

**Register to vote ASAP and vote next November.
Democracy is a fragile right, not to be taken lightly.**

**AS 100.310 The French Revolution (Sp 2024)
Tu, Th 4:30-5:45**

The French Revolution was one of the modern world's first great revolutions. In a single decade, it moved through periods of liberalism, radicalism, conservatism, and reaction before falling prey to its own government. Although we no longer assume that the French Revolution offers a metric for assessing subsequent revolutions, it remains a vibrant historical moment that helps us better understand regime change, radicalization and polarization, compromise and negotiation, and how upheaval inflects ordinary lives.

This course introduces the social, political, and cultural history of the French Revolution, posing questions essential to understanding it. How and why did the Revolution begin? Whose interests did it serve? Why did it radicalize? How was it to be ended? What were its long-term consequences? We will attempt to answer such questions by weighing primary evidence from the period and scholars' retrospective arguments, discussing scholarly hypotheses, and producing our own well-documented arguments.

Course Requirements

Reading: There will be roughly 80 pp. of reading per wk, with some exceptions (Reading load for Tackett and Mason will be 100-150pp/wk). Look ahead, to begin longer readings early and so balance your workload. Mark texts and bring hard copy to class for easy reference.

We will pose specific questions each week but you should always ask the following of any given text: Is it a primary or secondary source? Why does that matter? What does the author argue? What evidence do they use? How does this reading build on or complicate issues raised previously? What is your opinion of the argument? What evidence supports your interpretation?

Discussion & Lecture: We will devote most of our class time to discussion of assigned readings. No computer screens are allowed during discussion (w/out authorization from Student Disabilities), so bring hard copy for reference to specific passages or turns of phrase. Discussion helps students make sense of new ideas by asking informed questions and sharing opinions based on a growing body of knowledge so participation is vital. Accordingly, you should now your materials in advance, be prepared to listen, and be ready to engage (critically, but politely!) with what others say. Lectures at the end of class lay groundwork for the next readings.

A note on attendance: Attendance is essential to facilitate our work as a collective. Students are allowed two undocumented absences. Please provide documentation for absence due to a graduate school or job interview. For absences due to extended illness or family emergency, speak with someone in the Office of Student Life, who will inform us of your situation. In those cases, we can make alternate arrangements for course work if necessary. 2X tardy to class (more than 5 minutes late) counts as an undocumented absence. Each absence beyond the two permitted will lower your participation grade by 1/3 (from B+ to B, etc).

Writing Assignments: Two brief Canvas posts/wk, which address an issue in assigned texts and/or pose a discussion question. **Due by 3 pm day of class, no late submissions.** You may miss 2 canvas posts without penalty. Each missed post after that will lower your participation

grade by 1/3 (from B+ to B, etc)

Exams consist of two 5-6 pp. take-home midterms; one 6-8 pp. take-home final. Late exams will be lowered by 1/3 grade (from B+ to B, etc) for each day beyond deadline.

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

Students with Disabilities: In compliance with Johns Hopkins University policy and equal access laws, I am happy to discuss appropriate accommodations you may require. Request for accommodations should be made in the first week of the semester in coordination with the Office of Student Disability Services. Contact info is 410- 516-8075/ studentdisabilityservices@jhu.edu and/or disability accommodations site:

<https://advanced.jhu.edu/student-resources/disability-services/disability-accommodations/>

Academic Integrity: Students are expected to comply with University regulations for academic integrity. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, copying another student's work or using other materials without proper citation. Failure to maintain academic integrity will result, at a minimum, in a loss of credit for the assignment. Other penalties may also apply. If you are in doubt about what constitutes academic dishonesty, speak to me before the assignment is due. Further guidelines and procedures for dealing with academic dishonesty can be found at the JHU website:

<https://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/policies-guidelines/undergrad-ethics/>

Appropriate use of AI: You **may use** spell check, grammar check, and thesaurus tools when writing. You **may not use** AI to generate ideas or write any portion or draft of your essay. Evidence of inappropriate use of AI will be considered plagiarism and, as such, grounds for investigation into academic integrity.

Counseling and Mental Health. College is a time of major transition, change, and growth that can be both exciting and stressful. At times, the challenges of college life may feel overwhelming and impact your mental health, making it difficult to manage daily demands. The Counseling Center provides a safe, confidential, nonjudgmental space where students can feel free to explore a wide concerns and issues.

<https://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/counselingcenter/>

Required Texts

Laura Mason & Tracey Rizzo, *The French Revolution: A Document Collection*, 2nd edition

Peter McPhee, *Liberty or Death; the French Revolution*

Timothy Tackett, *When the King Took Flight*

Canvas Reserves

Schedule

Tu Jan 23 Introduction

The Old Regime

Th Jan 25 McPhee, *Liberty or Death*, 1-22

Mason/Rizzo, 9-16: Charles Loyseau, *A Treatise on Orders (1610)*

Origins of the French Revolution

- Tu Jan 30** McPhee, *Liberty or Death*, 23-57
Canvas: Diderot from *Encyclopédie*; Chesneau Dumarsais, "Definition of a Philosophe," in Kramnick (ed) *The Portable Enlightenment*, 17-22
Mason/Rizzo, 22-30, 32-39: Emilie du Châtelet, *Examination of the Bible*; Abbé Raynal, *A Philosophical and Political History of... Europeans in the East & West Indies*; Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin... of Inequality...*
- Th Feb 1** Mason/Rizzo, 16-22: Jacques Necker, *Preface to the King's Accounts*; Parlement de Paris, *Remonstrance on the 3^d Vingtième*
Canvas: Lauren R. Clay, "The Bourgeoisie, Capitalism, and the Origins of the French Revolution," *Oxford Handbook of the French Revolution*, 21-35

From Reform to Revolution

- Tu Feb 6** McPhee, *Liberty or Death*, 58-80
Mason/Rizzo, 42-56: "From Estates General to National Assembly"
- Th Feb 8** Canvas: William Sewell, "Historical Events as Structural Transformations: Inventing Revolution at the Bastille," *Theory & Society* v. 25 #6 (Dec 96) 841-881

Remaking France

- Tu Feb 13** Canvas: Peter McPhee, *Living the French Revolution*, 35-76 **
** This reading is not from *Liberty or Death*
Mason/Rizzo, 57-77: "The Emergence of Popular Revolution"
- Th Feb 15** McPhee, *Liberty or Death*, 81-101
Mason/Rizzo, 79-110, 112-119: "Legislating an Enlightened Regime"
** Hand out take-home midterm #1

Tu Feb 20 No class. Send exams as WordDoc to lmason@jhu.edu by 5pm

The Fracturing of the New Regime

- Th Feb 22** McPhee, *Liberty or Death*, 102-132
Mason/Rizzo, 131-150: "New Tensions"
- Tu Feb 27** Timothy Tackett, *When the King Took Flight* pp. 1-87
- Th Feb 29** The Birth of Democracy
Timothy Tackett, *When the King Took Flight* pp. 88-150
- Tu Mar 5** Foreign Relations & the March to War
Timothy Tackett, *When the King Took Flight* pp. 151-223

Republican Revolution, Crisis and Renewal

- Th Mar 7** McPhee, *Liberty or Death*, 142-163
Mason/Rizzo, 151-183: "War & A New Revolution".

Tu Mar 12 Revolution in the Colonies I
Canvas: Laurent Dubois & John Garrigus, *Slave Revolution in the Caribbean*, 7-22
John Garrigus, "Free People of Color... and the Origins of the Haitian Revolution,"
Before Haiti : race and citizenship in French Saint-Domingue (2006), 227-263

Th Mar 14 Revolution in the Colonies II
Canvas: Laurent Dubois & John Garrigus, *Slave Revolution in the Caribbean*, 24-33
Richard Lee Turits & Laurent Dubois, "Emancipation and the Rooting of Freedom,"
Freedom Roots (2019), 93-114
Mason/Rizzo, 110-112, 204-213: Documents from Saint-Domingue

Mar 18-22 Spring Break

Tu Mar 26 Popular Revolution
McPhee, *Liberty or Death*, 164-204
Mason/Rizzo, 190-204: "Popular Movements Beyond the Convention"

Th Mar 28 Federalism & counter-revolution
Mason/Rizzo, 218-220: "Popular Movements..."
Canvas: Olwen Hufton, "In Search of Counter-Revolutionary Women," Gary Kates
(ed) *The French Revolution: Recent Debates and New Controversies* 1st edition
(1998) 302-333
**** Hand out take-home midterm #2**

Tu Apr 2 No class. Send exams as WordDoc to lmason@jhu.edu by 5pm

Th Apr 4 Reordering Society
McPhee, *Liberty or Death*, 205-227
Canvas: Jean-Pierre Gross, *Fair Shares for All* pp. 64-92
Mason/Rizzo, 223-227, 240-243, 259-263: Constitution of Year I; Barère on the
Maximum; Saint-Just on Redistributing Property

Tu Apr 9 Revolutionary Terror
Canvas: Marisa Linton & Michel Biard, "Terror in the Convention," *Terror: the
French Revolution and Its Demons* (2021) 96-118
Mason/Rizzo, 220-222, 227-240, 253-259: Vendée, Suspects, Virtue

The Long Process of Ending the Revolution

Tu Apr 9 Thermidor
McPhee, *Liberty or Death*, 274-296
Canvas: Ronen Steinberg, "Terror on Trial: Accountability, Transitional Justice, and
the Affaire Le Bon in Thermidorian France," *French Historical Studies* 39 #3 (August
2016) 419-444
Mason/Rizzo, 264-277: "The Thermidorian Reaction"

- Th Apr 11** Attend Friday roundtable on Age of Revolutions (room TBA)
** 5% extra credit for a short paper (250-300 word) on the roundtable overall or a particular issue raised there.
- Tu Apr 16** The Directory
Canvas: Laura Mason, *The Last Revolutionaries* (2022), 44-89
- Th Apr 18** Canvas: Laura Mason, *The Last Revolutionaries* (2022), 118-158, 174-188
- Tu Apr 23** The Decline of the Republic and the rise of Napoleon
McPhee, *Liberty or Death*, 321-341
Mason/Rizzo, 293-303, 329-351: Constitutional Violations; Napoleon

The Meaning of it All

- Th Apr 25** McPhee, *Liberty or Death*, 342-370
Canvas: Jennifer Heuer, "Did Everything Change? Rethinking Revolutionary Legacies," David Andress (ed) *The Oxford Handbook of the French Revolution* (2015) 625-641
Mike Rapport, "The International Repercussions of the French Revolution," Peter McPhee (ed) *A Companion to the French Revolution* (2013), 381-396
**** Hand out take-home final**

Su May 5 Send finals as WordDoc to lmason@jhu.edu by 9 pm
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Guidelines for Papers & Take-Home Exams

Narrow your focus

You cannot say everything there is to be said in a short paper or exam essay. so focus a couple of issues and explain what they tell us about the larger problem you are discussing.

Make a clear, strong argument

Your essay should not summarize McPhee but, instead, make a persuasive argument that addresses the question posed.

Begin your essay by stating your argument in the clearest possible terms. This may require several good declarative sentences. Accordingly, write a draft of your introduction when you begin the paper to guide yourself, and revise thoroughly after you finish the essay. The introduction should be the last thing you revise because we rarely have a perfectly clear sense of what we are arguing until we finish writing. You should convey your final sense of the material to your reader.

As a rule, your first (introductory) paragraph and your final (concluding) paragraph should be brief, no more than a half-page. State your case and add background info as necessary in the body of the essay.

Organize your essay clearly and effectively

Each paragraph in the body of your 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, not several. Use a clear topic sentence to make the main point of each paragraph immediately visible. If you want to make an especially complicated point, consider devoting two consecutive paragraphs to developing it. Otherwise, limit development of each main point to one paragraph. Order the presentation of your main points carefully, 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 make your overall argument and main points convincing, you must analyze your sources. Avoid lengthy general discussions and simple summaries of sources. Give a brief overview of the source's provenance or significance (who wrote it? what does it address?), then explain, precisely, how it is relevant to your argument. Do not assume that a pithy quotation can make your point for you. Rather, lean into summary and explain how your source advances your argument. To ensure that each paragraph reinforces your analysis, avoid long block (indented) quotations when a briefer quotation will suffice.

Do not assume too much knowledge

It's good to get in the habit of writing for a general reader. In other words, do not assume that your reader is familiar with the texts you're analyzing. Give a very brief summary, cite the author's full name, and include the title of the book or article in question before moving to the 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

Your essays should have a bare minimum of typographical and grammatical errors. Numerous mistakes – in particular, poor syntax– may contribute to a significant drop in grade. Among the most common writing mistakes are run-on sentences; 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. Finally, 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, consult Strunk & White, *Elements of Style* (available for free on MSE website) and take drafts of your papers to the Writing Center. Correct grammar and syntax are essential to a good paper because persuasive arguments demand sound reasoning and clear expression.

Cite your sources

Cite any direct quotation, paraphrase, ideas or thoughts that are not exclusively your own, including information you've gathered from assigned readings, lectures, and films. FAILURE TO CITE PROPERLY IS PLAGIARISM. Full footnotes are not necessary when citing assigned materials. Cite the author and page number of the text you're using (McPhee, 47). When citing a document, name the original author and where you consulted the text (Necker in Mason/Rizzo, 19).