San José State University
College of Social Sciences/Department of History
History 211 - 01 (27738)

ADVANCED COLLOQUIUM: FRENCH REVOLUTION

SPRING 2020

Instructor: Dr. Mary Pickering
Office Location: DMH 218
Telephone: (408) 924-5516
Email: Mary.Pickering@sjsu.edu
Office Hours: Tuesday, 4:30-6:00, Thursday, 2:30-3:00, and by appt.
Class Day/Time: Tuesday, 6:00-8:45
Classroom: DMH 167
Units: 4 Units

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us . . .”

Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities*

“At least they can’t stop our heads from kissing in the basket.”

Georges Danton to his fellow victim before being guillotined in 1794

Course Materials and Messages

Copies of the course materials such as the syllabus, major assignment handouts, etc. may be found on Canvas. For help with using Canvas, see Canvas Student Resources page
You are responsible for regularly checking your email to get updates and/or course materials from me. Make sure SJSU has your current email address. Please correspond with me through email, not via Canvas.

**Course Description**

This course offers students an in-depth examination of one of the most exciting and controversial occurrences in history, the French Revolution. This event has attracted the attention of many brilliant historians, whose innovative approach to the past has profoundly influenced the entire historical profession. Students will have the opportunity to read the works of the leading historians of the Revolution from Alexis de Tocqueville to the present. They will gain not only insights into the major debates surrounding this period but an introduction to many of the new topics that are being explored by historians today: the body, language, gender, and the problems of representation. We will end the course with a brief look at Napoleon Bonaparte and the Haitian Revolution.

**Course Goals and Course Learning Objectives (CLOs)**

After successfully completing the course, students will be able to

1. explain the causes of the French Revolution
2. discuss the reasons why the Revolution took a bloody turn
3. elaborate on the significance and influence of the Revolution
4. spell out the different ways in which historians cover significant events in the past
5. analyze primary and secondary sources as well as visual imagery
6. display good oral communication skills.

**Required Texts/Readings**

Required reading for all students:


6. Caroline Weber, Marie Antoinette, Queen of Fashion (New York: Picador, 2006.)


9. David Bell, The First Total War: Napoleon's Europe and the Birth of Warfare as We Know It (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2007).

The texts are available for purchase at the Spartan University Bookstore.

Recommended overview:


**Library Liaison**

Nyle Monday is the library liaison for History students. Contact him at 408-808-2041 or Nyle.Monday@sjsu.edu.

**Classroom Protocol**

It is important that students attend class regularly. Be polite. Turn off cell phones. Do not use your laptop. Roaming the internet during class disturbs students next to you and ultimately hurts your own grade in the course. Laptops also disrupt the flow of ideas during a seminar. If you must have your laptop open to take notes or consult texts, please ask my permission.

**Course Workload, Assignments, and Assessment of Student Learning**

This course is a four-unit, graded course, satisfying GWAR (Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement). To meet this requirement, all papers must be individual projects.

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally 3 hours per unit per week with one of the hours used for lecture) for instruction or preparation/studying or course related activities. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus. (See SJSU Academic Senate Policy S12-3.)

Because this is a 4-unit course, students can expect to spend a minimum of twelve hours per week preparing for and attending classes and completing course assignments. Careful
management will be required to keep up with readings and assignments in an intensive course such as this one.

This class is a seminar for graduate students. By signing up for this course, each of you has made a commitment to attend the class regularly, read the assignments on time, and participate actively in discussion. In order for the course to succeed, you must fulfill these requirements. Please let me know in advance if an emergency will oblige you to skip class. Class participation will count heavily: 20% in the final grade. I will assess you based on the number of times you speak up in class and the quality of your comments. If you do not participate at all, you will receive a C. Participation from time to time is equivalent to a B. If you participate in every class discussion, you will receive an A. Your participation must indicate that you have read and/or watched the material under discussion. Oral communication is one of the learning objectives. Indeed, this component of the course satisfies CLO#6.

In addition to participating in class discussions around a common reading, you must complete three writing assignments. We will meet periodically throughout the semester to discuss your progress, especially on the large paper. You may call me, visit me during my office hours, or make an appointment to see me if you are experiencing difficulties of any sort.

1. Write a three-page response paper on two books or articles. You should develop an argument that relates to them both, perhaps explaining what aspect of the French Revolution they seek to illuminate in different ways. You should explain how the two texts relate to each other; briefly summarize their arguments, evaluate how well the authors fulfilled their goals; explain the authors’ assumptions, strengths, and weaknesses; and determine which author presents his or her case the most effectively. Do the two authors agree or disagree? How did these two texts deepen your understanding of the French Revolution? Were there any areas that needed further probing? These are some of your questions you might ask yourself in writing the paper. You should use quotations from the books or articles to illustrate your points. The paper must have footnotes and a bibliography, following the guidelines of Turabian (The Chicago Manual of Style). This paper is due whenever you like, but preferable before May 5. This assignment satisfies CLO#1 or CLO#4.

2. You must present two primary documents to the class and explain their context and significance. They should be related in some way around a common theme. Use them to illustrate an overall point. Don’t discuss them separately one right after the other without connecting them in some interesting way. They can be taken from any website or from two books on reserve:


Please write a two-to-three-page analytical essay and photocopy it and the document(s) to enable everyone to discuss your findings. The presentation and paper will be due the week
whose readings most pertain to the topic you address. The paper must have footnotes and a bibliography, following the guidelines of Turabian (The Chicago Manual of Style). Again, you must hand in the paper the day you present the documents. This assignment satisfies CLO#5 and #6.

3. You must present **two or more images** (from the 1780s on) that you analyze in a two-to-three-page paper with footnotes and a bibliography, following the guidelines of Turabian (The Chicago Manual of Style). Please photocopy the images for the class and your paper. The images should be connected and shed light on a theme, person, or events. The Hunt/Censer book and website mentioned above have images. Also see http://frda.stanford.edu/en/about. Another website is https://www.ucl.ac.uk/museums-static/obl4he/frenchrevolution/index.html (see the left side). The latter is the Art Museum at University College, London.

I have put on reserve several books, including Claire Trévien, *Satire, Prints and Theatricality in the French Revolution*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

Please let me know your choices for the person, events, or theme you wish to illuminate so that I can make sure there are no duplicate presentations. The sooner you give me your choices, the better for you.

This assignment satisfies CLO#5 and CLO#6.

4. You must write **fifteen-to-twenty-page historiographical essay** on any topic that appeals to you. The point is to analyze, that is, critique the ways in which various historians approach a particular topic. For example, you could evaluate Lynn Hunt’s or François Furet’s contribution to the historiography of the French Revolution. You could write a critique of intellectual historians’ approach to the French Revolution. You could compare and contrast several social historians. The paper must have footnotes and a bibliography, following Turabian (The Chicago Manual of Style). This assignment fulfills CLO# 2, CLO#3, CLO#4 and CLO#5. **It is due Monday, May 25 via Canvas.**

To do well on the papers, you will have to display good writing skills. You must begin with an introductory paragraph, which sets forth a central argument. This argument should reflect your insights into the material. The rest of the paper should include facts supporting this argument. Finally, you must end with a conclusion, which summarizes the argument and adds, hopefully, something provocative. Excellent grammar, perfect spelling, and clarity of writing style are essential for success. In reading your papers, I will pay special attention to the quality and extent of your research and your ability to put your subject into the historical context.

**Qualities of an “A” Assignment**

Content and Organization
- fulfills all the requirements of the assignment
- presents a recognizable, strong thesis or argument
- contains unified paragraphs that support recognizable topic sentences
- makes sure that the topic sentence of each paragraph relates to the thesis or argument in some way
- presents accurate information, with generalizations supported by facts, examples, or analysis
- displays original thought
- defines terms if necessary
- is clearly organized with an appropriate essay structure
- has an effective introduction and conclusion
- contains effective transitions between sentences and between paragraphs

Clarity and Correctness
- uses sentences that are easy to understand on a first reading
- includes a variety of sentence constructions
- has no serious errors of diction, syntax, grammar, punctuation, or spelling
- shows evidence of careful editing

**Qualities of a “B” Assignment**

Content and Organization
- fulfills most of the requirements of assignment
- presents accurate information, with generalizations supported by facts, examples, or analysis
- argues logically
- defines terms if necessary
- has a recognizable thesis or subject line but the argument is not original or striking
- has appropriate organization
- contains unified paragraphs that support recognizable topic sentences
- has an appropriate introduction and conclusion
- contains transitions

Clarity and Organization
- uses sentences that are easy to understand on a first reading
- includes a variety of sentence constructions
- has very few errors of diction, syntax, grammar, punctuation, or spelling. The errors do not prevent comprehension.
- shows evidence of editing.

**Qualities of a “C” Assignment**

Content and Organization
- fulfills the main parts of the assignment
- supports generalizations with some detail
- defines terms if necessary
- has a barely recognizable thesis or subject line
- uses appropriate organization
- contains unified paragraphs with topic sentences
- has an introduction and conclusion

Clarity and Correctness
- uses understandable sentences
- shows some variety in sentence construction
Qualities of a “D” or “F” Assignment

Content and Organization
- fails to fulfill main parts of the assignment
- provides scant information and little support
- fails to provide much of a thesis or subject line
- has poor organization
- contains only a few paragraphs with topic sentences

Clarity and Correctness
- has many sentences that are not understandable upon first reading
- shows little variety in sentence construction
- has many errors of diction, syntax, grammar, punctuation, or spelling. The errors often prevent comprehension

Grading Policy

Final grades will be based on the following:

Class Discussion on the Common Reading: 25%
3 Short papers: 15% each
1 long, fifteen-page paper: 30%

Grades are calculated according to the following percentages:
A: 93-100; A-: 90-92; B+: 87-89; B: 83-86; B-: 80-82; C+: 77-79; C: 73-76; C-:70-72;
D+:67-69; D: 63-66; D-:60-62; F: anything below 60. A student earning a grade below 60% will not pass the course.

Late Papers

A late paper will be marked down unless you talk to me before it is due. Ten points will be subtracted for every class period that it is late. After two weeks, late papers will not be accepted.

Incompletes

SJSU mandates that a grade of Incomplete be granted only when a student has satisfactorily completed a substantial portion of the course requirements and is unable to complete the course because of an accident, illness, or some other event beyond the student's control.

University Policies

The Office of Undergraduate Education has university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, student responsibilities, dropping and
adding, consent for recording of class, and services available to all students (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources). You should review these policies at Syllabus Information web page at http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/

**Relevant Journals**

*Journal of Modern History*
*French Historical Studies*
*American Historical Review*
*Representations*
*Historical Reflections*
*History and Memory*
*History and Theory*
*History of European Ideas*
*Journal of the History of Ideas*
# History 211: The French Revolution

## Spring Semester, 2020

### Course Schedule

*This schedule is subject to change with fair notice via in-class announcement or email. You are responsible for keeping track of announcements and assignments given in class.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jan. 28</td>
<td><strong>INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE</strong></td>
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<td>Paul R. Hanson, <em>Contesting the French Revolution</em> (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 1-34 (background on events and on historiography). Handout to read as necessary. Movie: <em>Dangerous Liaisons</em></td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Feb. 4</td>
<td><strong>CLASSIC TEXTS: FEUDALISM AND PEASANTRY</strong></td>
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<td>Alexis de Tocqueville, <em>The Old Regime and the French Revolution</em></td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Feb. 11</td>
<td><strong>THE SOCIAL ORIGINS: MARXISM AND ITS CRITICS</strong></td>
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| 4    | Feb. 18 | URBAN CULTURE AND CONSUMERISM: WORKERS AND THE BOURGEOISIE  
| 5    | Feb. 25 | ON THE PROBLEM OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT AND THE INTELLECTUAL ORIGINS OF THE REVOLUTION  
 Margaret C. Jacob, ed. *The Enlightenment: A Brief History With Documents* (Boston, 2001), 114-37 (Voltaire), 177-201 (Rousseau).  
 Dan Edelstein, *The Terror of Natural Right: Republicanism, the Cult
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<td>6</td>
<td>March 3</td>
<td><strong>CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS ORIGINS OF THE REVOLUTION</strong></td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>March 10</td>
<td><strong>THE CONSTITUTIONAL MONARCHY AND ITS DEMISE,</strong></td>
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<td><strong>1789-1793</strong></td>
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<td>MOVIE: <em>Nuits de Varennes</em></td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>March 17</td>
<td><strong>VIOLENCE AND THE TERROR</strong></td>
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<td>March 24</td>
<td><strong>POLITICAL CULTURE AND RELIGION</strong></td>
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<td>Hugh Gough, <em>AGenocide and the Bicentenary: the French Revolution</em></td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>March 31</td>
<td>Spring Recess</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>April 7</td>
<td><strong>Performing and Representing Patriotism and Equality</strong></td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>April 14</td>
<td><strong>GENDER AND FAMILY DYNAMICS</strong></td>
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<td>Lynn Hunt, &quot;The Many Bodies of Marie Antoinette: Political</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>April 21</td>
<td>AFTER 1794: FROM THERMIDOR TO NAPOLEON</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>April 28</td>
<td>THE TRIUMPH OF NAPOLEON:</td>
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<td>David Bell, <em>The First Total War: Napoleon's Europe and the Birth of Warfare as We Know</em> (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2007).</td>
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| 15   | May 5 | **THE SIGNIFICANCE AND GLOBAL EFFECTS OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION**  
<p>| 18   | Monday, | <strong>Upload paper to Canvas by midnight</strong> |</p>
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