

AS 100.310 The French Revolution
Spring 2019, Th 3-5:30

The French Revolution was one of the modern world's first great revolutions. In a single decade, it moved through periods of liberalism, radicalism, reaction and conservatism before falling prey to the ambitions of Napoleon Bonaparte. Although we no longer assume that the French Revolution offers a template by which to judge or forecast the course of all subsequent revolutions, it remains a vibrant historical moment that helps us better understand regime change, political radicalization and polarization, compromise and negotiation, and social and cultural change across time.

As this course introduces students to the social, political, and cultural history of the French Revolution, we pose questions essential to understanding it. How and why did the Revolution begin? Whose interests did it serve? Why did it radicalize? How could the nation bring it to an end? What were its long-term consequences? We will attempt to answer such questions by weighing evidence from the period against scholars' retrospective arguments, discussing hypotheses generated by the texts and producing well-documented arguments.

Course Requirements

Reading: There will be roughly 100 pp. of reading per wk. Mark your texts and bring hard copy to class for easy reference. I may propose more specific questions from week to week but always keep the following general questions in mind: Are you reading a primary or secondary source, and why does that matter? What does the author argue? What kind of evidence does s/he use? How does this reading build on or complicate issues raised previously? What is your opinion of the author's arguments? What evidence supports your interpretation?

Lectures & Discussion: About 2/3 of our time will be devoted to discussion, with which we begin each class. Bring hard copy of your texts (no computer screens during discussion) and be ready to refer to them. Participation is vital because it helps students make sense of new ideas by asking informed questions and sharing opinions based on a growing body of knowledge. Know your materials in advance, be prepared to listen and to critically engage what others say. Lectures at the end will set up material for the next week

A note on attendance: because we work as a collective, attendance is vital. Students are allowed one un-excused absence. Under ordinary circumstances, each additional absence will lower your participation grade by 1/3 (from B+ to B, etc).

Writing: *Two 5-6 pp. take-home midterms, one 6-8 pp. take-home final; one weekly Blackboard post* that initiates discussion about assigned texts (Posts due by 11 a.m. day of class; midterms & final due by midnight). **No late papers without prior arrangement.**

Grades

Blackboard Posts	10%
Participation	15%
1 st Midterm	20%
2 nd Midterm	25%
Final Exam	30%

JHU POLICIES

Students with Disabilities: In compliance with JHU policy and equal access laws, I will discuss appropriate academic accommodations you may require. Requests should be made in the first week of classes to facilitate arrangements. Students are encouraged to register with the Office of Student Disability Services to determine appropriate accommodations. For more information contact Dr. Richard Sanders in Student Disability Services, 385 Garland, (410) 516-4720 or studentdisabilityservices@jhu.edu.

Academic Integrity: Students are expected to comply with University regulations for academic integrity. If you are in doubt about what constitutes academic dishonesty, speak to me before an assignment is due and examine the University web site. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to cheating on an exam or plagiarizing a paper (e.g., taking material from readings without citation, copying another student's paper). Failure to maintain academic integrity on an assignment will result in a loss of credit for that assignment—at a minimum. Other penalties may also apply. Guidelines for determining academic dishonesty and procedures followed in a suspected incident of academic dishonesty are detailed on the website. For more information, visit: <http://ethics.jhu.edu>

Anxiety, stress and mental health: If you are struggling with anxiety, stress, depression or other mental health concerns, please consider visiting the JHU Counseling Center. If you are concerned about a friend, encourage that person to seek out their services. The Counseling Center is at 3003 North Charles Street in Suite S-200 and can be reached at 410-516-8278 or online at <http://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/counselingcenter/>

Required Texts

Peter McPhee, *The French Revolution, 1789-1799*

Laura Mason & Tracey Rizzo (eds) *The French Revolution: A Document Collection*

Timothy Tackett, *When the King Took Flight*

Schedule

Introduction to the Course, Introduction to Old Regime France

Th Jan 31 McPhee, *Liberty or Death* 1-22
Fr Rev Docs 16-24

Origins of the French Revolution

Th Feb 7 McPhee, *Liberty or Death* 23-57
Fr Rev Docs 29-32
D'Alembert, "The Human Mind Emerged from Barbarism"; Diderot "Encyclopédie"; Voltaire, "Reflections on Religion;" Montesquieu from "Spirit of the Laws;" Rousseau from "Discourse on Inequality" Isaac Kramnick (ed) *The Portable Enlightenment* pp. 7-21, 115-19, 125-131, 405-415, 424-431

The Opening of the French Revolution

Th Feb 14 McPhee, *Liberty or Death* 58-80
French Rev Docs 49-75
William Sewell, "Historical Events as Structural Transformations: Inventing Revolution at the Bastille," *Theory & Society* v. 25 #6 (Dec 96) pp. 841-881

Creating a New Regime

Th Feb 21 McPhee, *Liberty or Death* 81-118
Fr Rev Docs pp. 98-131
Suzanne Desan, "Gender and Radicalization in October 1789: Occupying the National Assembly." *Unpublished paper*.
1st midterm questions distributed

1st midterm due Monday Feb 25 @ midnight. Send MS Word doc to lmason@jhu.edu

Shattering the New Regime

Th Feb 28 *French Rev Docs* 144-155
Timothy Tackett, *When the King Took Flight* pp. 1-118

Th Mar 7 Timothy Tackett, *When the King Took Flight* pp. 119-223

Popular Revolution

Th Mar 14 McPhee, *Liberty or Death* 142-187
Fr Rev Docs 170-187, 197-208
Colin Lucas, "Revolutionary Violence, the People, and the Terror," Keith Baker (ed) *The French Revolution and the Creation of Modern Political Culture*, vol. 4: *The Terror* (1994) 57-79

Mar 18-2 Spring Break

Revolution in the Colonies

Th Mar 28 McPhee, *Liberty or Death* 188-204
Laurent Dubois & John Garrigus, *Slave Revolution in the Caribbean* pp. 7-33, 67-70, 84-85, 103-107, 120-125
Robin Blackburn, "Haiti, Slavery, and the Age of the Democratic Revolution," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 63 (October 2006), pp. 643-74

Forging a New Nation

Th Apr 4 McPhee, *Liberty or Death* 205-251
French Rev Docs pp. 221-43, 252-262
Jean-Pierre Gross, *Fair Shares for All* pp. 64-92
2nd midterm questions distributed

2nd midterm due Monday Apr 15 @ midnight. Send MS Word doc to lmason@jhu.edu.

Rejecting Revolution: Thermidor

Th Apr 11 McPhee, *Liberty or Death* 252-296
French Rev Docs pp. 263-268
Ronen Steinberg, "Terror on Trial: Accountability, Transitional Justice, and the Affaire Le Bon in Thermidorian France," *French Historical Studies* vol. 39 #3 (August 2016) 419-444
Laura Mason, "The Culture of Reaction: Demobilizing the People after Thermidor," *French Historical Studies* vol. 39 #3 (August 2016) 445-470

Ending Revolution: The Directory

- Th Apr 18 McPhee, *Liberty or Death* 297-320
French Rev Docs 270-275, 288-300
Andrew Jainchill, "The Constitution of the Year III," *Reimagining Politics after the Terror* pp. 26-61
John Anthony Scott (ed) *The Defense of Gracchus Babeuf* pp. 40-60
- Th Apr 25 McPhee, *Liberty or Death* 321-341
French Rev Docs pp. 306-19, 328-33
Christine Adams, "Venus of the Capitol": Madame Tallien and the Politics of Beauty under the Directory," *French Historical Studies* vol. 37 #4 (Fall 2014) 599-629
Suzanne Desan, "Redefining Revolutionary Liberty: The Rhetoric of Religious Revival during the French Revolution," *Journal of Modern History* vol. 60 #1 (Mar 1988) pp. 1-27

Ending the Republic and Making Sense of it All

- Th May 2 Philip Dwyer, "Napoleon, the Revolution, and the Empire," David Andress (ed) *The Oxford Handbook of the French Revolution* 573-589
Jennifer Ngair Heuer, "Did Everything Change? Rethinking Revolutionary Legacies," David Andress (ed) *The Oxford Handbook of the French Revolution* 625-641
Pierre Serna, "Every Revolution is a War of Independence," Suzanne Desan, Lynn Hunt, Wm. Max Nelson (eds) *The French Revolution in Global Perspective* pp. 165-82
David Bell, "Questioning the Global Turn: The Case of the French Revolution," *French Historical Studies* vol. 37 #1 (Winter 2014) pp. 1-24
Final Exam questions distributed

- Th May 9 **Final Exam due @ midnight. (Early exams accepted and encouraged)**
Send MS Word doc to lmason@jhu.edu

Coursework Guidelines

Blackboard Posts should reflect your thought about texts and suggest points for discussion. In ½ to 1 page, highlight how texts shed light on a particular historical problem, which you may want to link to others we have already discussed. Close with a suggestion for discussion or respond to someone else's suggestion w/ explicit reference to texts.

Discussion

"A": regular, sustained contributions to discussion that are well-informed by assigned texts and respond to others' contributions.

"B": less frequent contributions to discussion with qualities enumerated above

"C": regular attendance w/ little participation or participation uninformed by readings. lower than "C": little or no participation with excessive absences

Writing an Effective Paper

Narrow your focus

You cannot say everything there is to be said on any given question, so focus on a few key points and explain how they illuminate larger concerns.

Make a clear argument

Make an argument using evidence from primary and secondary sources. State the argument as clearly as possible right away, which may require a couple of good declarative sentences. Accordingly, write a rough draft of your intro when you begin and thoroughly revise when you finish the paper. Because we do not always have a perfectly clear sense of what we are arguing until we finish writing, your intro should be the last thing you revise so it conveys your final sense of clarity.

As a rule, introductory and concluding paragraphs should be brief. Do not take up valuable space at the start of your essay by giving lengthy background information: state your argument and move on. (If the background info is essential, it belongs in the body of the paper. If it is not essential, leave it out altogether).

Organize your essay effectively

Each paragraph in the body of the essay should contribute to the logical development of your argument. Think in terms of a series of main points. Make sure each paragraph develops one point, and use topic sentences to make clear what that point is. If you want to make an especially complicated point, you may want to dedicate two consecutive paragraphs. Otherwise, limit development of each point to one paragraph. Order your main points to build your argument logically and systematically. Use clear transition sentences to ensure that each paragraph flows from the previous one.

Demonstrate your main points with relevant examples from sources

To argue persuasively, you must analyze and interpret sources. Avoid lengthy general discussions and straightforward summaries of your sources. Use sources to illustrate the main points of your argument. Explain the essence of the author's argument and use a pithy quotation when essential. But do not assume that even the most evocative quotation can make your point. Better to summarize than leave your reader in the dark. And do explain how your example advances your argument. To ensure that each

paragraph reinforces your analysis, avoid long block quotations when a briefer quotation or your own summary will suffice.

Do not assume too much knowledge

Do not assume that your reader knows your texts. Explain its purpose briefly. The first time you introduce it, cite author's full name and include the title of the book or article in question, before moving on to the part of the argument that concerns you. For example:

*In **The Return of Martin Guerre**, Natalie Davis argues that peasants had some room to negotiate the material and social constraints that defined their world.*

Eliminate typographical and grammatical errors

Essays should have a bare minimum of typographical and grammatical errors. Numerous mistakes – in particular, sentences needing repair – may well contribute to a significant drop in grade. Among the most common writing mistakes are run-on sentences (sentences that are unnecessarily long or convoluted); unclear references; failure to ensure that subjects, verbs, and objects are in agreement; and sentences with improper punctuation (in particular, commas and semi-colons). Multiple verb tenses are also a common source of confusion. Avoid the passive voice whenever possible.

Most writing problems are relatively easy to solve, above all by consulting a writing manual and/or a writing specialist, and then consciously working to improve those aspects of your writing that are causing you trouble. **If you have been alerted to problems with clarity of expression, take drafts of your papers to the writing center for help editing.** Correct grammar and syntax are essential to a good paper because we cannot make persuasive arguments unless we express ourselves clearly.

For easy reference on good grammar and syntax, **keep a copy of Strunk & White, *Elements of Style* nearby.**

Cite your sources

Cite any direct quotation, paraphrase, ideas or thoughts not exclusively your own, including information from assigned readings and lectures. **FAILING TO CITE PROPERLY IS PLAGIARISM.** Full footnotes are not, however, necessary. Cite author and page number of the text (McPhee, 47) or document title and page number (“What is a sans-culotte?” Mason & Rizzo 197).