



The Old Regime and the French Revolution

Dr. David Allen Harvey
Tuesday-Friday 1:00-2:20
CHL 224
Spring 2011



This course will cover the political, socioeconomic, and cultural history of France from about 1700 to 1815, with special emphasis on the causes and consequences of the French Revolution, one of the major turning points in European history. Topics to be examined include the political and social structures of the Old Regime, religious and social conflict, French colonialism in the Americas and imperial rivalry with Britain, the impact of the Enlightenment, popular culture, the outbreak and radicalization of the revolution, the rise and fall of Napoleon, and the meaning and legacy of the Revolution for modern French society.

Course meetings will be devoted to lecture and discussion of readings. Students will be expected to complete in-class midterm and final examinations, lead and participate in class discussions based on course readings, and write a term paper (about 15 pages) on a subject of their choosing within the scope of the course. Students should meet with the instructor during office hours to discuss their term paper topics, no later than the midterm break.

Copies of the syllabus, any revisions or changes to the course calendar, and links to reserve readings will be available through the NewDLE system.

All assignments are due on the dates given in the course calendar unless other arrangements have been made in advance. Class participation is an important part of this course. Attendance will be taken, and students may miss no more than five class meetings (barring documented instances of extreme circumstances) in order to receive a satisfactory evaluation for the semester.

Contact Information:

Office: CHL 231; office hours Tuesdays 9-10, Fridays 10-12, or by appointment

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Course Readings:

The following books will be available for purchase at the bookstore:

Pierre Goubert, *Louis XIV and Twenty Million Frenchmen*
Guy Chaussinand-Nogaret, *The French Nobility in the Eighteenth Century*
Margaret Jacob, *The Enlightenment*
Robert Darnton, *The Literary Underground of the Old Regime*
Beaumarchais, *The Marriage of Figaro*
Timothy Tackett, *When the King Took Flight*
Howard Brown, *Ending the French Revolution*
Geoffrey Ellis, *Napoleon*

In addition, the above titles will be available on reserve in the library. Other readings listed on the course calendar will be available on electronic reserve through the library web page, or through the NewDLE system.

Course Calendar:

- Tues. 2/1: Louis XIV and Absolute Monarchy in France
Fri. 2/5: Discussion: Goubert, *Louis XIV*, Chapters 1-4, 6-8, 13-15
- Tues. 2/8: Nobles and Old Regime Society
Fri. 2/11: Discussion: Chaussinand-Nogaret, *The French Nobility*
- Tues. 2/15: Urban Society and Social Conflict
Fri. 2/18: Discussion: Bossenga, "Protecting Merchants"
Hufton, "Social Conflict and the Grain Supply"
Sewell, "Journeyman's Brotherhoods"
Darnton, "The Great Cat Massacre"
- Tues. 2/22: Religion and Dissent in 18th c. France
Fri. 2/25: Discussion: Van Kley, "From Calvin to Quesnel"
Merrick, "Conscience and Citizenship"
Kreiser, "Religious Enthusiasm"
- Tues. 3/1: France in the Atlantic World
Fri. 3/4: Discussion: Boucher, "French Images of America"
Butel, "Empire and Economic Growth"
Aubert, "The Blood of France"
Ogle, "The Eternal Power of Reason"

Tues. 3/8: The Enlightenment

Fri. 3/11: Discussion: Jacob, *The Enlightenment*

Tues. 3/15: Discussion: Darnton, *The Literary Underground*

Fri. 3/18: **Mid-Term Examination (in class)**

SPRING BREAK MARCH 21-25: NO CLASS

Tues. 3/29: Signs of Crisis: Rumors, Scandals, and Public Opinion

Fri. 4/1: Discussion: Beaumarchais, *The Marriage of Figaro*
Maza, "The Diamond Necklace Affair"

Tues. 4/5: The Beginnings of Revolution

Fri. 4/8: Discussion: Tackett, *When the King Took Flight*

Tues. 4/12: The Radical Revolution and the Reign of Terror

Fri. 4/15: Discussion: Soboul, *The Sans-Culottes*, excerpts
Mayer, "The Return of Vengeance"
Bell, "The Exterminating Angels"

Tues. 4/19: From Thermidor to Brumaire: Revolution and Counter-Revolution

Fri. 4/22: Discussion: Brown, *Ending the French Revolution*, Intro, Chapters 1-2,
5-6, 9, 12

Tues. 4/26: Bacc Days: No class

Fri. 4/29: Napoleon's Rise to Power

Tues. 5/3: Discussion: Ellis, *Napoleon*, Chapters 1-6

Fri. 5/6: Napoleon's Defeat, the Restoration, and After
Term Paper Due

Tues. 5/10: Discussion: Ellis, *Napoleon*, Chapters 7-8
Spitzer, "Malicious Memories"
Hazareesingh, "Memory and Political Imagination"

**Final Examination during Exam Period, Tuesday, May 17, Regular Course Time
and Location**

General Guidelines:

The first of New College's four founding principles declares, "Each student is responsible in the final analysis for his or her own education." The benefit that you will take away from this class is directly related to the effort you put into it. I pledge to do my part to make this course both educational and (hopefully!) fun, through careful preparation of lectures and selection of readings, and I am always willing to discuss the course, your performance, and my expectations with you, before or after class, in office hours, or via e-mail. In return, I expect you to complete all assigned readings, submit assignments on time, and participate actively in class. My specific expectations, and suggestions on how to do well in the different facets of this course, are listed below.

Discussions:

Class discussion is an integral part of a liberal arts education, but for discussions to be fruitful and informative, both discussion leaders and participants must do their part. Discussion leaders should craft a list of questions (about eight to twelve for a 90-minute class session), and should bring printed copies of the questions to distribute to all class members. Keep in mind that the purpose of the exercise is to stimulate substantive discussion. Purely factual questions, or questions that can be answered with a simple yes or no, are not particularly helpful in this regard. Try instead to focus on interpretive issues (do you agree with the author's interpretation? what are the strong and weak points of the book/article?), particularly on questions of causality (why did a particular event occur, and what were its consequences?), agency (who made things happen? how much freedom of action did they have?), and contingency (how might things have turned out differently?). Discussion participants are responsible for completing all class readings before the session in which they are to be discussed, and should come prepared to participate actively in discussions (when the conversation comes to a halt, I will begin to call on students randomly, and I will expect a response from each person on whom I call).

Exams:

There are two examinations in this course: a midterm and a final, both administered in class, with a maximum of 90 minutes for completion. Both exams will have the same structure: you will be asked to complete 6 out of 8 identifications (about a paragraph each), and 2 out of 3 essay questions (which should be, as much as possible under the circumstances of an examination, clear, coherent, and complete, incorporating material from lectures and course readings to support an argument formulated in response to the question). If you attend classes regularly, take detailed notes, and complete all course readings, you should do well on these exams; I am looking for you to show me what you've learned, not trying to trip you up with obscure references or trick questions! The exam dates are listed on the syllabus, and I expect all students to take the exams on the dates on which they are offered. I will allow make-up exams only in the case of documented medical or family emergencies.

Term Paper:

All students are expected to complete a term paper of approximately 15 pages (no fewer than 12, excluding notes and bibliography, and no more than 20), which is due on the penultimate day of class. The topic for the paper is open, provided it falls within the scope of the course, and I want you to write about something that interests you, so that you will be motivated to do the best work of which you are capable. It should go without saying that all papers must be your own original work; please use appropriate citation (Chicago style is standard in history, but MLA is also acceptable) for all references to sources. You will be required to submit a one-page abstract summarizing your paper topic, as well as a provisional bibliography, following the midterm break. I am available during office hours, before or after class, or via e-mail, if you wish to discuss possible paper topics with me. I expect all term papers to make use of at least six, and ideally ten or more, scholarly books and articles (Wikipedia and other online materials, with the exception of online versions of peer-reviewed journals, are not acceptable sources). You can find relevant books through the Cook Library catalog and through online catalogs such as WorldCat, which lists the holdings of other college and university libraries throughout the nation and the world. You can find articles through databases such as J-STOR and Historical Abstracts, both accessible through the library website. J-STOR and other online journal collections allow you to download and print articles directly, and articles not available online, as well as books held by other libraries, can be requested through interlibrary loan. Careful planning is vital to a successful term paper: you need to define your topic in the first half of the semester, request loan materials ahead of time, and begin outlining and writing your paper well before the due date. I will not accept late term papers or grant extensions.