

Econ 101: Enlightenment, Fall 2023

Northwestern University, 2023 Fall, Mon/Wed 9:30 - 10:50 am; Annenberg G31

Prof. Scott Ogawa (sogawa@northwestern.edu/sogawa@gmail.com)

Description

We will read Steven Pinker's *Enlightenment Now: The Case for Reason, Science, Humanism, and Progress*. We will discuss reason, science, humanism, and progress. (We will also read individual chapters from other selected works.)

Expectations

Class attendance is required and active participation is expected. Throughout the quarter you will be given reading assignments. Please complete these before class, and come willing and able to contribute to a discussion. If you cannot meet any of these expectations then please send me an email in advance.

Readings, Quizzes, and Reflections

On a typical class we will start with a short reading quiz and chance for brief writing reflection. We will then discuss topics as they come up. By midnight prior to class: Every student is expected to do the reading and complete a short online assignment (generate reading-quiz questions and discussion questions).

Also, on some Mondays there will be a very short writing assignment due. This will be evaluated entirely on content and not on writing quality (i.e. typos are great!). The topic will be announced by the Thursday beforehand, and my genuine hope is that you all will help generate ideas for topics.

Final Paper

There will be a short (likely 3-5 pages) final paper due during finals week (Dec 6 at 5:00 pm, as this is when our scheduled final exam time concludes). It will be on a topic of your choosing, though based on one of the short writing assignments due during the quarter.

Office Hours

There are no official office hours for this class but my door is always open: Just send me an email to set up a time to meet. Also, we will have scheduled meetings to discuss each of your papers.

Reading

In addition to *Enlightenment Now*, we may read individual chapters from the following books:

- *The Beginning of Infinity*, David Deutsch
- *The Righteous Mind*, Jonathan Haidt
- *Thinking Fast and Slow*, Daniel Kahneman

Evaluation

- Class participation, including attendance (15%)
- Quizzes and in-class writing assignments (50%)
- Short at-home writing assignments (15%)
- Final paper (up to 20%)

University Policies

Unless I state explicitly otherwise, all expectations contained in the following link apply:

<https://www.registrar.northwestern.edu/faculty-staff/syllabi.html>