Purpose of Course

Few events in history have had such a profound impact on Western society and culture and have generated such intense debate among historians as the French Revolution. In this course we will consider the causes, meanings, and consequences of the French Revolution by examining French society and culture in the “long century” between the reign of King Louis XIV (1660) and the end of Napoleon Bonaparte’s empire (1815). Our sources will range from novels and memoirs to Enlightenment treatises to scandalous revolutionary pamphlets attacking Queen Marie Antoinette. In addition to primary sources, we will encounter a range of conflicting historical interpretations of the Old Regime and Revolution as we try to make sense of a revolution that, in many historians’ eyes, gave birth to the modern world. In addition, the course will provide an introduction to the culture of the rich and sparkling century that is fondly known as le siècle des lumières.

Learning Goals:

1. Develop a clear understanding of the basic chronology of French history from 1715 to 1815, with a focus on the crucial events and turning points.

2. Learn about and understand the importance of the key individuals who shaped the politics and culture of eighteenth-century France.

3. Learn about the key institutions of eighteenth-century France: the court, the parlement, the Catholic church, the salon, the artisan’s workshop, the press, the political club, the National Assembly, the Committee of Public Safety, the army.

4. Understand the tensions within pre-revolutionary society: class tensions between the aristocracy, bourgeoisie, working class and peasantry; class tensions within the aristocracy; and regional tensions between Paris and the provinces.

5. Reflect on a set of classic historical questions such as: What was the connection of the Enlightenment to the French Revolution? Why did the Revolution keep moving to the left? Was the Terror inevitable? Did Napoleon 'save' or 'end' the Revolution? How was France in 1815 different from France in 1715?
6. Engage and discuss a range of interpretations of the French Revolution, from Alexis de Tocqueville’s in the 19th century to François Furet’s in the 20th century.

7. Understand the key vocabulary and concepts historians use to interpret the Old Regime and Revolution, such as the Public Sphere, desacralization, centralization, radicalization, the gender ideology of Republicanism, and Terror.

8. Read and analyze primary sources, including novels, memoirs, newspapers, royal proclamations, political tracts, and eye-witness accounts (in translation).

9. Read and analyze secondary historical articles and books written by major historians.

10. Write a major interpretive essay on the causes and consequences of the French Revolution.

**Books available at the Rutgers University Bookstore**

- Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Confessions*
- Mme de Lafayette, *The Princesse de Cleves*
- Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*
- William Doyle, *Oxford History of the French Revolution*
- David Bell, *The First Total War.*
- Additional primary sources and secondary articles, available on Sakai.

**Requirements and Grading**

- Active participation in class discussions (10%)
- 5- to 7-page paper on Rousseau’s *Confessions*, submitted to turnitin.com through SAKAI (20%)
- In-class reading quiz on *The Princesse de Cleves* (5%)
- In-class reading quiz(es) on *The First Total War* (5%)
- 1st midterm exam based on identifications and short answers (15%)
- 2nd midterm exam based on identifications, short answers and chronology (15%)
- 8- to 10-page, take-home final essay (30%)
- Failure to complete any assignment will result in failure for the course.
Weekly Schedule

Week 1

January 18 Introduction: 18th-century France

Readings:
- Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*, all of Part I
- Consult any European history textbook for background on 18th-century Europe
  (if you need the review)

January 20 Peasants and rural society

Readings:
- Alexis de Tocqueville, Part II, chapters 1, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12.
- “Puss and Boots” (Sakai)

Week 2

January 25 Absolutism from Louis XIV to Louis XVI

Readings:
- Alexis de Tocqueville, Part II, chapters 2-6.
- Peter Burke, "The Fabrication of Louis XIV" (Sakai)
- Virtual tour of Versailles (web link on Sakai)

January 27 Aristocracy and Court Society
  Discussion/reading quiz: *The Princesse de Clèves*

Readings:
- Mme de Lafayette, *The Princesse de Cleves*

Week 3

February 1 From Rococo to Neoclassicism

Readings:
- Virtual tour of Fragonard and Boucher rooms at the Frick Museum, NYC.
- Thomas Kaiser, "Mme de Pompadour" (Sakai)

February 3 Urban Life -- Discussion

Readings:
- Colin Jones, "Bourgeois Revolution Revivified: 1789 and Social Change." (Sakai)
- Robert Darnton, "The Great Cat Massacre." (Sakai)
Week 4

February 8  The Enlightenment and the Public Sphere

Readings:
• Doyle, chapters 1 and 2.
• Alexis de Tocqueville, Part III, all chapters except chapter 2

February 10  The High Enlightenment  -- Discussion

Readings:
• The Encyclopédie of Diderot and d'Alembert, a collaborative translation project
• Salons (Sakai)
• David A. Bell, The First Total War, chapters 1 and 2
• Begin reading Rousseau's Confessions.

Week 5

Feb. 15  Jansenism, the Parlementaires, and Desacralization

Readings:
• Tocqueville, Part III, chapter 2.
• Roger Chartier, "A Desacralized King." (Sakai)

Feb. 17  Do Books Make Revolutions? Discussion

Readings:
• Roger Chartier, “Do Books Make Revolutions?” (Sakai)
• Continue reading Rousseau's, The Confessions.

Week 6

Feb. 22  Fiscal Crisis, Reform and the Diamond Necklace Affair

Readings:
• “A Royal Tongue-lashing,” (also called, "The Session of the Scourging" 1766)
• Lynn Hunt, “The Many Bodies of Marie Antoinette” (Sakai).
• Doyle, chapter 3.
• Mason and Rizzo, Jacques Necker, pp. 29-32

Feb. 24  Rousseau  -- Discussion

Readings:
• Rousseau, The Confessions, books 1-6.

*** Rousseau paper due in class***
Week 7

March 1  **First midterm exam**

March 3  **Interpreting the Revolution**

Readings:
- Robert Darnton, “What was so Revolutionary about the French Revolution?” (Sakai)
- Browse and familiarize yourself with the website, "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" (weblink on Sakai)

Week 8

March 8  **1788 to 1789: The Estates General to the Rights of Man**

Readings:
- David A. Bell, *The First Total War*, chapter 3
- Doyle, chapter 4,
- Abbé Sieyès, "What is the Third Estate?"
- "Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen"
- Mason and Rizzo, Chapter 2 and 3, selected documents

March 9  **Discussion/ reading quiz on David Bell**

  **Spring Break: March 15 and 17 -- no class**

Week 9

March 22  **The Rise and Fall of the Bourgeois, Liberal Revolution**

Readings:
- Doyle, chapters 5 and 6.
- Civil Constitution of the Clergy (July 12, 1990)
- David A. Bell, chapter 4
- Mason and Rizzo, chapter 4, selected documents

March 24  **Popular revolution and Sans Culottes**

Readings:
- Doyle, chapters 7 and 8.
- Camille Desmoulins, on "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" website.
- Bell, chapter 5.
• Mason and Rizzo, selected documents, chapter 8, including *Le Pere Duchesne*

**Week 10**

March 29  **Making Sense of the Terror**

Readings:

- Doyle, chapters 9-11
- Francois Furet, “On Terror” (Sakai)

March 31 **The Terror -- discussion**

Readings:

- Robespierre on Terror and Virtue
- Robespierre on the Festival of the Supreme Being (June 1794)
- Mason and Rizzo, chapters 7 and 9, selected documents

**Week 11**

April 5  **Film: Danton**

Readings:


April 7  **Film: Danton** (continued)

**Week 12**

April 12  **Revolutionary Women**

Readings:

- J. Abray, "Feminism in the French Revolution".
- Olympe de Gouges, “The Declaration of the Rights of Woman”
- Condorcet on the Rights of Women
- Mason and Rizzo, chapter 9, p. 232

April 14  **Second midterm exam**
Week 13

April 19  The French Revolution and the Haitian Revolution

Readings:

• Abbe Grégoire on people of color in Saint Domingue
• Mason and Rizzo, chapter 8, Toussaint L’Ouverture, pp. 208-209; chap. 15, pp. 348-359

April 21  Thermidor and Directory

Readings

• Doyle, chapters 12-15.
• Bell, chapter 6.
• Mason and Rizzo, chapters 11-13, selected documents

Week 14

April 26  Napoleon: the most absolutist monarch?

Readings:

• Mason and Rizzo, chapters 14 and 15, selected documents.

April 28  Napoleon: bringing the Revolution to Europe

Readings:

• Bell, chapters, 7, 8 and Epilogue.
• Doyle, chapters 16 and 17.