Wollstonecraft

dates so far:
Locke’s 2nd Treatise: 1690
Franklin: publ 1868, but life is 1706-1790
Decl: 1776
Const: 1787
MW: 1792
intervening: Fr Rev: 1789

- pioneering feminist and Enlight thinker
- born London, 1759
- her lifelong crusade for independence and female equality was deeply rooted in a traumatic childhood: her father a violent alcoholic who abused his wife and frequently relocated the family because of economic troubles
- left home at 19, eventually becomes part of a London community called Newington Green, where she est. a school and begins to associate with group of London intellectuals, men & women
- gained instant notoriety with the publication of *Vindication of the Rights of Men*, an angry response to a famous male writer who had written a conservative account of the Fr Rev
- her controversial attack on this other writer led her to be condemned in public, Horace Walpole later called her “a hyena in petticoats”
- her most famous & influential work, though, is the one we read
- sustained argument for female emancipation that extended the Enlightenment credo of inalienable human rights to women; widely regarded as landmark of feminist thought
- actually travels to Paris in Dec 1792 to witness the French Revolution first hand
- there she has an ill-fated love affair with Gilbert Imlay, a dashing Am businessman living in Paris, and produces an illegitimate daughter
- when she returns to England she soon becomes involved with William Godwin, a political philosopher, marries 1797. Dies of blood poisoning in 1797, 11 days after giving birth to their child, Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin Shelley

discuss essay prompt

80. what are differences between men and women? “natural” vs. “unnatural”
83. suggests women have to be more “masculine” -- what does she mean here?
86. manners & morals. read this P out loud – what is her point here? how
87-88. her reliance on Lockean ideas will emerge – which ideas & how does she apply them. first ch: a lot of time contra Rousseau
what’s his idea of state of nature, anyone know? (civ is root of all evil)
95. what does she think of Rousseau’s idea of the state of nature?
97. makes a really interesting analogy between soldiers and women (also 105)
ch 2:
definition of “virtue”? 
women not educated enough to be virtuous? 
101. what does she say about “innocence”? 
109. Biblical arguments for subjection of women? 
110. what does she say about love? vs friendship? what do we think of this? 
what is valued in women? (118)
do these kind of women make the best wives? 
128. divine right of kings & husbands 
why is this situation bad for both men and families (136) 
140. denies existence of “sexual virtues” – what does she mean? 
143. defines reason: power of discerning truth 
she also praises what she calls “power of generalizing ideas” (145) – what does she mean?
149. rich men have something in common with women 
156. defines “sensibility” – what’s this? quickness of sensation, quickness of perception, delicacy 
164. writers have argued women mature more quickly than men, what’s her point here? 
ch 6: what should education give us? variety of thought 
227. what is a “rake”? what’s her point here? 
ch 7. 
231. 
what is modesty? 
how are traditional ideas about this dangerous to women? 
239-40. she’s a bit squeamish about how women are with each other? what does she say, what did you think?