Enlightenment?
Culture and Knowledge in Eighteenth-Century Europe

Instructor: Rebecca L. Spang
Office hours: Tues., 11-12:30, Ballantine 711
website: www.indiana.edu/~enltnmt
Ancients and Moderns; History and Enlightenment

studying history in the eighteenth century

writing history of the eighteenth century

Why study history?

How is the present related to the past?

How do we know about the past?
History: Plato to NATO?

ancient
medieval
early modern
modern
contemporary

History as a line; one thing after another, with the line divided into segments or “periods”
What do we see as the “end” of medieval Europe?

1439 invention of moveable type (Gutenberg)
1453 fall of Constantinople
1492 Jews and Muslims expelled from Spain; Columbus sets sail
1517 Luther’s 95 Theses (Protestant Reformation)

When does the modern era begin?

1694 founding of the Bank of England
1776 American Revolution
1789 French Revolution
1825 first public steam-powered railway
1859 Darwin’s *Origin of Species* published

Where does “the Enlightenment” fit on the line? What does “early modern” mean?
We have no distinct idea of length of time, till we have conceived it in the form of some sensible thing that has length, [such as] a line...

Joseph Priestley, “A New Chart of History” (1769 and later editions)
The Eighteenth Century? Pre-Modern or Early Modern?

Population of Europe

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1700</td>
<td>approx. 75 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800</td>
<td>110 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>300 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>today</td>
<td>512 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Agriculture and Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Population &gt; 20% urban</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Europe overall</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comparing past and present: population structure

Thomas Gainsborough, “Drover with calves in a cart” (about 1755)
Drawing, graphite with gray wash, 9.5 x 11.5 inches
National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Century</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>1700s</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>1700s</td>
<td>30-45%</td>
<td>2-10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>1650</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>1750</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>1690</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>1790</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bengal</td>
<td>1830s</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Comparing past and present: Measuring literacy, measuring the modern?
Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns

“Learned Antiquity, for all its extent, was never as enlightened* as the times now present.”

Charles Perrault, *The Century of Louis the Great* (1687)

*éclairée* in French

ceiling of the Grand Salon of the Palace of Versailles, France (Louis XIV drives the sun across the sky) designed by Charles LeBrun, this painting primarily by Charles de la Fosse, *circa* 1680