salons in their homes for the purpose of facilitating political or academic debate.

The French authorities were undoubtedly concerned with the radical political conversations taking place at the coffee-houses. The police undertook efforts to conduct surveillance on coffee-houses and infiltrate the inner-circles of the political groups that met there. Interestingly, the French authorities were more concerned with the biological effects of coffee itself than by the goings-on in the coffee-houses. They were concerned that their subjects, fortified and emboldened by coffee and its ability to stave off fatigue, would stay awake all night and become vulnerable to radical ideologies and public opinion. Finding itself in dire financial straits, the French government could not afford to deny licenses to coffee-house owners. Furthermore, like those who would oppose King Charles II’s decree that all coffee-houses in England should be closed, French authorities saw the coffee-house as a harm less safety-valve for allowing the disgruntled bourgeoisie to voice its political dissent.

**The Paris Project**

Maria Theresa (r. 1740-1780)  
Joseph II (r. 1765-1790)

Frederick II the Great  
(r. 1740-1786)

Catherine II the Great  
(r. 1762-1796)

**Class 7: DBQ**

**Purpose:** Explain the reasons for the adoption of a new calendar in revolutionary France and analyze reactions to it in the period 1789 to 1806.

**Historical Background:** On November 24, 1793, the National Convention adopted a revolutionary calendar to replace the Gregorian calendar (established by the Roman Catholic Church in 1582). New Year’s Day was moved from January 1 to September 22, the founding date of the French Republic, and this date in 1792 marked the beginning of Year One. The months were renamed, assigned a uniform 30 days and divided into 3 weeks of 10 days each (décade). The remaining 5 days of the year were to be celebrated as republican festivals (sans-culottides) in honor of Virtue, Intelligence, Labor, Opinion, and Rewards. The revolutionary calendar continued through the republican era but was eventually abolished by Napoleon I in 1806.
Dress during [the French Revolution] goes through a massive shift. Late 18th Century women’s dress collapses from its padded and puffed look to a thin, often translucent silhouette. As the French Revolution progressed, different women’s styles were adopted that appeared to have reference to the revolutionary politics, social structure and philosophy of the time. In the early 1790’s, for example, the “English” or man-tailored style was favored as it hinted towards the leanings of constitutional monarchy. There was a brief fashion for plain dresses in dark colors during the Terror of 1792, but when the Directory took over French fashion again went wild, trying out “Rousseauesque” fashions in “Greek”, “Roman”, “Sauvage” and “Otaheti” (Tahitian) styles. The Pseudo-“Greek” look proved most popular and was adopted as the standard style in Europe in the late 1790’s.

While Men’s Costume in the 1790’s also becomes thinner in line, it separates it’s style from women’s dress by beginning to lose nearly all forms of surface decoration, lace and bright color, as “irrational” and feminine effluvia. This change is slow, but it completely alters men’s dress by the mid 19th Century into dull dark uniform dress. Other major changes include the adoption of trousers from the dress of sailors and the urban proletariat of the French Revolution, the passing of the fashions for wigs and hair powder. The bonnet is invented as a hat that is meant to look like a Greek helmet, but it quickly is altered in style out of all resemblance to the original.

Probably due to post Revolutionary backlash against female influence in politics, in [The Neoclassical Period 1800-1825], the sexual dichotomy in dress becomes more pronounced in this era. The direction of fashions towards Neo Classical dress for women, and increasingly drab utilitarian dress on men, continue in a steady manner in this very stylistically stable period.

Women’s dress locks into a pattern of light colored muslin gowns, high waisted with little puffed sleeves, and pseudo-Greek hairstyles. As the period proceeds, the originally simple lines of these gowns are increasingly decorated with ruffle and puffs, the skirts get puffed out with petticoats, the waist lowers and tightens with corsets, until by 1825 it is hard to see how the style worn was ever imagined to look Greek.

Men’s clothing in this era becomes less and less adventurous in style. The few outlets for male fashion expression (boots, hats, collars and neckties) therefore go to extremes. Neckties in this period were especially important.
Historians who examine Europe and the events of late eighteenth and early to mid-nineteenth century often refer to the period as the “dual revolution.” While political systems were loudly altering the concept of the state, sovereignty and the citizen, economic systems were quietly and almost imperceptibly transforming society in, arguably, a far more permanent manner. This unit examines the roots of the quietly developing industrial revolution as well as the post Napoleonic concepts of liberalism and conservatism and their by-products: nationalism, socialism and romanticism.

Key forces in this period were the conservative aristocrats and the middle-class and working-class liberals and nationalists. Conservatives wanted to maintain the status quo and reinstate a sense of traditional European values and practices. Liberals and nationalists sought to carry on the destruction of the old regime of Europe that had begun in France in 1789. The symbol of conservatism in this period was Prince Metternich of Austria, Europe’s leading diplomat. Metternich was convinced that liberalism and nationalism were destructive forces that had to be repressed. In opposition, liberals and nationalists vehemently and relentlessly pushed their creeds as ways to free humanity from the burden of supporting a lazy aristocracy and from the threats of foreign oppression.

Ultimately these forces and their dreams for Europe collided in 1848, a year of revolutions and upheavals. Of the major powers that dealt directly with these forces, only Britain managed to balance reform with traditional systems and thus remained untouched by revolution. For the rest of Europe, the result was the birth of a new type of European leadership, neither totally liberal, nor totally conservative. The leaders of this new Europe would eventually become known as nationalists who themselves would grapple with even more debate and discussion among the ideologically charged environment of late nineteenth century Europe.

Class 11: The General, the Consul and the Emperor or Napoleon takes over Europe
Purpose: Is Napoleon a liberator or oppressor?
Readings:
- The Napoleonic Era, 1799-1815,
  McKay (6) 712-720, (7) 712-720, (8) 712-720
- The Code of Napoleon,
  Reader IX, 363-365

Tasks:
1. Take notes on the Napoleon’s actions in Europe.
2. What happens to the position of women in the Napoleonic Code?
3. Propaganda in Art. Examine one of the pictures in the box to the right. In what way may it be considered propaganda? You may need to do basic research on the painting you choose.

Class 12: Post Waterloo, or Let’s go to Vienna and Dance
Purpose: Do “entrenched” interests accept change?
Readings:
- The Congress of Vienna,
  Reader X, 375-376
- The Settlement of 1815 Appraised,
  Reader X, 377-378

Tasks:
1. Was the Congress of Vienna doomed to failure due to the failure to include the “lesser” states? Are there any historical connection you are able to make with this time period?

2. Many scholars criticize the Congress of Vienna for not taking “national” aspirations into account whereas the 1919 Peace Conference in Paris followed that principle. What is the argument this author makes about the comparison?

Class 13: Essay and Multiple Choice Test: The Age of Enlightenment and Revolution

Class 14: DBQ
Europe in 1715

Europe in 1789

Empire of Napoleon at its height
1810-1811

Europe 1815
Congress of Vienna