

English 9111A  
 Professor Alison Conway  
 Office hours: Wed. 1-4 p.m., and by appointment  
 Ivey 3G16  
[amconway@uwo.ca](mailto:amconway@uwo.ca)

### **Religious Toleration: the Philosophical and Cultural History of an Idea**

Religious toleration was central to Enlightenment debates and this course will trace the evolution of English ideas on the subject. We will begin with Milton's engagement with humanist and Puritan understandings of toleration in *Areopagitica* before turning to John Locke's influential *Letter Concerning Toleration*. We will then move forward through Shaftesbury's *Letter Concerning Enthusiasm* and Defoe's *Journal of the Plague Year* to the middle of the eighteenth century, when questions of toleration expanded to include more general concerns regarding difference and the limits of sympathy. Developments in the colonies presented authors such as Frances Brooke with new opportunities to consider the question of nation and faiths. The Gordon Riots of 1780 revealed the persistence of English anti-Catholic xenophobia, even as novels such as Tobias Smollett's *Humphry Clinker* demonstrated an easing of tensions between Methodism and Anglican orthodoxy. We will consider the disjunction between the skeptical toleration that emerged in the work of Hume and the Dissenting discourse advanced by Joseph Priestley before concluding with Maria Edgeworth's 1817 novel, *Harrington*—a novel that returns us both to the Jewish Naturalization Act of 1753 and the Gordon Riots.

Alongside our reading in eighteenth-century philosophy and literature, we will read recent considerations of toleration and its limits.

#### **Course texts:**

Rawls, *The Law of Peoples* (Harvard)  
 Brown, *Regulating Aversion* (Princeton)  
 Tonder, *Tolerance: A Sensorial Approach to Politics* (Oxford)  
 Milton, *Areopagitica*  
 Locke, *Letter Concerning Toleration* (Yale)  
 Defoe, *Journal of the Plague Year* (Penguin)  
 Smollett, *Humphry Clinker* (Oxford)  
 Lennox, *Henrietta* (Kentucky)  
 Brooke, *The History of Emily Montague* (Carleton)  
 Edgeworth, *Harrington* (Broadview)  
 Priestley, *Essay on the First Principles of Government* (Cambridge)  
 Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Religion* and *A Natural History of Religion* (Oxford)

Sept. 4: intro to class

Sept. 11: Rawls/Brown  
Response A

Sept. 18: Tonder  
Response B

Sept. 25: Milton  
Response A

Oct. 2: Locke/Shaftebury  
Response B  
Toleration Act

Oct. 9: Defoe  
Response A  
Acts Against Occasional Conformity

Oct. 16: class cancelled: I am away at a conference this week

Oct. 23: Lennox  
Response B  
Jewish Naturalization Act

Oct. 30: Fall Study Break

Nov. 6: Hume  
Response A  
Catholic Relief Act

Nov. 13: Smollett  
Response B  
Methodism

Nov. 20: Brooke  
Response A  
Quebec Act

Nov. 27: Priestley: **annotated bibliographies (and provisional thesis) due in class**  
Response B  
Gordon and Priestly Riots

Dec. 4 (make-up class): Edgeworth  
Repeal of Test and Corporation Acts

## Course Requirements

Students are required to write five short response papers (600-800 words), present a seminar on a historical topic, and write a final research essay (4500 words). Please email your response papers to me the Wed. before class, by noon. For your seminar, please organize a ten-minute presentation on the day's historical topic, and provide the class with a bibliography of your source material. Before you submit your final essay, you are required to submit an annotated bibliography and a provisional thesis (**Nov. 27**). Your annotated bibliographies will include a complete list of the sources you are using for your essay in a Works Consulted, as well as three 100-word summaries of **three** of your sources. Each summary needs to address the author's argument and its theoretical outlook and/or research orientation. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the author's argument? How has it shaped the thesis governing your essay?  
**Essays are due Dec. 18 by 4 p.m.**

Grade distribution: participation (including response papers): 30%; seminar 20%; essay 40%; annotated bibliography 10%.

## Statement on Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_grad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf)

## Select Bibliography

Barlow, Richard Burgess. *Citizenship and Conscience: A Study in the Theory and Practice of Religious Toleration in England during the Eighteenth Century*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1962.

Bödeker, Hans Erik, Clorinda Donato, and Peter Hanns Reill, eds. *Discourses of Tolerance and Intolerance in the European Enlightenment*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009.

Creppell, Ingrid, *Toleration and Identity: Foundations in Early Modern Thought*. New York: Routledge, 2003.

---, Russell Hardin, and Stephen Macedo, eds. *Toleration on Trial*. New York: Lexington Books, 2008.

Grell, Ole Peter, et al, eds. *From Persecution to Toleration: the Glorious Revolution and Religion in England*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991.

Haydon, Colin. *Anti-Catholicism in Eighteenth-Century England: a political and social study*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993.

Laursen, John Christian and Cary J. Nederman, eds. *Beyond the Persecuting Society: Religious Toleration Before the Enlightenment*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998.

Mendus, Susan. *Toleration and the Limits of Liberalism*. London: Macmillan, 1989.

---, ed. *Justifying Toleration: Conceptual and Historical Perspectives*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

---, ed. *The Politics of Toleration in Modern Life*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1999.

--- and David Edwards, eds. *On Toleration*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987.

Murphy, Andrew R. *Conscience and Community: Revisiting Toleration and Religious Dissent in Early Modern England and America*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003.

Walzer, Michael, *On Toleration*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999.

Zagorin, Perez, *How the Idea of Religious Toleration Came to the West*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003.

### **Historical Glossary**

1660: Declaration of Breda: Charles Stuart promises “liberty to tender consciences”

1661: Corporation Act: municipal officers must receive sacrament according to Anglican liturgy

1662: Act of Uniformity: those clergyman not subscribing to all Thirty-Nine Articles are removed from their livings

1662: Declaration of Indulgence: the king capitulates to parliamentary pressure to retract the declaration early in 1663

1672: Declaration of Indulgence: suspends legal penalties against nonconformists and Catholics, although only the former could claim the right to public worship

1673: Declaration rescinded by parliament, withdrawn by Charles

1673: Test Act: office holders must swear oath of allegiance and receive Anglican sacrament; second Test Act (1678) strengthens language of the first

1685: Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, which guaranteed civil rights to Huguenots in Catholic France, by Louis XIV

1685: Monmouth Rebellion: James Scott, Duke of Monmouth and illegitimate son of Charles II launches a rebellion against James II; he is captured and executed July 15, 1685

- 1687, 1688: James II, Declarations of Indulgence: suspension of penal laws, guarantee of freedom of worship, end of oath requirements for holding of public office
- 1688: invasion of William III, November 5th
- 1689: William and Mary, “An Act for exempting their Majesties protestant Subjects, dissenting from the Church of England, from the penalties of certain laws,” known as the Toleration Act: excludes Catholics, attempts to reconcile Dissenting and Anglican religious interests
- 1701: Act of Settlement: secures Protestant succession to the throne
- 1707: Act of Security of Church of England: bars Presbyterians from public office
- 1711: Act against Occasional Conformity: to prevent Dissenters from skirting Test Act regulations by taking communion occasionally in the Anglican Church
- 1714: Schism Act: renders illegal the Dissenters’ separate school system
- 1715: first Jacobite rising
- 1719: Schism and Occasional Acts repealed
- 1739: motions to repeal discriminatory laws against Dissenters fail
- 1745: second Jacobite Rising
- 1778: Catholic Relief Act: repeals clauses of penal code which allow for prosecution of Catholic clergy, schools; impediments to inheritance and purchase of property removed
- 1779: Nonconformist Relief Act: repeals of restrictions on teaching and preaching
- 1828/29: repeal of Test and Corporation Acts

For an introduction to the period’s historical landmarks and documents, see:

- Browning, Andrew, ed. *English Historical Documents*. London: Routledge, 1966, 1996. Taylor and Francis e-library, 2004.
- Cook, Chris and John Stevenson. *Longman Handbook of Modern British History*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition. London: Longman, 2001.
- Fritze, Ronald H., William B. Robison, and Walter Sutton, ed. *Historical Dictionary of Stuart England, 1603-1689*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996.
- Gregory, Jeremy and John Stevenson. *The Routledge Companion to Britain in the Eighteenth Century*