

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION AND NAPOLEON

HIST 462/662: Gregory Brown
Wednesday 5:30-8:20 PM
CBC C116

3 Credits

The French Revolution remains one of the crucial events of modern European and world history; for over 200 years, it has been celebrated, commemorated, and debated. This class will introduce students to the dramatic events which saw the end of Old Regime Europe through the displacement of the Church as the source of moral authority; the dismantling of the feudal social system; and the overthrow of a 1000-year old monarchy. We will discuss in detail the Revolutionary debates over how to enshrine new principles of human rights, individual liberty, representative democracy and social equality in law and to establish the largest republic in history to that time.

We will consider the relationship between political reform and warfare, since throughout the period of the Revolution, France was at war internally and with much of the rest of Europe. We will also analyze the ways in which the Revolution transformed culture, so that men and women came to think of themselves in new ways. Finally, we will seek to understand the unexpected culmination of these epic struggles in a powerful, central government in France under Napoleon. This course proposes not merely a narration of the events of the Revolution but also an in-depth exposure to primary sources : texts, images, and songs of the period. Furthermore, we will engage with the rich and sophisticated historiography of the Revolution, which has made the topic a matter of contemporary debate around the world.

This course then will give students not only a greater understanding of a crucial transformation in world history, but also of why that event remains relevant and crucial, even in twenty-first century America.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students are expected to attend class reliably, having done the assigned reading and being prepared to discuss the reading. Each week I will ask you to turn in an informal set of questions, observations or comments on the reading. **Class discussion** will account for **30% of the semester grade**. In addition, there will be two essays based on assigned primary and secondary sources (though research topics are encouraged, if you arrange the topic in consultation with me.) **Each essay** will account for **35% (for a total of 70%)** of the semester grade. There are no in-class exams.

REQUIRED READING: (all available as paperbacks)

- David Andress, *The French Revolution and the People* (2006)
Ruth Scurr, *Fatal Purity: Robespierre and the French Revolution* (2007)
Jennifer Heuer, *The Family and the Nation: Gender and Citizenship in Revolutionary France* (2007)
Laurent Dubois, *A Colony of Citizens: Revolution & Slave Emancipation in the French Caribbean, 1787-1804*
David Bell, *The First Total War: Napoleon's Europe and the Birth of Warfare* (2007)
Lynn Hunt, *The French Revolution and Human Rights* (1996)
Rafe Blaufarb, *Napoleon: Symbol for an Age* (2007)

SUGGESTED READING: (for those new to the topic, choose 1 of these)

- Jeremy Popkin, *A Short History of the French Revolution* (4th edition)
William Doyle, *The Oxford History of the French Revolution* (2nd edition)

Graduate students enrolled in 662 should contact the instructor prior to the start of the fall semester; graduate students will meet with the instructor as a group every second or third week to discuss additional readings, to be placed on reserve.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week Date Topic

1. Aug 27 Why study the “French Revolution”?

Popkin, *Short History of the French Revolution* (4th ed) vii – viii.
Heuer, *Family and the Nation*, 1 - 13
2. Sept 3 Old Regime Society: Land, Wealth, Status

Popkin, *Short History of the French Revolution*, pp. 1 - 21
Andress, *The French Revolution and the People* pp. ix – xviii, 1 - 77
Bell, *The First Total War*, 21 – 51
Dubois, *Colony of Citizens*, 30 – 61
3. Sept 10 The Enlightenment: Reason, Liberty and Nature

Hunt, *The French Revolution and Human Rights*, 1 – 12; 35 – 59
Bell, *First Total War*, 54 - 83
Dubois, *Colony of Citizens*, 62 - 84
4. Sept 17 18th-Century French Culture: The Birth of the “Public Sphere”

Scurr, *Fatal Purity*, 17 - 60

11. Nov 5 Revolution in the Colonies: Race, Slavery and Liberty

Dubois, *Colony of Citizens*, 171 – 348
Hunt, *French Revolution and Human Rights*, 112 - 118
Blaufarb, *Napoleon*, 158 – 174

12. Nov 12 “Revisionism,” “Brumaire” and the Napoleonic Settlement

Popkin, *Short History of the French Revolution*, 112 – 124.
Bell, *First Total War*, 186 - 222
Dubois, *Colony of Citizens*, 349 – 422
Blaufarb, *Napoleon*, 1- 19; 35 - 117

13. Nov 19 Family and Nation in the Revolution

Heuer, *Family and Nation*, 69 - 202

14. Nov 26 The Napoleonic Empire and the first “Total War”

Popkin, *Short History of the French Revolution*, 125-139.
Bell, *First Total War*, 222 – 301
Blaufarb, *Napoleon*, 19 – 29; 140 – 157; 175 -194

15. Dec 3 Legacies of the French Revolution

Popkin, *Short History of the French Revolution*, 140-151.
Bell, *First Total War*, 302 – 317
Dubois, *Colony of Citizens*, 423 - 437
Blaufarb, *Napoleon*, 195 – 211

Dec 10 **Final Essay Due**