

**Oberlin College
Department of History**

FYSP 173: The French Revolution and the Origins of Modern Europe

Fall 2012

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3:00-4:15 PM

Instructor: Leonard V. Smith

317 Rice Hall, x8950

**Office Hours: Mondays, 1:30-4 PM; Wednesdays, 9:00 AM-Noon; Thursdays,
Noon-2:30 PM; other times by appointment**

This course emphasizes basic skills of reading, writing, and speaking necessary for success in college, and introduces students to the study of history at the college level. It does so through an involved examination of a particular historical episode. We will be looking at conventional questions of political and diplomatic history, as well as newer questions of social and cultural history. Students will be working in both primary sources (that is, sources written at the time of the events taking place) and secondary sources (sources written by historians). Because of the small size of the class, we will be able to spend a considerable amount of time both in discussion and working on students' writing.

The course is structured in two main parts, with a brief summary at the end. In Part I, we will work through the French Revolution chronologically, emphasizing how primary sources can be related to a present-day textbook narrative. In Part II, we will examine the Revolution thematically, through such topics as the Catholic Church, the army, male and female gender roles, etc. Part III will briefly introduce broad themes of interpretation through exploring the remarkably durable debate between Edmund Burke and Tom Paine.

Requirements:

The following may be purchased at the Oberlin College Bookstore:

William Doyle, *The Oxford History of the French Revolution*, 2nd edition, (2002)

This book is available on reserve, and may otherwise be obtained through OHIOINK. Primary documents will be made available on Blackboard.

Discussion:

Approximately 50 percent of students' final grade will depend on their ability to contribute to classroom discussions. Successful discussions inevitably depend on timely and thorough completions of the readings. It also should go without saying that regular attendance is mandatory, though as a matter of principle I will take attendance only if it proves necessary. In Part I of the course, I will distribute questions about the readings in advance in order to facilitate and structure the discussions.

In Part II of the course, each student will be expected to prepare one presentations of about 15-20 minutes on a particular topic. They will choose from topics on a sign-up sheet. Bibliographical assistance will be provided. Students should also plan to go over the basics of their presentations in advance with the instructor. Members of the class will be expected to ask questions of the presenters, and to make suggestions for improvements to be made for the papers.

Writing:

The other 50 percent of students' final grade will be based on three short (5-page) papers and one final exam. The first two papers will use primary documents. The first paper will be written in a preliminary version of three pages, with a mandatory rewrite in an expanded version of five pages, to be submitted one week after the first version is returned.

The third papers will be write-ups of students' presentations. The content and structure of these papers can vary according to the topic being considered. These papers must be submitted within one week after a student's presentation. Students will need to use a standard footnote format, and to prepare a short bibliography of works cited.

Students will have the option of rewriting the second and third papers. They should expect to consult with the instructor before doing rewrites. Rewritten papers are due no later than one week following the return of the original paper. The final grade on the paper will be that of the second (and improved) version. But students must turn in both the original and the rewritten version. Additional ground rules may be found at the end of the syllabus.

The final exam will involve broad interpretative issues of the French Revolutions. We will discuss the particulars in class.

Schedule of Classes and Assignments:

Part I: The French Revolution in Primary and Secondary Sources

Introduction

September 4: Introduction: What was the French Revolution really about?

Readings: "Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen" (26 August 1789, to be read in-class)

Begin: Doyle, Ch. 1-3

September 6: Privilege under the *Ancien Régime*

Readings: Continue Doyle, Ch. 1-3

Blackboard:

- 1) Loyseau, *A Treatise on Orders* (1610)
- 2) Parlement of Paris, *Lit de justice* (1770)
- 3) Parliamentary remonstrance (1776)

September 11: Fault Lines of the Ancien Régime

Readings: Finish Doyle, Ch. 1-3

Blackboard:

- 1) Necker, *King's Accounts* (1781)
- 2) Rousseau, *Social Contract* (1762)
- 3) Sieyès, "What is the Third Estate?" (January 1789)
- 4) *Cahiers de Doléances* (1789)

September 13: First Paper Brainstorming Session

With writing tutor Rebekkah Rubin (attendance required)

September 18: Revolution of 1789

3- PAGE VERSION OF FIRST PAPER DUE

Readings: Doyle, Ch. 4-5

- 1) Declaration of the National Assembly, 17 June 1789
- 2) Tennis Court Oath, 20 June 1789
- 3) King's Speech, 23 June 1789
- 4) Sieyès Speech after King's Speech
- 5) Review "Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen," 26 August 1789 (under readings for September 4)

September 20: Stresses Old and New

Readings: Doyle, Ch. 6

- 1) "Women's March to Versailles," (1789-90)
- 2) "Discussion of the Le Chapelier Law," 13 June 1791
- 3) "The Continuing Contest over Seigneurial Rights," (1789-90)
- 4) "The Debate over the Civil Constitution of the Clergy," (1790-91)

September 25: The Old Slavery in the New France

Readings:

Blackboard:

Background (in lieu of Doyle):

Laurent Dubois and John D. Garrigus, "Introduction," *Slave Revolution in the Caribbean, 1789-1804* (2006), pp.7-29

Original Documents:

- 1) Montesquieu, *Laws of Civil Slavery* (1748)
- 2) "The Abolition of Negro Slavery" (1789)
- 3) Motion made by Vincent Ogé (1789)
- 4) "Memoir in favor of the People of Color" (1789)
- 5) "Address to the National Assembly" (1790)
- 6) "Speech of Barnave" (1790)
- 7) "Discussion of Troubles in the Colonies" (1792)
- 8) "Decree of the National Convention" (1794)
- 9) "Speech of Chaumette," (1794)

September 27: The 1791 Constitution

Readings: Begin Doyle, Ch. 7-9

Blackboard:

Constitution of 1791

October 2: The Fall of the Monarchy

5-PAGE REVISION OF FIRST PAPER DUE

Readings: Finish Doyle, Ch 7-9

Blackboard:

- 1) "Debate over the Declaration of War," 1792
- 2) The Brunswick Manifesto," 25 July 1792
- 3) Speeches Saint Just, Paine, and Robespierre on the Execution of the King, 1792

October 4: The Reign of Terror: The Legal Framework

Readings: Begin Doyle, Ch 10-11

Blackboard:

- 1) Decree against Profiteers, 26 July 1793

- 2) Decree Establishing the *Levée en masse*, 23 August 1793
- 3) Statement of French Foreign Policy, 17 November 1793
- 4) Law of Suspects, 17 September 1793
- 5) Declaration of Revolutionary Government, 10 October 1793
- 6) Constitution of the Terror, 4 December 1793

October 9 The Reign of Terror: Society and Culture

Readings: Finish Doyle, Ch 10-11

Blackboard

- 1) “Reflections of a Good Citizen in Favor of Divorce” (1789?)
- 2) Decree Regulating Divorce, 20 September 1792
- 3) Robespierre, “Report on the Principles of Political Morality, 5 February 1794
- 4) “Inauguration of a Temple of Reason,” 5 February 1794
- 5) Proceedings of the Convention, 5 February 1794

October 13 The Directory and Rule from the Dead Center

Readings: Doyle, Ch. 12-15

Blackboard:

Constitution of the Year III, 22 August 1795

October 16 The Rise of Bonaparte and the “End” of the Revolution

Readings: Doyle, Ch 16-17

Blackboard:

- 1) Proclamation of the Directory to the French People, 14 September 1797
- 2) Napoleon Bonaparte, Proclamation to the French Nation, 10 November 1799
- 3) “The Imperial Religious Settlement,” 1801-2
- 4) French Civil Code, 1803-4

October 18 The Revolution, Slavery, and the French Empire

Blackboard:

Background (in lieu of Doyle):

Laurent Dubois and John D. Garrigus, “Introduction,” *Slave Revolution in the Caribbean, 1789-1804* (2006), pp.29-42

Note that this is a continuation of the “Introduction” reading for September 25, and may be found in the same file

Blackboard:

- 1) Toussaint L’Ouverture, “From the Constitution of the French Colony of Saint-Domingue,” (1801)
- 2) Letters between Bonaparte and Leclerc, 1802-1803
- 3) Haitian Declaration of Independence, 1 January 1804
- 4) Haitian Constitution, 1805

SECOND PAPER DUE BY 5:00 PM ON FRIDAY, OCTOBER 19

FALL BREAK!!!

Part II: Topics

- October 30: How to Do a Brilliant Presentation
- November 1: Presentation on Library Research by Jen Starkey, Mudd 113
- Week of November 15 No class meetings, work on presentations

Note: Extra office hours during class time exclusively for FYSP 173

Note: the exact schedule of presentations will be worked out with the class before fall break. The dates below are approximate.

- November 13 The Peasantry
- November 15 Subsistence and the Urban Poor
- November 20 Church and Religion
- November 22 No Class: Thanksgiving
- November 27 Slavery and Slave Rebellion
- November 29 The Army
- December 4 Women and Gender

Part III: What Was the French Revolution Really About?

- December 6 Edmund Burke and “Real” Conservatism

Readings:

Blackboard:

Excerpt from Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the French Revolution* (1790)

December 11 Tom Paine: Ideas Matter

Readings:

Blackboard:

Excerpt from Tom Paine, *Rights of Man* (1791)

December 13 Review for Final

Final Exam Set by College Final Exam Schedule

Friday, December 21, 7-9 PM

Additional Ground Rules:

- 1) Due dates and page-limit requirements are to be taken most seriously. I am not in the business of persecuting students if a genuine problem exists, but in principle I strongly dislike giving extensions. Normally, I take off 1/3 of a letter grade for every 24 hours a paper is overdue.
- 2) Three excuses for requesting extensions will never be acceptable: 1) a self-defined character flaw of procrastination; 2) extracurricular activities, including political activism; 3) work in other classes.
- 3) Papers must be double-spaced and have 1-inch margins. They must also be typed or word-processed with near letter quality resolution. I will return unread any illegible paper. No written work may be submitted electronically.
- 4) All written work at Oberlin College is covered by the Honor Code. Students are expected to familiarize themselves with its provisions.
- 5) All written work for the course must be completed in order to pass it. That is to say, a student who receives an A on the first three papers and does not take the final will fail the entire course.
6. Computers should be used in class only in matters pertaining to the class. It is remarkably easy to tell when students are fixating on whatever happens to be on their computer screens, let alone their smart phones, rather than paying attention in class.
7. Students are advised that they should not engage in any activities in class not related to the class. This includes text messaging and e-mail.

8. No permission is granted to upload ANY materials from this course on to a third party web site. Such materials are for the use of students in this class only.

9) Students with learning or other disabilities are advised to make proper arrangements with the Office of Disability Services at the beginning of the term.