The Age of Reason

The Scientific Revolution & the Enlightenment of the 17th and 18th centuries

Purpose: This seminar will explore the changes in Western European thought from the religiously oriented medieval worldview to the beginnings of a more secular understanding of the physical, social, political and economic conditions of the modern world.

Course #	19SAR
Format:	Seminar
Moderator:	Rich Hamilton
Date and Time:	Thursday, 9:30-11:30
	10 weeks, starting February 28
Location:	Smith College, Lilly Hall room 308
	(on 4/11, 4/18 meet in Campus Center Room 102)

Description: We will explore the seminal discoveries in anatomy (Michael Servetus & Vesalius) and in astronomy and physics (Copernicus to Newton), the importance of mathematic application to physical phenomena and the emergence of an empirically based scientific method. These discoveries revolutionized perceptions of the place of nature, God and humanity in the universe and provided the rational tools used to re-examine the order of society, political legitimacy, justice and economic structures. As we examine the thought of such Enlightenment thinkers as John Locke, Montesquieu, Diderot, Voltaire, Adam Smith, Jefferson and Franklin, we will see it was an age of optimism and a belief in the possibility of progress that would drive the political and economic revolutions of the 18th and 19th centuries.

Role of participants: Each participant will be responsible for a presentation of up to 30 minutes followed by a group discussion.

Resources: Suggested Reading: *The Enlightenment, a Source-Book and Reader,* Hyland, Gomez & Greensides, new & used available from online booksellers. SparkNotes*: The Scientific Revolution,* and SparkNotes: *The Enlightenment.* Both can be read online free. More reading materials will be available later.

About the Moderator: The moderator taught college level European history for 37 years and has moderated and taken several seminars during the past eight years.

Maximum number of participants: 16

Auditors accepted: yes, up to 2