

HISTORY BC 3368
Fall 2020
Wednesday 12:10-2:00 pm

Prof. Deborah Valenze
218 Lefrak, dvalenze@barnard.edu
office hours: T 1:00-3:00 pm & by appt.

History of the Senses in Britain and France, 1680 – 1830



This course will trace the evolution of European awareness of the human senses and their power by exploring the production and reception of different forms of art, music, literature, food, and sensual enjoyments. Beginning in the late seventeenth century, new theories of human understanding and sense perception ushered in a quest to define the senses as determinative of what it meant to be human. Theorists debated whether or not such capacities were linked to moral faculties, social tendencies, or constituted as good in and of themselves. With confidence in the power of reason, Europeans gradually relinquished fears relating to the power of the passions, entertaining the notion of their potential for beneficial influence. The popularity of novels, enthusiasm for travel, and the development of leisure activities in the public sphere signaled a greater value placed on contemplating an awareness of interiority and its connections to a variety of sensations. Readings will explore ideas associated with aesthetic value and the championing of taste, which worked to categorize responses to art, music, and nature. We will also examine cultural activities as they absorbed aspects of national and civic interests, exhibited in the professions of art, music, and literature.

The course will require regular attendance (absence requires consultation with the instructor; more than two will impinge on your grade), weekly participation in discussion, possible in-class writing exercises, and one class presentation (30%); one essay of six pages, due March 8, on a topic of your choice, to be drawn from *any* unit of the syllabus (30%); and a lengthy *research* paper (primary sources are required) extending the earlier essay (20 pages), due at the end of the term (40%). We will also have one required field trip to an opera performance in addition to the required museum visit during class time at the end of the term.

Textbooks available for purchase at Book Culture, 536 W. 112th St.:

Rebecca Spang, *The Invention of the Restaurant*.

James Johnson, *Listening in Paris: A Cultural History*.

Tim Blanning, *The Romantic Revolution*.
 Mary Hays, *Emma Courtney*. (Oxford UP pbk edition)

Please purchase from the Internet:

Henry Abelove, *The Evangelist of Desire: John Wesley and the Methodists*.
 Gilbert White, *The Natural History of Selborne* (Oxford U Press edition).

Learning objectives, or what you can expect to learn from taking this course:

- an appreciation for the diversity and complexity of human experience
- a critical understanding of the relationship between past events and modern life
- an ability to conduct close readings of key texts, primary and secondary
- an ability to analyze and interpret historical material
- the skill of responding constructively and critically to the views of others
- the skill of presenting arguments cogently and logically in writing and speaking

Some of you may wish to supplement your knowledge with a general text on the Enlightenment. There are several available, most notably, those you'll use in Unit I (by Porter and Roche), another by Peter Gay, and a short student-styled text (*Enlightenment*, published in 1990) by Roy Porter. If you want to refresh your memory with a general text on European history, try the following:

Isser Woloch and Gregory S. Brown, *Eighteenth-Century Europe* (Norton, 2012).

Readings marked with an asterisk (*) will be available on Courseworks and (in most cases) on reserve in Wollman Library on the ground floor of Lehman Hall at Barnard.

For your browsing enjoyment, here's an anthropology website on sensory studies: <http://www.sensorystudies.org/> and for research purposes, please look into:

Electronic Enlightenment (an award-winning database):
<http://www.e-enlightenment.com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/search/>

Early modern letters online:
<http://emlo.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/>

I. From Sinful to Satisfying: Identifying the Senses in Historical Context (January 25)

*Roy Porter, *The Enlightenment: Britain and the Creation of the Modern World*, Chap. 7, "Anatomizing Human Nature," pp. 156-83 [27]

*Daniel Roche, *France and the Enlightenment*, the section beginning with "Happiness, Energy, Anxiety" to end of chapter, pp. 595-607 [12] and Chap 19, "Materializing the Intelligence," pp. 608-40 [32].

Constance Classen, "The Senses," in Peter N. Stearns (ed.), *Encyclopedia of European Social History From 1350-2000*, 4 (Gale, 2001), available through CLIO: <http://go.galegroup.com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/ps/i.do?id=GALE|CX3460500202&v=2.1&u=columbiau&it=r&p=GVRL&sw=w>

*Jan Plamper, *The History of Emotions: An Introduction*, Chap. 1, "History and Emotions: An Introduction," pp. 1-39.

*Leigh Eric Schmidt, *Hearing Things: Religion, Illusion, and the American Enlightenment*, "Introduction" and Chap. 1, "Hearing Loss," pp. 1-37.

*Alain Corbin, *Village Bells: Sound and Meaning in the 19th-century Countryside*, Chap. 1, "An Impossible Revolution in the Culture of the Senses," pp. 3-44.

*John E. Crowley, "Homely Pleasures: The Pursuit of Comfort in the Eighteenth Century," in *The Book of Touch*, ed. Constance Classen, pp. 82-91.

Handout: Thomas Wright, *The Passions of the Mind* (1604).

Further (not required) Reading:

Carl Nordenfalk, "The Five Senses in Late Medieval and Renaissance Art," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 48 (1985): 1-22.

Paul Oskar Kristeller, "The Modern System of the Arts: A Study in the History of Aesthetics," Pt. I, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (Oct., 1951), pp. 496-527; Pt. II, Vol. 13, No. 1 (Jan., 1952), pp. 17-46. (This can be read through CLIO and J-STOR from your own computer.)

E. Fubini, ed., *Music and Culture in Eighteenth-Century Europe*, Chap. 1, "The First Polemics on Opera in Italy," pp. 35-65.

II. The Advance of Human Technos: Body or Mind? (February 1)

*Ann C. Vila, *Enlightenment and Pathology: Sensibility in the Literature and Medicine of Eighteenth-Century France*, Chap. 3, "The Medicalization of the Enlightenment," pp. 80-107; Chap. 7, "Moral Anthropology," pp. 225-56 [58]

Jessica Riskin, *Science in the Age of Sensibility: The Sentimental Empiricists of the French Enlightenment*, Chap. 1, "Introduction," and Chap. 2, "The Blind and the Mathematically Inclined," pp. 1-67. Available as an e-Book through CLIO:

<http://site.ebrary.com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/lib/columbia/docDetail.action?docID=10433763>

*Berys Gaut and D. M. Lopes, eds., *Routledge Companion to Aesthetics* "Empiricism," pp. 37-47. [10]

*John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689), Book 2, Chap. 1, sec. 1-2; Chap. 2, sec. 1-3; Chap. 8, sec. 8-13.; Book 4, chap. 11, sec. 1-3. [ca 15 in all] [this can also be read on line through electronic sources via CLIO]

*Julien Offray de la Mettrie, *Man a Machine* (1747) and

*Jean d'Alembert, 'Preliminary Discourse' to the Encyclopedia (1751), in Paul Hyland, et al., eds., *The Enlightenment*, pp. 15-17; 49-53

*E. Fubini, ed., *Music and Culture in Eighteenth-Century Europe*, Chap. 8, "Sensism and Empirical Currents," pp. 320-39. (19)

Further Reading:

G.S. Rousseau and Roy Porter, eds. *The Ferment of Knowledge: Studies in the Historiography of Eighteenth-Century Science* (1980).

G.S. Rousseau, *Enlightenment Crossings: Pre- and Post-Modern Discourses: Anthropological* (1991), esp. Chap. 5, "Nerves, Spirits, and Fibres: Towards an Anthropology of Sensibility."

Thomas W. Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (1990).

III. Ranking the Passions: The Senses and Taste in the Eighteenth Century (February 8)

*Morris H. Abrams, "Art-as-Such," *Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, Vol. 38, No. 6 (March, 1985), pp. 8-33.

*Constance Classen, "Introduction: Through the Looking Glass" and Chap. 1, "The Odour of the Rose," *Worlds of Sense: Exploring the Senses in History and Across Cultures*, pp. 1-36.

*Mark S.R. Jenner, "Follow Your Nose? Smell, Smelling, and Their Histories," *American Historical Review* [AHR] Vol. 116, No. 2 (April, 2011), pp. 335-51.

Alain Corbin, *The Foul and the Fragrant: Odor and the French Social Imagination* [E-book available through CLIO]: Introduction and all of Part I (chaps. 1-5), pp. 1-88.

*Denis Dutton, *The Art Instinct*, Chap. 9, "The Contingency of Aesthetic Values," pp. 203-219.

*Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson, "The Senses of Taste," *AHR*, Vol. 116, No. 2 (April, 2011), pp. 371-84.

**Routledge Companion to Aesthetics*, "Taste," pp. 193-202. [9]

Further Reading:

David Hume, "Of the Standard of Taste," *Selected Essays*.

William Weber, "The Music Festival and the Oratorio Tradition," *The Rise of Musical Classics in Eighteenth-Century England*, pp. 103-42.

IV. Mastering the Passions: The Construction of the Sensible Individual (February 15)

*Joseph Addison, "The Pleasures of the Imagination," *Spectator*, Nos. 412 and 416.

*Peter de Bolla, *Education of the Eye*, Introduction and Chapter 1, "The Culture of Visuality," pp. 1-71.

*John Brewer, *Pleasures of the Imagination*, Chap. 15, "'Queen Muse of Britain': Anna Seward of Lichfield and the Literary Provinces," pp. 573-612. [49]

*William Weber, "Did People Listen in the Eighteenth Century?" *Early Music*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (Nov., 1997), pp. 678-91.

**"The Baroque Sonata," "Modern Concert Life is Born," "The Art of Music Reduced to Rational Principles," "The Earliest Musical Conservatories," "Castrato Singers," "The Piano is Invented" and "Addison and Steele Poke Fun at Handel's First London Opera," in Piero Weiss and Richard Taruskin, eds., *Music in the Western World*, pp. 207-12; 220-229; 238-42. [20]

Further Reading:

Music in the Western World: A History in Documents: "Music as a Proper Occupation for the British Female," pp. 335-6.

Richard Leppert, *The Sight of Sound: Music, Representation, and the History of the Body* (1993). (also see other works by Leppert)

Ludmilla Jordanova, "Feminine Figures: Nature Display'd," *Nature Displayed: Gender, Science and Medicine, 1760-1820*, pp. 21-47

Anne Vincent-Buffault, *The History of Tears : Sensibility and Sentimentality in France*.

V. Policing the Senses: Touch and Sensuality (February 22)

*G. J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, Chapter 2, "The Reformation of Male Manners," pp. 37-65 and 98-103 only. [33]

*Adam Gopnik, "Feel Me," *The New Yorker*, May 16, 2016:

<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/05/16/what-the-science-of-touch-says-about-us>

*Thomas Laqueur, *Solitary Sex*, Chap. 4, "The Problem with Masturbation," pp. 185-245. [60]

*Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, Chap. 1, "Repressive Hypothesis," pp. 17-35. [18]

Mark M. Smith, *Sensing the Past*, Chap. 5, "Touching," pp. 93-116.

Further Reading:

Sander Gilman, "Touch, Sexuality and Disease," in W. F. Bynum and Roy Porter, eds., *Medicine and the Five Senses* (1993), pp. 198-224.

Ashley Montagu, *Touching: The Human Significance of the Skin* (1971), esp. pp. 236-88.

Elizabeth Harvey, ed., *Sensible Flesh* (2003).

Linda Holler, *Erotic Morality: The Role of Touch in Moral Agency* (2002).

VI. The Sense of Taste: Food and the Body (March 1)

*Mark M. Smith, *Sensing the Past*, Chap. 4, "Tasting," pp. 75-92.

Rebecca Spang, *The Invention of the Restaurant*, Intro., pp. 1-11; Chap. 2, pp. 34-63; Chap. 7, pp. 170-206; Chap. 8, pp. 207-33; Epilogue, pp. 234-45. [c. 110]

John Wesley, *Primitive Physick* (1747), Preface, available on line:
<http://gbgm-umc.org/health/johnwesley.stm#glossary>
 Henry Abelove, *The Evangelist of Desire: John Wesley and the Methodists*,
 Chaps. 1 – 6, pp. 1-95.

Further Reading:

Christopher Forth, ed., *Cultures of the Abdomen: Diet, Digestion, and Fat in the Modern World* (2005).

Priscilla P. Ferguson, *Accounting for Taste: The Triumph of French Cuisine* (2003).

Stephen Mennell, *All Manners of Food: Eating and Taste in England and France from the Middle Ages to the Present* (1996).

Jean-Louis Flandrin and Massimo Montanari, eds., *Food: A Culinary History* (1999).

VII. A Feeling for Others: The Rise of Humanitarian Projects (March 8)

***** First essay assignment due this week *****

*Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*, “New Sensibilities,” pp. 173-91.
 [18]

*Marchese di Beccaria, *On Crimes and Punishments* (1764), excerpts in
The Enlightenment, Paul Hyland et al., pp. 216-20. [4]

*Mary Wollstonecraft, *Original Stories from Real Life* [1788; repr., 1796], Chaps.
 I-VI.

*Thomas Laqueur, “Bodies, Details, and the Humanitarian Narrative,” in Lynn
 Hunt, *The New Cultural History*, pp. 176-204. [28]

Further Reading:

Thomas L. Haskell, “Capitalism and the Origins of the Humanitarian Sensibility,”
 Pts. I and II, *American Historical Review* 90, No. 2 and 3 (April and June, 1985), pp.
 339-61 and 547-66.

Howard Temperley, “Capitalism, Slavery and Ideology,” *Past and Present* 75
 (1977).

Moira Ferguson, *Subject to Others: British Women Writers and Colonial Slavery, 1670-1834* (1992).

VIII. “Feeling” and the Senses : Fictional Worlds and the Emotions (March 22)

Mary Hays, *Memoirs of Emma Courtney* [1796].

Further Reading:

Charlotte Lennox, *The Female Quixote* [1752].
 J.-J. Rousseau, *La Nouvelle Heloise* [1761].
 Henry Mackenzie, *The Man of Feeling* [1771].
 Jane Austen, *Sense and Sensibility* [1811].

IX. Listening in Public (March 29)

James Johnson, *Listening in Paris: A Cultural History*, Introduction and Parts 1 through 3, pp. 1-161.

Further Reading:

John Brewer, *Pleasures of the Imagination*, Chap. 14, "The Harmony of Heaven."
 William Weber, *The Rise of Musical Classics in Eighteenth-Century England*.
 Piero Weiss and Richard Taruskin, eds., *Music in the Western World: A History in Documents*, esp. Parts VI and VII.

"Leigh Hunt on Rossini;" "Schubert remembered by a Friend;" "Paganini, the Spectacular Virtuoso;" "The Virtuoso Conductor," in Piero Weiss and Richard Taruskin, eds., *Music in the Western World: A History in Documents*, pp. 336-46. [10]

X. Exercising the Senses: Travel (April 5)

William Gilpin, *Observations on the River Wye and Several Parts of Wales . . . in the year 1770* (1800), Sections I-V: Google for free E-Book. (link also on Canvas)

*Tobias Smollett, *Travels through France and Italy* (1771), Letter X (Nov. 10, 1763); Letter XXXI (March 5, 1765). [15]

*Mary Wollstonecraft, *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway and Denmark* (1796), Letter V; Letter XI. [20].

Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origins of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, Pt. I; Pt. II (look at "Power" and "Vastness"); Pt. III; Pt. V (skim), available on line at <http://www.bartleby.com/24/2/>. (print out important passages)

*Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*, "Cultivation or Wilderness?", pp. 254-69. [15]

Further reading:

Chloe Chard and Helen Langdon, eds. *Transports: Travel, Pleasure, and Imaginative Geography, 1600-1830*, essays by Porter, Bechler, Chard, and Hamblyn.

Brian Dolan, *Exploring European Frontiers: British Travelers in the Age of Enlightenment*.

-----, *Ladies of the Grand Tour* (2001).

Elizabeth Bohls, *Women Travel Writers and the Language of Aesthetics* (1995).

Mark Laird, *The Flowering of the Landscape Garden*.

Gerald Creed, *Knowing Your Place*.

**A Field Trip to the Metropolitan Opera: Beethoven's *Fidelio*
April 5th - 7:30 pm (required)**

XI. The Revolt Against Reason (April 12)

James Johnson, *Listening in Paris*, Chaps.12 through 16, pp. 206-280.
 Tim Blanning, *The Romantic Revolution*, Introduction and Chaps. 1-2.
 *Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Reveries of the Solitary Walker*, Second Walk and Seventh Walk.
 Gilbert White, *The Natural History of Selbourne*, Letters 1-22, 46-66. (This can be read as an ebook, though a very good edition by Oxford Univ. Press is available through the internet at a reasonable price.)

Further Reading:

Robert Darnton, *Mesmerism and the End of the Enlightenment in France* (1968).
 Esteban Buch, *Beethoven's Ninth: A Political History* (2003).

XII. Professions of the Senses (April 19)

*Gillen d'Arcy Wood, *The Shock of the Real: Romanticism and Visual Culture, 1760-1860*, "Introduction: Belzoni's Tomb" and Chap. 4, "Ruins and Museums."
 *Patrick Noon, ed., *Crossing the Channel: British and French Painting in the Age of Romanticism*, pp. 46-123 and pp. 192-7. (Introduction, "The Raft of the Medusa," "Art on View," "Landscape Painting")

Further Reading:

Hector Berlioz, *Memoirs*.
 T. J. Clark, *The Absolute Bourgeois*.
 Readings from *Music in the Western World: A History in Documents*, pp. 348-57.
 David Michael Levin, ed. *Modernity and the Hegemony of Vision* (1993).

XIII. Museum field trip during class time (April 26)

Final paper due on May 3rd by 5 p.m.

HOW TO GIVE YOUR ORAL PRESENTATION

Time limit: 8-10 minutes, strictly enforced.

Aim: To develop (1) an ability to synthesize historical literature and
(2) a mature speaking style.

Content: What is the **largest generalization** you can make about the reading? As you work on the assignment for the week, keep a list of the general points you might want to make. You'll notice that you'll improve this skill as you go along, advancing from statements that are very close to the material ("Joseph Addison's "Pleasures of the Imagination" talks about "greatness . . .") to more general ones, which might apply to several readings ("This week's readings focus on the power of the intellect to perceive natural wonders . . ."). When you try to boil down your ideas to a few statements (which is all anyone can manage in 8 to 10 minutes), try to enter into a spirit of debate.

Other things to look out for: What **arguments** do you see emerging from the readings? That is, what have writers of the period or historians been quarreling about when thinking about the issues in the reading? (If you're not reading secondary sources, see if you can guess what historians have had to say about the documents you're using.) Sometimes you need to read between the lines. Try to find one central debate in the assignments and highlight it. Simplify the issues for your classmates by identifying the issues at stake.

What **linkages** do you see emerging from the readings? Do the various authors or works have common concerns? Help the class make connections. This is a really important part of understanding the material, even though it may not feel that way while you read. Don't worry so much about retaining all the "facts" of the assignment. Jot down only what appear to be **the most important or striking examples** of the topic of the week.

Finally, give an **opinion** on what you've read; make your report unique, drawing on your own knowledge and perspective. And end with a **set of questions** for discussion.

What to avoid: Please do not summarize the readings, one by one, for your classmates. If you take this approach, you will violate the time limit and (sorry to say) bore your classmates. Instead, allow your chosen themes to govern how you present **examples** from the readings.

Style and Presentation: Write out your opening so that you can get yourself on the proper track right away. Start with a startling or burning question, if you can. This helps your listeners get into your chosen frame of mind. Include choice quotes from the authors you've read. Number your points, if necessary. And practice in front of a mirror or standing on a chair, with a recorder, if you feel like it. See yourself as an instructor and try to enjoy the experience.

What to avoid: Don't drone or use a monotone. Don't let your voice rise at the end of statements. Try not to bury yourself in your notes. And please don't violate the time limit! Practice giving your presentation with a stopwatch device.