Notes
Chapter 23: The Transformation of Europe

Protestant Reformation
- at core of protests of Martin Luther (1483-1546) was an emphasis on the sanctity of the individual ... which echoes the humanism of the Renaissance
- views spread quickly because of the printing press
  1. Luther, a German monk, was angered by the sale of indulgences, which seemed to be a way to buy one’s way into heaven; advocated the closure of monasteries, translation of the Bible from Latin into the vernacular, an end to priestly authority and the authority of the pope himself
  2. John Calvin, a French lawyer, was just as important to the Reformation; organized in Switzerland a Protestant community with a very strict code of morality and discipline; Geneva was a missionary center that attracted followers across Europe, especially successfully in the Netherlands and Scotland
- led to a century of religious wars, culminating in the Thirty Years’ War, the most destructive European conflict before the 20th century
  1. these wars involved political or economic motives but religious differences between Protestants and Catholics provided the fuel
  2. Thirty Years’ War (1618-1648) ended with Peace of Westphalia, whereby European states regarded each other as sovereign equals
  3. this began what’s known as the modern “European states system” and the overriding concern for a balance of power: If one state is threatening to become too large and powerful, other states form alliances to check and balance that threatening power

Sovereign states
- unlike their medieval counterparts, European states were becoming larger and more powerfully centralized, with standing armies using gunpowder weaponry (including, importantly, canons on ships)
- European states grew along two lines: In England and the Netherlands, constitutional states emerged (a constitutional monarchy in England and a republic based on representative government in the Netherlands) ... whereas monarchs in France, Spain, Austria, Prussia and Russia concentrated power in their own hands and created absolute monarchies
  1. a chain of events leading from the English Civil War (1642-49) to the Glorious Revolution (1688-1689) culminated with William and Mary assuming the throne and agreeing to rule in cooperation with Parliament
  2. a Calvinist movement in the Netherlands led to rebellion against its Spanish Hapsburg overlords, who were staunchly Catholic, eventually leading to the independence of the Dutch republic by the end of the Thirty Years’ War
3. in both England and the Netherlands, merchants were especially prominent in political affairs ... and these constitutional states allowed entrepreneurs to pursue their economic interests with minimal interference, which led to prosperity for both countries in the 17th and 18th centuries
4. absolute monarchies relied on the principle of “the divine right of kings,” the theory that kings derived their authority from God and served as His “lieutenants on earth.” No role for commoners or even nobles in public affairs; the king alone made law and determined policy
5. Louis XIV of France (r. 1643-1715) and Peter the Great of Russia (r. 1682-1725) among the most notable absolute monarchs

Early capitalist society
- merchants and manufacturers capitalized on improved communication and transportation technologies to organize their efforts increasingly to market forces
- population growth – fueled by the introduction of American food crops, which improved diets and thus immunities to disease – and urbanization spurred the trend toward capitalism
- in capitalist society, businessmen – not governments or social superiors – make the economic decisions (e.g., what and how much to produce) ... and they’re motivated by their own economic interest in making a profit while competing against others who are trying to do the same
- institutions and services developed to support early capitalism
  1. banks held funds on account for safekeeping and made loans to entrepreneurs launching new business ventures
  2. newsletters appeared, providing published reports on prices, information on demand for commodities in distant markets, and political news that could affect business opportunities
  3. insurance companies mitigated financial losses from risky ventures, such as those involving transoceanic voyages
  4. important note: all this was new to Europe but had long been a feature of societies in China, southeast and southwest Asia, India, the Mediterranean and sub-Saharan Africa
  5. one important new feature: joint-stock companies – the English East India Co. and the Dutch East India Co. (aka “the VOC”) were the direct ancestors of contemporary multinational corporations
  6. especially in the constitutional states, where individual rights were most protected, governments worked to protect the financial interests of private companies ... and this developed also in the context of European imperialism, where the raw materials and profits of overseas colonies were vital
  7. entrepreneurs began a form of “protoindustrialization” with the “putting-out system,” which delivered unfinished materials such as raw wool to rural households, where peasants in their own cottages could spin it, weave it, cut it into patterns and eventually
assemble the pieces into garments ... all of which was a way to get around the control of craft guilds in the cities, which were not really profit-centered

- these capitalist transformations took hold in western Europe but not eastern Europe or Russia, which remained the suppliers of grain and raw materials like timber
- capitalism had an effect on the nuclear family, encouraging marriages of love and greater affection between parents and their children
- **Adam Smith**’s *The Wealth of Nations* (1776) lays out the classic argument for capitalism; seeking individual gain and profit works through an “invisible hand” to benefit all of society

**Scientific Revolution leads to the Enlightenment**

- **Galileo** (who used a telescope to confirm that the earth revolved around the sun, which contradicted the teachings of the Church) and **Isaac Newton** (who used math, astronomy and mechanics to establish a law of universal gravitation that governs the motions of bodies throughout the universe) were just two of a number of scientists who shaped a new understanding of the physical world separate from the supernatural explanations found in religious doctrine
- as the 1600s passed into the 1700s, the rational, scientific approach to understanding the universe was adopted by philosophers to analyze human relations
  1. **John Locke** argued against the “divine right of kings” and for the idea that people are born with inalienable rights to life, liberty and property (the philosophical foundation of democracy)
  2. **Voltaire** argued strongly for freedom of expression and religion
- some Enlightenment thinkers (often called *philosophes* [the French word for philosophers] because France was the center of Enlightenment thought) were conventional Christians, and some turned to atheism, but most were *deists* who believed in the existence of a god but denied the supernatural teachings of Christianity ... that god was like a watchmaker who did not need to interfere in the workings of his creation, because it operated by itself according to rational and natural laws
- the progressive-mindedness of scientists and Enlightenment thinkers for the most part did not carry over to women; most continued to have limited ideas about the roles and functions of women