

FINAL PAPER ASSIGNMENT

Requirements

- 1) Please write a research paper of not less than twelve pages. Consult the guidelines below regarding content. The text should be double-spaced. The paper is due at the beginning of class on Wednesday, December 14. It must be computer-processed. Please give your paper a title, and write your name on the back of the last page. Do not write your name elsewhere on the paper. All pages should be numbered. Citations to texts read in this course should be made in parentheses in your paper. For example, if you refer to a passage on page 13 of Beik's *Louis XIV and Absolutism*, indicate this in the following manner at the end of your sentence, after the period: (Beik, 13) Full citations to any work not assigned in class should be made in footnote or endnote form.
- 2) You must submit a one-paragraph summary of your paper to me by Monday, November 14. The summary should indicate which source or sources you will use, and how your analysis of this source or sources fits into the themes we have developed in class this semester. I will comment on your summary and return it to you, but I will not grade it.
- 3) Each student will give an oral presentation on their paper to the class on either December 7 or December 12. Sign-ups will be held later in the term. The presentation will not last more than one-half hour total. Each student will speak for 15-20 minutes, followed by 10-15 minutes of questions and conversations. These presentations should provide you with an opportunity to present your work to the class, and receive useful feedback prior to submitting the final version of the work.
- 4) Have fun with this final project! I encourage you to explore themes in the class that interest you in a creative fashion.

Guidelines

- Your final paper is a research paper, which means that the focus of the project should be extensive analysis of one or more primary sources from the Old Regime or the Revolutionary and Napoleonic periods. I understand primary sources in the broadest possible sense, including novels, plays, archival documents,

philosophical treatises, political pamphlets, demographic statistics, tax revenues, memoirs, paintings, engravings, sculpture, architecture, or anything else generated by French men and women between 1660 and 1815.

- The task is to provide an in-depth analysis of your primary source material that situates it in the context of the ideas and historical arguments about France that we have discussed this term. In other words, does your analysis of this material support ideas we have discussed, modify them, or contradict them outright? How does this source effect your understanding of the French past?
- This paper **IS NOT** a book report; your task **IS NOT** to read a text and summarize its contents, or describe in words a visual image or work of architecture. You may want to summarize briefly the contents of a text, or describe rapidly an image, but it is the analysis that counts. You are a historian of the French past; what does your analysis of your primary source material tell you about that past?
- You might begin to think about this paper by asking yourself what primary sources you would most like to analyze, then think about what such an analysis tells us about the French past. Alternatively, you might identify a specific theme or idea we have discussed in class, then think about what primary source or sources would best help you refine your thinking about that topic.
- Please feel free to speak with me at any point about your topic, even if you only have a vague sense of your interests. I am always happy to help you develop your ideas, or to suggest possible sources.

Primary Sources in English

A good list of French-language texts translated into English is at

<https://jshare.johnshopkins.edu/myweb/davidbell/sources.html>.

In addition, some useful document collections on the Old Regime and the Revolution in translation are:

- Keith Michael Baker, ed. *University of Chicago Readings in Western Civilization. Volume 7: The Old Regime and the French Revolution* (Chicago, 1987)
- Laura Mason and Tracy Rizzo, eds. *The French Revolution: A Document Collection* (Boston, 1999)
- Lynn Hunt, ed. *The French Revolution and Human Rights: A Brief Documentary History* (Boston, 1996)
- Paul H. Beik, ed. *The French Revolution* (New York, 1970)
- Paul Dawson, ed. *The French Revolution* (New York, 1967)

- Richard T. Bienvenu, ed. *The Ninth of Thermidor: The Fall of Robespierre* (New York, 1968) [in-depth collection of documents related to one of the key moments of the Revolutionary decade]
- John Rothney, ed. *The Brittany Affair and the Crisis of the Ancien Régime* (New York, 1969) [In-depth collection of documents that betray the increasing contradictions of the Old Regime in the final decades before the Revolution]
- Jeffrey Kaplow, ed. *France on the Eve of the Revolution* (New York, 1971)
- John Lough, ed. *France on the Eve of the Revolution: British Traveler's Observations, 1763-1788* (Chicago, 1987)

Other interesting primary sources in English include:

- Louis-Sébastien Mercier, *Panorama of Paris*, ed. Jeremy Popkin (University Park, 1999) [Vivid descriptions of Parisian landscape, residents, etc. before the Revolution]
- Charles-Louis de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu, *The Persian Letters* [Famous epistolary novel; recounts the “observations” of two Persians traveling in France around the time of the death of Louis XIV]
- Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract* [Most important political treatise written in eighteenth-century France ; very influential in 1789]
- Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile, or, On Education* [Widely read tract on the education of children]
- Denis Diderot, *The Nun* [Novel about a young woman forced to enter a convent against her will]
- Denis Diderot, *Supplement to the Voyage of Bougainville* [Exercise in armchair anthropology in which Diderot imagines Tahiti as a human paradise, particularly in comparison to France and Europe in his day]
- Madame de Graffigny, *The Peruvian Letters* [counterpart to Montesquieu's *Persian Letters*; the account of a young Peruvian noblewoman transplanted to eighteenth-century France]