The French Revolution and Napoleon
History 334
Spring 2014
University of Massachusetts-Lowell
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office hours: Tuesdays, 3:30-5, Thursdays 9:30-10:45, and by appointment

Course Description

This course will examine the central events, issues and historical resonances of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic periods. Few eras of history have been as passionately observed and discussed. Our own engagement of the subject matter will lead us into core questions of modern politics: the nature of political liberty, the rise of the nation and national identity, the politics of equality and inequality, the use of violence and terror in politics, changing media of political communication, the conduct of modern warfare and empire. As a principal aim of the course will be to capture the intensely divisive quality of this period’s history, we will return regularly to debate over clashing interpretations of events. We will also analyze a great range of historical materials, including not only secondary interpretations but also speeches and pamphlets, philosophical and literary texts, prints and paintings, music, popular and material culture.

Course Objectives

The aim of this course is to enable students to

- identify and analyze the main themes and problems of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic periods
- work critically and effectively with historical evidence (primary sources, secondary texts, visual materials) in their reading and essay writing
- demonstrate improvement in written work

Course Texts

The following are the required books for the course. They are available at the campus bookstore, and should be acquired as soon as possible. Additional readings will be housed in digitized format on the course website, and/or put on reserve at O’Leary Library.

Timothy Tackett, *When the King Took Flight* (Harvard University Press, 2003)

**Course Website**

The course website can be accessed at [http://continuinged.uml.edu/online](http://continuinged.uml.edu/online). See handout entitled “Blackboard Access Information for Students” for instruction in logging on to the course website.

The website is a vital component of the course, and employs the Blackboard Learn course management software. All of the essential assignments, class readings, images and other course materials will be posted there. You should go to the web address as soon as possible, bookmark it, confirm your registration to obtain a user name and password, log on and familiarize yourself with the website’s content.

Please contact me, or Continuing Ed if you are having any difficulties whatsoever at any point in accessing or using the course website.

**Course Requirements**

The graded work of the course will comprise written work and involvement in discussion, and break down as follows:

- Unit One worksheet and paper 20%
- Unit Two summary and paper 20%
- Final Research Paper 40%
- Class Participation 20%

Due dates for the assignments are provided below. The penalty for late work is one half-letter grade per day. Any extension of the deadline must be arranged with me at least 24 hours in advance of the due date.

**On Class Discussion and Participation:**

This course has a discussion-based format, and requires active student participation. A formal requirement of that participation is that students assume responsibility for being a primary discussant for two classes of their choosing at some point over the course of the semester. In line with that duty, students are required to submit a one to two-page summary of that day’s reading in advance to me via email, along with any questions of their own they may wish to raise for discussion.

The primary discussant work will be combined with a grade for daily participation, to produce an overall class discussion grade. Lateness and/or incomplete preparation for the discussion will lower the participation grade, as will any more than three absences. It goes without saying as well that phone usage and texting are strictly forbidden during class.
Schedule of Classes

1/21 Course introduction: What is revolution? Why study the French Revolution?

**Unit One: The Coming of Revolution**

1/23 The ‘Old Regime’: Absolute Monarchy
reading:
   Neely, 1-16
   “Jean Domat on Social Order and Absolute Monarchy” (course website)
   course website: view image file, “Images of Monarchy”

1/28 Life in a Society of Orders
reading:
   Peter McPhee, “France in the 1780’s” (course website)
   Henri, Comte de Boulainvilliers, “Essais sur la Noblesse de France” (course website)
   Pierre Jean Baptiste Le Grand d’Aussy, “Voyage d’Auvergne”;
   F.Y. Besnard, “Souvenirs d’un Nonagenaire” (course website)
   Louis Sébastien Mercier, selections from *Panorama of Paris*, 1781-8 (course website)

*worksheet due*

1/30 A Revolution of Ideas? The Enlightenment
reading:
   Neely, 16-28
   Denis Diderot, “The Encyclopedia”, selections (course website)
   Jean-Jacques Rousseau, “The Social Contract” at

*worksheet due*

2/4 The Spread of Enlightenment
reading:
   Robert Darnton, “The Forbidden Bestsellers of Pre-revolutionary France” (course website)
   “Salon Life” at [http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/18salons.html](http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/18salons.html)

2/6 Financial and Political Crisis of the French State
reading:
   Neely, 29-69
   Dwyer and McPhee: Sieyès, “What is the Third Estate?”, 3-5
   Cahiers de Doléances, 5-15
   Tennis Court Oath, 16-17
*worksheet due*

2/11 The Crowd and Revolution: Fall of the Bastille

**reading:**
- Neely, 69-78
- Dwyer and McPhee: The storming of Bastille, 18-19
- The killing of Bertier and Foulon, 19-20
- George Rudé, “July 1789” (course website)

2/13 Group Discussions: The Coming of the French Revolution

**Unit Two: Creating a New Liberal Order, 1789-1792**

2/18 Monday Schedule: No Class

*Unit One paper due*

2/20 Liberal Reforms of the National Assembly

**reading:**
- Neely, 78-106
- Dwyer and McPhee: Arthur Young in France, 21-22
- The Great Fear, 22-23
- August 1789 decrees on Feudalism, 24-26
- Declaration of Rights of Man and Citizen, 26-28

2/25 The Promise and Limits of Revolution: Women and Slaves

**reading:**
- Neely, 147-155
- Dwyer and McPhee: Civil Rights for free blacks, 37-38
- An attack on the slave trade by Frossard, 38-39
- Olympe de Gouges on women’s rights, 39-42
- Witness accounts of the March on Versailles (course website)

2/27 Religion, Revolution and Counter-Revolution

**reading:**
- Neely, 106-116
- Dwyer and McPhee: Petition from Jewish communities, 35-37
- “The Church and the Revolutionary State”, 43-50
- websource: Edmund Burke, “Reflections on the Revolution”,

*one-page summary due*

3/4 The Flight of the King

**reading:**
- Tackett: 1-87

3/6 Crises of the Constitutional Monarchy
From Liberal to Radical Revolution: Issues of Interpretation
reading:
Tackett: 151-finish

Unit Three: Radical Revolution and Terror, 1792-1794

Art and Revolution: Jacques-Louis David
*Unit Two paper due

Spring Break

3/25 The Republic and its Challenges
reading:
Neely, 163-188
Dwyer and McPhee: “The End of the Monarchy,” 68-79

3/27 Equality, War and Dictatorship
reading:
Neely, 189-197
Dwyer and McPhee: “The Republic at War”, 90-96
“Revolt in the Vendée”, 97-102

4/1 in-class discussions of the Terror

4/3 Creating the New Citizen: The Civic Culture of Revolution
reading:
Neely, 197-203
Dwyer and McPhee: “A New Civic Culture”, 84-89
course website: see image file, “Revolutionary Festivals”

4/8 The Reign of Terror
reading:
Neely, 203-220
Dwyer and McPhee: “The Terror at Work”, 103-113
webservice: Robespierre, “Justification of the Use of Terror”, at
www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/robespierre-terror.html

Unit Four: From Revolution to Empire, 1794-1815
4/10   Ending the Revolution? Thermidor and the Directory
       reading:
              Neely, 221-248
*revised topic/question and bibliography due

4/15   Napoleon the Revolutionary: Beginnings of an Ascent
       reading:
              Ellis, *The Napoleonic Empire*, 1-19
       Dwyer and McPhee: “Bonaparte”, 128-139

4/17   The Napoleonic State
       reading:
              Ellis, 20-53
       Dwyer and McPhee: The Concordat, 149-152
       Founding the Empire, 153-154
       The Civil Code, 155-156

4/22   Spreading Revolution: Colonial Revolt and National Liberation in Haiti
       reading:
              “Slavery and the Haitian Revolution”,
              [http://chnm.gmu.edu/revolution/chap8a.html](http://chnm.gmu.edu/revolution/chap8a.html)
              “Toussaint L’Ouverture”,

4/24   Myths of Empire and Emperor
       reading:
              Ellis, 54-80
       Dwyer and McPhee: Imposing the Code Napoleon on the Empire,
              165-168
       “Resistance and Repression”, 169-174
*paper outline or draft due

4/29   Napoleon’s Grande Armée
       reading:
              Blaufarb and Liebeskind: 1-22, 25-58

5/1    From Apex to Defeat
       reading:
              Ellis, 81-126
       Dwyer and McPhee: “The Russian Catastrophe” and “Collapse”,
              175-192
       Blaufarb and Liebeskind, 76-101

*Final Research Paper due