

HIST 313:
The French Revolution and the Origins of Modern Politics
(draft, subject to change)

Prof. Sophia Rosenfeld

Spring 2019

Class meetings: Tues. and Thurs., 10:30-12

Professor's office hours:

Professor's office address and email: CH 307 and srosenf@upenn.edu

This course will examine the social, cultural, intellectual, economic, and especially political history of France and its empire from the end of the Old Regime through the Napoleonic period. The origins, development, and outcome of the French Revolution, followed by the Haitian Revolution and Napoleonic wars, will be our main focus. Particular attention will be paid to the global legacy of these late 18th-century revolutions in terms of such key modern political concepts as human rights, nationalism, social welfare, feminism, democracy, terrorism, capitalism, and revolution itself. Throughout the course, we will also emphasize the different and often conflicting ways in which historians have interpreted the meaning and consequences of this critical moment of upheaval. Readings will be a mixture of primary and secondary sources, and classes will combine lecture and discussion. Requirements include one short paper of 4 pages (20%), one midterm examination (20%), one final paper of 8-9 pages (25%), and one final examination (25%), as well as class participation (10%).

The three books listed below are available for purchase at the Penn Book Center or on amazon.com (used or new). They are the required texts for this course.

Peter McPhee, The French Revolution, 1789-1799 (Oxford, 2002) [also an ebook]

Keith M. Baker, ed., Readings in Western Civilization: 7, The Old Regime and the French Revolution (Chicago, 1987) [abbreviated as Readings below]

Robert Darnton, The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History (Random House, 1984)

The following books are easily available on amazon.com (older editions are fine), as well as available on reserve at Van Pelt. Purchasing them is strongly recommended.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, On the Social Contract, trans. J. R. Masters (St. Martins, 1978)

Georges Lefebvre, The Coming of the French Revolution, trans. R. R. Palmer (Princeton, 2015)

Lynn Hunt, ed., The French Revolution and Human Rights: A Brief Documentary History (Bedford, 1996)

Laurent Dubois, Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution (Harvard, 2004) [also an ebook]

Al-Jabarti, Napoleon in Egypt: Al-Jabarti's Chronicle of the French Occupation, 1798, trans. Shmuel Moreh (M. Wiener, 1993)

Rafe Blaufarb, ed., Napoleon: Symbol for an Age: A Brief Documentary History (Bedford, 2008)

Alexis de Tocqueville, The Old Regime and the French Revolution, trans. Stuart Gilbert

(Anchor, 1983)

The following articles are available on electronic reserve on Canvas:

- Munro Price, "Politics: Louis XVI," in Old Regime France, 1648-1788, ed. William Doyle (Oxford, 2001), pp. 223-244
- Roger Chartier, "A Desacralized King," in The Cultural Origins of the French Revolution, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Duke, 1991), pp. 111-139
- Sarah Maza, "The Diamond Necklace Affair Revisited, 1785-86," in Eroticism and the Body Politic, ed. Lynn Hunt (Johns Hopkins, 1991), pp. 63-89
- George Taylor, "Noncapitalist Wealth and the Origins of the French Revolution," American Historical Review 72, no. 2 (January 1967), pp. 469-496
- Mona Ozouf, "Space and Time in the Festivals of the French Revolution," in The French Revolution and Intellectual History, ed. Jack Censer (Dorsey Press, 1988), pp. 186-200
- Darline Gay Levy and Harriet B. Applewhite, "A Political Revolution for Women? The Case of Paris," in Becoming Visible: Women in European History, eds. R. Bridenthal, S. Stuard, M. Wiesner (Houghton Mifflin, 1998 [3rd ed.]), pp. 265-292
- Lynn Hunt, "The Many Bodies of Marie-Antoinette: Political Pornography and the Problem of the Feminine in the French Revolution," in The French Revolution in Social and Political Perspective, ed. Peter Jones (Arnold, 1996), pp. 268-284
- Olwen Hufton, "In Search of Counter-Revolutionary Women," in The French Revolution: Recent Debates and New Controversies, ed. Gary Kates (Routledge, 1998), pp. 301-333
- Alyssa Goldstein Sepinwall, "Robespierre, Old Regime Feminist? Gender, the Late Eighteenth Century, and the French Revolution Revisited," Journal of Modern History 82, no. 1 (2010): 1-29

Readings on the syllabus are marked as follows:

*=available for purchase or on reserve in hard copy at Van Pelt Library

C=available on Canvas, i.e. electronic reserve

Schedule of Class Meetings and Readings

Thursday, January 17: Introduction to the Course

French Society during the Old Regime

Tuesday, January 22: Social Distinctions and the People of France and its Empire
Loyseau, "A Treatise on Orders" in Readings, pp. 13-31 [*]

Thursday, January 24: Everyday Life and Work in the Eighteenth Century

Darnton, "Peasants Tell Tales," "Workers Revolt: The Great Cat Massacre" and "A Bourgeois Puts His World in Order," all in The Great Cat Massacre, pp. pp. 9-65, 75-104, 107-143 [*]

The Monarchical State and its Outposts

Tuesday, January 29: The Institutions and Theory of Absolutism

Bossuet, "Politics Derived from the Words of Holy Scripture" and "A Royal Tongue Lashing" in Readings, pp. 31-50 [*]

Thursday, January 31: The Troubled Reign of Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette

Price, "Politics: Louis XVI" [C]

Chartier, "A Desacralized King" [C]

Maza, "The Diamond Necklace Affair Revisited, 1785-86" [C]

The Enlightenment

Tuesday, February 5: The Enlightenment as a Philosophical and Cultural Movement

Diderot, "The Definition of an Encyclopedia" in Readings, pp. 71-89 [*]

Darnton, "Philosophers Trim the Tree of Knowledge" in The Great Cat Massacre, pp. 191-213 [*]

Thursday February 7: The Enlightenment as Politics

Rousseau, On the Social Contract, books I, II, and IV (chapters 8 and 9 only) [*]

The Decline and Fall of the Old Regime and the "Causes" of the Revolution of 1789

Tuesday, February 12: The Crisis of 1787-89

Sieyès, "What is the Third Estate?" in Readings, pp. 154-179 [*]

Lefebvre, The Coming of the French Revolution, pp. 7-75 [*]

Thursday, February 14: The Question of the Origins of the Revolution

Taylor, "Noncapitalist Wealth and the Origins of the French Revolution" [C]

optional (an excellent survey for review): McPhee, The French Revolution, pp. 4-49 [*]

1789

Tuesday, February 19: The First Revolution

"Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen" in Readings, pp. 237-239 [*]

Lefebvre, The Coming of the French Revolution, pp. 76-205 [*]

Thursday, February 21: Violence, Crowds and Popular Protest

"Reports of Popular Unrest" and "The October Days" in Readings, pp. 217-226, 231-237 [*]

NOTE: PAPER #1 due in class

Constitutional Monarchy

Tuesday, February 26: The Radicalization of the Revolution, 1790-92

Burke, "Reflections on the Revolution in France" in Readings, pp. 428-445 [*]

McPhee, The French Revolution, pp. 64-88 [*]

Thursday, February 28: A Second Revolution: The Fall of the Monarchy, 1792-Jan. 1793
 "September Massacres" and "The King's Trial" in Readings, pp. 296-302 and 302-324 [*]
 McPhee, The French Revolution, pp. 89-108 [*]

SPRING BREAK

Republicanism, War, and the Origins of Terror

Tuesday, March 12: Escalation: Enemies at Home and Abroad
 "Purge by Insurrection" in Readings, pp. 324-325, 328-330 [*]
 McPhee, The French Revolution, pp. 109-130 [*]

Thursday, March 14: MIDTERM IN CLASS

The Legal and Political Culture of the Terror

Tuesday, March 19: The Third Revolution: A Year of Terror, Summer 1793-Summer 1794
 "What is a Sans-Culotte?" and other documents in Readings, pp. 330-331, 340-342, 353-362, 368-384 [*]
 McPhee, The French Revolution, pp. 131-153 [*]

Thursday, March 21: Revolutionary Religion and the Culture of Year II
 "The Revolutionary Calendar" and "The Festival of the Supreme Being" in Readings, pp. 362-368, 384-391 [*]
 Ozouf, "Space and Time in the Festivals of the French Revolution" [C]

NOTE: viewing of the film "Danton" by Andrzej Wajda over the weekend

Whose Revolution? What rights?

Tuesday, March 26: The Question of the Poor

Thursday, March 28: The Question of Women
 Gouges, "Declaration of the Rights of Woman" and other documents in The French Revolution and Human Rights, pp. 124-129, 135-139 [*]
 Levy/Appelwhite, "A Political Revolution for Women? The Case of Paris" [C]
 Hunt, "The Many Bodies of Marie-Antoinette" [C]
 Hufton, "In Search of Counter-Revolutionary Women" [C]
 Sepinwall, "Robespierre, Old Regime Feminist?" [C]

The Revolution Spreads: The Making of Haiti

Tuesday, April 2: Colonial France and the Institution of Slavery

Thursday, April 4: Revolution in Saint-Domingue
 Documents on the French debate on colonial slavery in The French Revolution

and Human Rights, pp. 55-59, 101-118 [*]

Dubois, Avengers of the New World, pp. 1-170 [* or ebook]

optional: the “Introduction” to The French Revolution and Human Rights (an overview of some of the questions of this week and the previous one) [*]

After the Terror—in France and Haiti and Egypt

Tuesday, April 9: The Thermidorean Reaction, Summer 1794-1795

Thursday, April 11: The Directory and the Rise of Napoleon, 1795-1799

McPhee, The French Revolution, pp. 154-177 [*]

Al-Jabarti's Chronicle of Napoleon in Egypt, pp. 1-118 [*]

The Age of Napoleon and the Making of Empire

Tuesday, April 16: France under Napoleon

Thursday, April 18: The 'Bonapartisation of Europe' and the End of the Revolution

Intro and documents in Napoleon: Symbol for an Age, pp. 1-29 and 70-91, 97-100, 114-117, 118-120, 127-133, 140-149, 175-194 [*]

The Legacy of the French and Haitian Revolutions for Modern Politics

Tuesday, April 23: Making Sense of the French Revolution in the 19th Century

Tocqueville, The Old Regime and the French Revolution, Forward, Part I (all), Part II (chapters. 1, 2, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12) and Part III (chapters. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8) [*]

Thursday, April 25: The French and Haitian Revolutions in the 20th and 21st Centuries

Tuesday, April 30: REVIEW SESSION

NOTE: PAPER #2 due in class

Date tbd: FINAL EXAM