To a large extent the 18th century is the era where most of the categories that guide contemporary thinking have emerged. It is the era where the very concepts of Literature and literary theory have been invented, as well as the era of the birth of new literary genres such as the gothic novel. It is the era where the figures of the public intellectual, the political revolutionary, and the scientist have been developed. It is the era of the birth of the theoretical discourse of economy, as well as the science of biology, and the philosophical branch called aesthetics. What is it that is at the background of all these innovations of the 18th century? What is it that made them possible? The brief answer would be, the attempt to think human existence without the intervention of the dimension of the divine. for the longer answer you will need to come to class!

Readings include: Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, Hume, Burke, Kant, Schlegel