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21H.346 France 1660-1815: Enlightenment, Revolution, Napoleon  
Fall 2005

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## **FRANCE, 1660-1815: ENLIGHTENMENT, REVOLUTION, NAPOLEÓN**

**Subject Description.** The French Revolution of 1789 stands at the crossroads of modern French history, and perhaps of western and world history more generally. Since its outbreak, observers have debated the following questions: Why did the Revolution begin? When did it end? In what ways does 1789 constitute a rupture with the French Old Regime? The answers to these questions continue to have a surprising relevance. In this class, we will study the century and a half of French history prior to 1789, then examine some of the central events and issues of the Revolution and its Napoleonic sequel.

**Subject Requirements.** Attendance and class participation is mandatory. Students will write three 3-page papers, due in class on the dates indicated below, and a final paper of at least 10 pages in length. Each student will also present an oral report based on the research paper. I will hand out instructions for these assignments later in the semester. Each assignment will be weighted as follows in the calculation of the final grade, although these calculations will also take into account improved performance during the course of the semester:

Class Participation	25 points
Three-Page Papers	25 points each (75 points total)
Final Paper	75 points
<u>Oral Presentation</u>	<u>25 points</u>
TOTAL	200 points

**Required Reading.** The following books are available for purchase at the MIT Bookstore, or in the case of *The Would-Be Commoner*, via amazon.com; they are also on 2-hour reserve in the Hayden Library. Other readings, indicated below by an asterisk (\*), are available online or as .pdf files on the course web site.

William Doyle, ed., *The Short Oxford History of France. Old Regime France, 1648-1788*

William Beik, ed., *Louis XIV and Absolutism: A Brief Study with Documents.*

Jeffrey S. Ravel, *The Would-Be Commoner: A Tale of Deception, Murder, and Justice in Seventeenth-Century France*

Laura Mason & Tracy Rizzo, *The French Revolution: A Document Collection*

Rafe Blaufarb, *Napoleon, Symbol for an Age: A Brief History with Documents*

**Supplemental Reading.** The following books, on 2-hour reserve in the Hayden Library, provide background reading for issues we will cover in class. They are optional, but I will mention them from time to time and you may wish to consult them.

Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Old Regime and the French Revolution* [Seminal work in the history of this period; first published in 1856, and still highly relevant.]

Colin Jones, *The Great Nation: France From Louis XIV to Napoleón* [The best recent one-volume study of this period in English.]

François Furet and Mona Ozouf, *A Critical Dictionary of the French Revolution* [Very useful articles on major events, individuals, ideas, and institutions of the revolutionary period.]

## **Class Meetings and Reading Assignments**

### **Week 1**

2/3. Introduction

2/5. 1789: Lists of Grievances

1. \*Excerpts from the 1789 French "Lists of Grievances," from Paul Beik, ed. *The French Revolution* (New York, 1970), pp. 45-63.
2. \*"Petition of Women of the Third Estate to the King," in Levy, *et al.*, eds. *Women in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1795* (Illinois, 1979), 18-21.
3. \*John Markoff, "Peasants and Their Grievances," in Peter R. Campbell, ed. *The Origins of the French Revolution: Problems in Focus* (New York, 2006), 239-67

### **Week 2**

2/10. The Material World and the Political Background

1. \*Jeffrey Ravel, "France," in Alan Charles Kors, ed. *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment* (Oxford UP, 2003), 2: 60-65.
2. Doyle, 1-77.

2/12. The Theory and Practice of Absolutism under Louis XIV

1. \*Bossuet, *Politics Derived from the Holy Scripture*, in Keith M. Baker, ed. *University of Chicago Readings in Western Civilization. Volume 7: The Old Regime and the French Revolution* (Chicago, 1987), 31-47.
2. Beik, 1-16, 50-96.

### **Week 3**

2/17. **NO CLASS – MONDAY SCHEDULE OF CLASSES**

2/19. Taxes and Provincial Reform

1. Beik, 96-155.

#### **Week 4**

2/24. Theater, Art, and Politics

**1. First Paper Due**

2/26. The Would-Be Commoner I

1. Ravel, xv-xxv, 1-121

#### **Week 5**

3/3. The Would-Be Commoner II

1. Ravel, 122-231
2. **Recommended:** Lecture, "Making Enlightenment Newtonianism in France c. 1700." J.B. Shank, 4:30-6, E51-149

3/5. Religion in France from Louis XIV to the Revolution

1. Beik, 170-98
2. Doyle, 78-104

#### **Week 6**

3/10. Montesquieu, Critic of the Old Regime

1. Doyle, 195-222
2. \*Montesquieu, *Persian Letters*, preface, letters 1-4, 11-14, 24-35, 147-161 (pp. 39-44, 53-61, 72-88, 270-81)

3/12. Popular Culture and Politics in Eighteenth-Century Paris

1. \*Robert Darnton, "Workers Revolt: The Great Cat Massacre of the Rue Saint-Séverin," in *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (New York, 1984), 75-104.
2. \*Jeffrey S. Ravel, "The Coachman's Bare Rump: An Eighteenth-Century French Cover-Up," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 40-2 (2007): 279-308.
3. \*Robert Darnton, "An Early Information Society: News and the Media in Eighteenth-Century Paris," American Historical Association Presidential Address. Be sure to listen to the street songs at [http://www.historycooperative.org/ahr/darnton\\_files/darnton/songs/](http://www.historycooperative.org/ahr/darnton_files/darnton/songs/)

#### **Week 7**

3/17. Economic and Social “Imaginaris” Before 1789

1. \*John Shovlin, “Political Economy and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century France,” and “Cobnstructing a Patriot Political Economy,” in *The Political Economy of Virtue: Luxury, Patriotism, and the Origins of the French Revolution* (Cornell UP, 2006), 1-12, 49-79.
2. \*Sarah Maza, “The Social Imaginary in Prerevolutionary France,” in *The Myth of the French Bourgeoisie: An Essay on the Social Imaginary, 1750-1850* (Harvard UP, 2003), 14-40.

3/19. Spaces of the Public Sphere

**1. Second Paper Due**

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**March 23-27: Spring Break**

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**Week 8**

3/31. The Question of Origins

1. Doyle, 223-248
2. \*Web Site: *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity: Exploring the French Revolution*. <http://chnm.gmu.edu/revolution/>. Read the first chapter, entitled “Social Causes of the Revolution,” and the second chapter, entitled “Monarchy Embattled.”
3. Mason, 29-32, 42-48

4/2. 1789: The Abolition of Feudalism and the Rights of Man

1. \*Web Site: *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity: Exploring the French Revolution*. <http://chnm.gmu.edu/revolution/>. Read the third chapter, entitled “Enlightenment and Human Rights.”
2. Mason, 98-113, 120-3
3. \*Decrees of the National Assembly (10-11 August 1789), in Keith M. Baker, ed. *University of Chicago Readings in Western Civilization. Volume 7: The Old Regime and the French Revolution* (Chicago, 1987), 226-31.

**Week 9**

4/7. From Constitutional Monarchy to the Terror

1. \*Web Site: *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity: Exploring the French Revolution*. <http://chnm.gmu.edu/revolution/>. Read all of the fourth and sixth chapters, entitled

- respectively “Paris and the Politics of Rebellion,” and “The Monarchy Falls.” Read pages 1 and 2 of the seventh chapter, “War, Terror, and Resistance.”
2. Mason, 138-55, 221-243.

#### 4/9. The Directory

1. \*Web Site: *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity: Exploring the French Revolution*. <http://chnm.gmu.edu/revolution/>. Read pages 3-5 of the seventh chapter, “War, Terror, and Resistance.”
2. Mason, 281-319.

### **Week 10**

#### 4/14. Women and Politics in the French Revolution

1. \*Madelyn Gutwirth, “The Limits to Women’s Action as Empowerment, 1792-1795,” in *The Twilight of the Goddesses: Women and Representation in the French Revolutionary Era* (Rutgers UP, 1992), 285-306.
2. \*Suzanne Desan, “War between Brothers and Sisters’: Inheritance Law and Gender Politics in Revolutionary France,” *French Historical Studies* 20-4 (Autumn 1997): 597-634.

#### 4/16. Slavery and the French Caribbean

1. **Third Paper Due**

### **Week 11**

#### 4/21: **NO CLASS – PATRIOTS DAY**

#### 4/23. Napoleon, the Emperor

1. Blaufarb, 1-29, 140-194

### **Week 12**

#### 4/28. Napoleon, the Politician and Legislator

1. Blaufarb, 52-100

#### 4/30. Individual Consultations with Instructor

### **Week 13**

5/5. Class Presentations

5/7. Class Presentations

**Week 14**

5/12. Class Presentations

5/14. Conclusion.

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**NO FINAL EXAM**