Hist 510:321 Age of Enlightenment

This course examines the Enlightenment as a cultural movement in the eighteenth century, with particular attention to the social history of science. The course has three parts: on experiment and scientific sociability, performance and display; the emergence of forms of ‘social science,’ including educational reform and articulations of gender and racial difference; and voyages and encounters with non-European worlds. A central aim is to explore the role played by the sciences in the Enlightenment as a whole, and to explore the tense relation between freedom and discipline enlightenment projects seemed simultaneously to involve. Specific topics covered include Newton and the legacies of Newtonianism; experiments with electricity in transatlantic scientific culture; Mesmerism and medicine; social engineering via educational reform; the relation between human beings and machines in the context of materialism and industrialization; monsters and theological controversy; anatomy, race and gender; early anthropology and expeditions to the Pacific islands; and Mary Shelley’s original 1818 novel of human experimentation, Frankenstein.