

OLD REGIME AND REVOLUTIONARY FRANCE

AS.100.303, Spring 2023

Professor Michael Kwass (*he, him, his*)

Email: kwass@jhu.edu

Office Hours: by appointment

Course Objectives

This course surveys the social, political, and cultural history of old regime and revolutionary France. We will examine such themes as the structure and evolution of old-regime society; the rise of absolutism during the reign of Louis XIV; the ideas of the Enlightenment; the development of a colonial empire based on slavery; and the origins and course of the French and Haitian Revolutions. Lectures will introduce chronological and thematic background material, while readings and discussion will focus on specific historical texts, problems, and events.

Course Requirements

This is an inquiry-driven, student-led seminar. Students' own curiosity, questions, and desire to learn will shape the class at every turn. The seminar is designed to foster meaningful civil exchange among students across disciplinary interests and from diverse backgrounds. To that end, all students are expected to contribute actively to class.

The course is designed to impart the skills of reading, writing, and discussing history in a critical fashion. I will give short lectures providing historical background on readings, but the class will mainly be oriented to discussion. Every week on the day of class before noon, students are expected to post on Canvas one specific question on the reading that is firmly grounded in a primary-source text. In addition to posting a question, students must post a short statement (1-3 clear sentences) explaining why their question is important. How does the question illuminate the significance of the reading assignment, and what kinds of discussions might it prompt? While the question must be based on a close reading of a primary source, students shouldn't be afraid to take intellectual risks.

After each lecture, students will be divided into small break-out discussion groups to discuss their questions and select two questions for the board. Students will then reunite as a class and a designated student and I will use the questions on the board (among others) to co-lead class discussion. **Everyone is expected to contribute to discussion. Class participation is worth 25% of your grade.**

Students are also expected to write three double-spaced 6-page papers (formatted as Word documents with 12-point font and standard margins) based on class readings. A first draft of the first paper will be due on March 2. The draft will be graded, but students will be able to revise the draft (due March 16) if they so choose, in which case the first draft and final draft will count equally towards the final paper grade. The remaining two papers are due on April 11 and May 8. Each paper is worth 25% of your grade. Papers are to be sent to me via email attachment by 6:00 pm on the day they are due.

Required Readings (available for purchase at the JHU bookstore and/or on e-reserve at the JHU Library):

Natalie Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre*

Molière, *The Misanthrope and Other Plays*

Corneille, *The Cid, Cinna, The Theatrical Illusion*

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

Arlette Farge and Jacques Revel, *The Vanishing Children of Paris*

PLEASE NOTE: Additional required readings have been placed on e-reserve at the JHU library. You are also strongly encouraged to watch the following films: *The Return of Martin Guerre*; *Ridicule*; and *La Nuit de Varennes*.

Ethics Guidelines

The strength of the university depends on academic and personal integrity. In this course, you must be honest and truthful. Ethical violations include plagiarism, reuse of assignments, improper use of the Internet and electronic devices, unauthorized collaboration, alteration of graded assignments, forgery and falsification, lying, facilitating academic dishonesty, and unfair competition. Please report any violations you witness to the instructor. For more information, see <https://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/policies-guidelines/undergrad-ethics/>.

Appropriate use of AI when writing essays or discussion board entries:

You are free to use spell check, grammar check, and synonym identification tools.

You are free to use app recommendations when it comes to rephrasing sentences or reorganizing paragraphs you have drafted yourself.

Inappropriate use of AI when writing essays or discussion board entries:

You may not use entire sentences or paragraphs suggested by an app.

You may not have an app write a draft (either rough or final) of an assignment for you.

Student Resources:

Johns Hopkins offers students an array of academic and health resources. I strongly encourage you to make use of them. Past students have found the Writing Center to be particularly useful. Regarding health resources, please keep in mind that the university offers mental health services, such as the Counseling Center, in addition to physical health services. It is *perfectly normal* for college students to experience mental health challenges during the academic year, which is why the university provides mental health services to the student body.

So, please make use of:

People around you:

- Each other
- Your professors & TAs
- Your advisors
- Your RAs (resident assistants)

Academic resources:

- [Writing Center](#)

- [ESL Consulting](#)
- [Research & Library Assistance](#)
- [Office of Academic Support](#)
- [Center for Student Success](#)
- [Student Disability Services](#)
- [Citation sources \(JHU library\)](#)
- [Purdue Online Writing Lab \(OWL\)](#)
- [Homewood Undergraduate Ethics Policy](#)

Health resources:

- [Student Well-being](#)
- [Counseling Center](#) (or call 410-516-8278, open 24/7)
- [One-stop shopping for resources for 1st-years](#)
- [Student Health & Wellness Center](#)
- [Religious & Spiritual Life](#)
- [Recreation Center](#)
- [A Place to Talk](#) (peer counseling)
- [Office of Institutional Equity](#)

Finally, please don't forget to register to vote if you're eligible. Democracies are fragile and depend on the active participation of citizens like you.

Course Schedule

I. The Society of Old Regime France

Week 1 (Jan 24 and 26): Introduction to Class

T: Distribute and review syllabi. Introduction to early modern society.

Th: Lecture on Social Hierarchy. Loyseau, "A Treatise on Orders," in Keith Michael Baker, ed., *The Old Regime and the French Revolution* (Chicago, 1987), 13-31, on e-reserve. **Schedule discussion leaders: everyone must lead discussion once.**

Week 2 (Jan 31 and Feb 2): The Peasantry

T: Lecture on Social Hierarchy. William Doyle, *Old Regime France, 1648-1788* (Oxford, 2001), 42-54, 62-8; and Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre*, 1-61.

Th: Lecture on the Peasantry (slides on les Bories). Discussion of Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre*, 62-125.

Please watch *The Return of Martin Guerre*, which is on reserve and streamable via Kanopy. Do NOT watch the movie instead of the book because the movie is quite different and will mislead you. If possible, watch the movie after you read the book.

Week 3 (Feb 7 and 9): The Bourgeoisie

T: Lecture on the Bourgeoisie, Artisans, and Urban Life. Discussion of William Doyle, *Old Regime France*, 69-75; and Molière, *The Misanthrope and Other Plays*, “The Would-Be Gentleman,” 3-22 (Acts 1 and 2).

Th: Lecture on the Bourgeoisie, Artisans, and Urban Life. Molière, *The Misanthrope and Other Plays*, “The Would-Be Gentleman,” 22-62 (Acts 3-5).

Week 4 (Feb 14 and 16): The Nobility

T: Lecture on the Nobility. Discussion of William Doyle, *Old Regime France*, 57-62; and Corneille, *The Cid*, *Cinna*, *The Theatrical Illusion*, “The Cid,” Acts I-II.

Th: Lecture on the Nobility. Corneille, *The Cid*, *Cinna*, *The Theatrical Illusion*, “The Cid,” Acts III-V. **Distribute Essay Questions for First Essay and Writing Guidelines.**

II. Absolutism and the Rise of Louis XIV

Week 5 (Feb 21 and 23): Absolutism

T: Lecture on Absolutism. Discussion of William Beik, *Louis XIV and Absolutism*, 1-16; and Bossuet, “Politics Derived from the Words of Holy Scripture,” in Keith Michael Baker, ed., *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*, 31-47, on e-reserve. Watch the film *The Rise to Power of Louis XIV*.

Th: Lecture on Absolutism (slides of Versailles). Discussion of William Beik, *Louis XIV and Absolutism*, 82-90 and 108-120.

Week 6 (Feb 28 and March 2): Absolutism: Versailles, Provinces, and Colonies

T: Lecture on Absolutism. Discussion of William Beik, *Louis XIV and Absolutism*, 50-81.

Th: Lecture on Absolutism. Discussion of Jean-Frédéric Schaub, “1659” and “1683,” in Patrick Boucheron, ed., *France in the World: A New Global History*, 339-344 and 357-362; and Dubois and Garrigus, *Slave Revolution in the Caribbean, 1789-1804*, 1st edition (Boston, 2006), *The Code Noir*, 49-54. **First Drafts of Paper Due March 2**

III. The Eighteenth Century: Absolutism Challenged

Week 7 (March 7 and 9): The Enlightenment I

T: Lecture on Enlightenment. Discussion of William Doyle, *Old Regime France*, 78-85, 89-104; and Voltaire, “Reflections on Religion,” in Isaac Kramnick, ed., *The Portable Enlightenment Reader* (Penguin, 1995), 115-133, on e-reserve.

Th: Lecture on Enlightenment. Discussion of Diderot, “Encyclopedia,” in Jacques Barzun, ed., *Rameau’s Nephew and Other Works* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merill Co.), 277-307, on reserve.

Week 8 (March 14 and 16): The Enlightenment II

T: Lecture on Enlightenment. Discussion of selections from the Encyclopedia: “Happiness,” “Humanity (ethics),” “Jew,” “Lesbian,” “Paternal Authority,” “Prejudice,” “Virginity,” on line at: www.hti.umich.edu/d/did/. **Meet at Library, BLC Seminar Room 2030/2040.**

Th: Lecture on Enlightenment. Discussion of Rousseau, “Discourse which Won the Prize of the Academy of Dijon... [First Discourse],” in Roger D. Masters, ed., *The First and Second Discourses* (New York: St Martin’s), 30-74, on reserve; and Abbé Raynal, *Philosophical and Political History of the Settlements and Trade of the Europeans in the East and West Indies* (1770), in Lynn Hunt, ed., *The French Revolution and Human Rights*, 51-55, on reserve. **Paper Revisions Due.**

Please watch the film *Ridicule* (it’s a fun movie, I promise).

Week 9: Spring Break, March 18-26

Week 10 (March 28 and 30): Parliamentary Politics

T: Lecture on Parlements. Discussion of William Doyle, *Old Regime France*, 155-60, 207-212, 215-222; and “Remonstrance of the Cour des Aides,” in Baker, ed., *The Old Regime and the French Revolution* (Chicago, 1987), 51-70, on reserve. **Distribute Essay Questions for Second Paper**

Th: No Class.

Week 11 (April 4 and 6): Popular Politics and Social Change in the Eighteenth Century

T: Lecture on Popular Politics. Discussion of Farge and Revel, *The Vanishing Children of Paris*, 1-79.

Th: Lecture on Eighteenth-Century Social Change and Colonial Expansion. Discussion of Farge and Revel, *The Vanishing Children of Paris*, 81-132.

IV. The French Revolution

Week 12 (April 11 and 13): The Origins of the French Revolution / The Liberal Revolution

T: Lecture on Political Crisis and the Calling of the Estates General. Discussion of Laura Mason and Tracey Rizzo, *The French Revolution: A Document Collection*, 10-15, on reserve; and Sieyes, “What is the Third Estate” in Keith Michael Baker, ed., *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*, 154-179, on reserve. **Second Paper Due.**

Th: Lecture on Liberal Revolution. Discussion of Mason and Rizzo, *The French Revolution: A Document Collection*, 67 (introductory paragraph only), 69-73, 73-75, 83-87.

Week 13 (April 18 and 20): From Liberal to Republican Revolution: Politics High and Low

T: Lecture on Transition from Liberal to Republican Revolution. Discussion of Mason and Rizzo, *The French Revolution: A Document Collection*, 89-97, 101-104, 144-152, 177-187, on reserve.

Please watch the film *La Nuit de Varennes*.

Th: Lecture on Republican Revolution. Discussion of Mason and Rizzo, *The French Revolution: A Document Collection*, 189-195 (stop at the Thermidorian Reaction), 197-199, 204-206, 254-258, 258-262, on reserve.

Week 14 (April 25 and 27): The Haitian Revolution

T: Lecture on the Haitian Revolution. Discussion of Laurent Dubois and John Garrigus, *Slave Revolution in the Caribbean, 1789-1804*, (1st edition: Bedford/St Martin's, 2006), 7-40, 67-70, 70-72, 75-8, 78-82, 82-83, 84-85, and 86-88.

Th: Lecture on the Haitian Revolution. Discussion of Dubois and Garrigus, *Slave Revolution in the Caribbean, 1789-1804* (1st edition: Bedford/St Martin's, 2006), 93-94, 95-99, 120-125, 129-132, 167-170, 188-191, and 191-196. **Handout essay questions for final paper.**

Third paper is due on May 9.