

The French Revolution and the Old Regime

History 730
Thurs 4:10-6:55

Spring 2010
Sarah Curtis

The French Revolution remains one of the most important events in world history, a catalyst for change throughout Europe and beyond. When asked what its impact had been, in 1972 Chinese premier Zhou En-lai reportedly replied “It’s too soon to tell.” For over 200 years, since the publication of Edmond Burke’s “quickie” book on the Revolution, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, in 1790, its meaning has been analyzed and debated. This seminar will examine the history and the historiography of the French Revolution with a retrospective look at the Old Regime as it influenced the outbreak of revolution and a brief look ahead to the Napoleonic period. It is not intended to be a survey of events but an examination of the historical debates and historical literature surrounding the Revolution and the development of modern political culture.

Prerequisites:

This is a graduate history seminar. Graduate standing in history or permission of the instructor is required for enrollment. In most cases, it is expected that students will have already taken History 700.

Readings:

The following books are available for purchase at the bookstore and are on reserve at the library (except Popkin).

- Jeremy Popkin, *A Short History of the French Revolution* (any edition, **optional**)
Ronald Schechter, ed., *The French Revolution* (Blackwell Essential Readings in History)
Robert Darnton, *The Literary Underground of the Old Regime*
Sarah Maza, *Private Lives and Public Affairs: The Causes Célèbres of Prerevolutionary France*
Alfred Cobban, *The Social Interpretation of the French Revolution*
David Andress, *The Terror: The Merciless War for Freedom in Revolutionary France*
Lynn Hunt, *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution*
Olwen Hufton, *Women and the Limits of Citizenship in the French Revolution*
Laurent Dubois, *A Colony of Citizens: Revolution and Slave Emancipation in the French Caribbean, 1787-1804*
David Bell, *The First Total War: Napoleon’s Europe and the Birth of Warfare as We Know It*
Juan Cole, *Napoleon’s Egypt: Invading the Middle East*

The Popkin textbook is background reading on the events of the Revolution. It is up to you whether you read it.

Electronic reserves:

Some of the readings are available on electronic reserves at the library. They can be accessed via the internet on campus or at home at the following address: <http://eres.sfsu.edu/> (or by the link on the library web page or my web page). The password for this course is guillotine. These readings are indicated on the schedule with the abbreviation ER.

Journal articles are available directly on one of the electronic databases in the SFSU Library (JSTOR, Project Muse, etc.). If you do not know how to use these resources, please consult a reference librarian.

Course requirements:

Attendance at seminar sessions is required. If you have to miss a class, please inform me *in advance* of the meeting by telephone or e-mail. More than one absence will affect your grade. This is primarily a reading seminar, so you should come to class prepared to discuss that week's reading. I expect every student to participate in every class.

There will be four short papers (5-6 pp.) based on the interpretive issues raised by the previous weeks' readings; suggested topics will be handed out in class. These papers will be due March 4, March 25, April 29, May 20.

In addition to the papers, each student will be assigned as an "expert witness" for one week of the seminar. This means that you will have a deeper understanding of the material under discussion, obtained by consulting the reviews of the assigned book (when appropriate) and doing some additional reading. You should meet with me at least two weeks before your assigned session to discuss what kinds of materials you should be consulting. You should prepare a short written review of the additional material and sources to hand out to the rest of the class as well as presenting it orally. You should also come to that class with 2-3 questions to start off our discussion.

Grading:

Grades will be determined as follows: participation 25%, four papers 60 % (15% each), review and presentation 15%

Office hours and contact information:

Tuesday and Thursday 2:30-3:30, and by appointment

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Schedule:

January 28 Introduction

February 4 High and Low Culture

Reading for discussion:

Robert Darnton, *The Literary Underground of the Old Regime*, chaps. 1, 2, 4, 6
Roger Chartier, "The Cultural Origins of the French Revolution" in *Essential French Revolution*

Further reading:

Robert Darnton, *The Forbidden Best-Sellers of Pre-Revolutionary France*
Robert Darnton, "An Early Information Society: News and the Media in Eighteenth-Century Paris," *American Historical Review* 105 (2000): 1-35.
Roger Chartier, *The Cultural Origins of the French Revolution*
Daniel Roche, *A History of Everyday Things: The Birth of Consumption in France, 1600-1800*
Jeremy Popkin, ed., *Panorama of Paris: Selections from Le Tableau de Paris by Louis-Sebastien Mercier*

February 11 The Crisis of the Old Regime

Reading for discussion:

Sarah Maza, *Private Lives and Public Affairs* (entire)

Further reading:

Dena Goodman, ed., *Marie-Antoinette: Writings on the Body of a Queen*
Arlette Farge, *Subversive Words: Public Opinion in Eighteenth-Century France*
Arlette Farge and Jacques Revel, *The Vanishing Children of Paris: Rumor and Politics before the French Revolution*
Dale Van Kley, *The Damiens Affair and the Unraveling of the Ancien Régime, 1750-1770*
Dale Van Kley, *The Religious Origins of the French Revolution: From Calvin to the Civil Constitution, 1560-1791*
Keith Michael Baker, *Inventing the French Revolution: Essays on French Political Culture in the Eighteenth Century*
Keith Michael Baker, ed., *The French Revolution and the Creation of Modern Political Culture*, 4 vols. (covers entire Revolution)

February 18

The Bourgeois Revolution?

Reading for discussion:

François Furet, "Interpreting the French Revolution" in *Essential French Revolution*

Keith Michael Baker, "On the Problem of the Ideological Origins of the French Revolution" in *Essential French Revolution*

Sarah Maza, "Luxury, Morality, and Social Change: Why There Was No Middle-Class Consciousness in Pre-Revolutionary France" in *Essential French Revolution*

Alfred Cobban, *The Social Interpretation of the French Revolution* (entire)

Further reading:

Georges Lefebvre, *The Coming of the French Revolution*

George Rudé, *The French Revolution*

Albert Soboul, *A Short History of the French Revolution*

François Furet, *Interpreting the French Revolution*

François Furet, *Marx and the French Revolution*

William Doyle, *Origins of the French Revolution*

George C. Comminel, *Rethinking the French Revolution: Marxism and the Revisionist Challenge*

William Sewell, *A Rhetoric of Bourgeois Revolution: The Abbé Sieyès and What is the Third Estate?*

Timothy Tackett, *Becoming a Revolutionary: The Deputies of the French National Assembly and the Emergence of a Revolutionary Culture*

Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*

John McManners, "The Historiography of the French Revolution," in *The New Cambridge Modern History*, vol. 8

February 25

Popular Revolution

Reading for discussion:

John Markoff, "Violence, Emancipation, and Democracy: The Countryside in the French Revolution," *American Historical Review* 100 (1995): 360-86

Georges Lefebvre, *The Great Fear of 1789*, pp. 59-74, 122-33, 137-42, 148-55, 202-11 (ER)

Timothy Tackett, "Collective Panics in the Early French Revolution, 1789-1791: A Comparative Perspective," *French History* 17 (2003): 149-71

Further reading:

Michael Fitzsimmons, *The Night the Old Regime Ended: August 4, 1789 and the French Revolution*

John Markoff, *The Abolition of Feudalism*

Peter Jones, *The Peasantry in the French Revolution*

Colin Lucas, "The Crowd and Politics between *Ancien Régime* and Revolution in France," *Journal of Modern History* 60 (1988): 421-57

George Rudé, *The Crowd in the French Revolution*

Alan Forrest, *The French Revolution and the Poor*
David Andress, *Massacre at the Champ de Mars: Popular Dissent and Political Culture in the French Revolution*
Albert Soboul, *The Sans-Culottes*
Ted Margadant, *Urban Rivalries in the French Revolution*

March 4

To the barricades!

No class due to statewide CSU/CFA protests over higher education budget cuts

Paper due by 4 p.m.

March 11

The Terror

Reading for discussion:

David Andress, *Terror: The Merciless War for Freedom in Revolutionary France* (entire)

Further reading:

R. R. Palmer, *Twelve Who Ruled*

Norman Hampson, *Prelude to Terror: The Constituent Assembly and the Failure of Consensus, 1789-1791*

David Jordan, *The King's Trial: The French Revolution vs. Louis XVI*

Michael Walzer, *Regicide and Revolution: Speeches at the Trial of Louis XVI*

Norman Hampson, *The Terror in the French Revolution*

Timothy Tackett, "Conspiracy Obsession in a Time of Revolution: French Elites and the Origins of the Terror, 1789-1792," *American Historical Review* 105 (2000): 691-713

Mona Ozouf, "War and Terror in French Revolutionary Discourse (1792-1794)," *Journal of Modern History* 56 (December 1984): 579-97

Richard Cobb, *The People's Armies: The Armées Révolutionnaires, Instrument of the Terror in the Departments, April 1793 to Floreal Year II*

Gwynne Lewis and Colin Lucas, *Beyond the Terror: Essays in French Regional and Social History, 1794-1815*

Arlo J. Mayer, *The Furies: Violence and Terror in the French and Russian Revolutions*

Patrice Higonnet, *Goodness Beyond Virtue: Jacobins During the French Revolution*

R.R. Palmer, *The World of the French Revolution*

March 18

Revolution in Political Culture

Reading for discussion:

Lynn Hunt, *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution*, read Part I and conclusion, skim Part II

Mona Ozouf, "The Revolutionary Festival: A Transfer of Sacrality" in *Essential French Revolution*

Further reading:

Mona Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution*

Emmet Kennedy, *A Cultural History of the French Revolution*

Jeremy Popkin, *Revolutionary News*

Daniel Roche and Robert Darnton, eds., *Revolution in Print*

Carla Hesse, *Publishing and Cultural Politics in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1810*

Laura Mason, *Singing the French Revolution*

March 25

No class due to statewide budget cuts (furlough day)

Paper due by 4 p.m.

April 1

SPRING BREAK

April 8

Women and Revolution

Reading for discussion:

Olwen Hufton, *Women and the Limits of Citizenship in the French Revolution*, chaps. 1-2

Joan Wallach Scott, "French Feminists and the Rights of 'Man': Olympe de Gouges's Declarations" in *Essential French Revolution* (also read a copy of de Gouges's Declaration, available online)

Lynn Hunt, "The Band of Brothers," in *Essential French Revolution*

Suzanne Desan, "'War between Brothers and Sisters': Inheritance Law and Gender Politics in Revolutionary France," *French Historical Studies* 20 (1997): 597-634

Further reading:

Jane Abrey, "Feminism in the French Revolution," *American Historical Review* 80 (1975): 43-72

Sara E. Melzer and Leslie W. Rabine, eds., *Rebel Daughters: Women and the French Revolution*

Dominique Godineau, *The Women of Paris and Their French Revolution*

Darline Gay Levy, Harriet Applewhite, and Mary Johnson, *Women in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1795: Selected Documents Translated with Notes and Commentary*

Joan Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere in the Age of the French Revolution*

Joan Landes, *Visualizing the Nation: Gender, Representation, and Revolution in Eighteenth-Century France*

Madelyn Gutwirth, *The Twilight of the Goddesses: Women and Representation in the French Revolutionary Era*

Suzanne Desan, *The Family on Trial in Revolutionary France*

Lynn Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution*

April 15

Counterrevolution

Reading for discussion:

Olwen Hufton, *Women and the Limits of Citizenship in the French Revolution*, chaps. 3-4

Timothy Tackett, "The West in France in 1789: The Religious Factor in the Origins of the Counterrevolution," *Journal of Modern History* 54 (December 1982): 715-45

Suzanne Desan, "Redefining Revolutionary Liberty: The Rhetoric of Religious Revival during the French Revolution," *Journal of Modern History* 60 (March 1988): 1-27

Suzanne Desan, "Reconstituting the Social after the Terror: Family, Property and the Law in Popular Politics," *Past and Present* 164 (1999): 81-121

Bill Edmonds, "'Federalism' and Urban Revolt in France in 1793," *Journal of Modern History* 55 (March 1983): 22-53

Further reading:

Jacques Godechot, *The Counter-Revolution: Doctrine and Action, 1789-1804*

John McManners, *The French Revolution and the Church*

Timothy Tackett, *Religion, Revolution, and Regional Culture in Eighteenth-Century France: The Ecclesiastical Oath of 1791*

Suzanne Desan, *Reclaiming the Sacred: Lay Religion and Popular Politics in Revolutionary France*

Raymond Jonas, *France and the Cult of the Sacred Heart*

Gwynne Lewis, *The Second Vendée: The Continuity of Counter-Revolution in the Department of the Gard, 1789-1815*

Donald Sutherland, *The Chouans: The Social Origins of Popular Counter-Revolution in Upper Brittany, 1770-1796*

Jeremy Popkin, *The Right-Wing Press in France, 1792-1800*

Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*

April 22

The Revolution in the Colonies

Reading for discussion:

Laurent Dubois, *A Colony of Citizens: Revolution and Slave Emancipation in the French Caribbean, 1787-1804* (entire)

Franklin W. Knight, "The Haitian Revolution," *American Historical Review* 105 (February 2000): 103-15

Further reading:

Sue Peabody, "*There Are No Slaves In France*": *The Political Culture of Race and Slavery in the Ancien Regime*

C.R.L. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint l'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*

Laurent Dubois, *Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution*

Michel-Rolph Trouillot, "An Unthinkable History: The Haitian Revolution as a Non-Event," in *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, 70-107

Alyssa Sepinwall, *The Abbé Grégoire and the French Revolution*

April 29

Ending the Revolution?

Paper due in class

Reading for discussion:

Lynn Hunt, David Lansky, and Paul Hanson, "The Failure of the Liberal Republic in France, 1795-1799: The Road to Brumaire," *Journal of Modern History* 51 (December 1979): 734-59

Martyn Lyons, *Napoleon Bonaparte and the Legacy of the French Revolution*, chaps. 1-4 (ER)

Further reading:

Bronislaw Baczko, *Ending the Terror: The French Revolution after Robespierre*

Martyn Lyons, *France under the Directory*

Isser Woloch, *Napoleon and His Collaborators: The Making of a Dictatorship*

Louis Bergeron, *France under Napoleon*

Alan Schom, *Napoleon Bonaparte*

Isser Woloch, *The New Regime: Transformations of the French Civic Order, 1789-1820s*

May 6

Revolutionary and Napoleonic Warfare

Reading for discussion:

David Bell, *The First Total War* (entire)

Further reading:

T.C.W. Blanning, *Origins of the French Revolutionary Wars*

John A. Lynn, *The Bayonets of the Republic: Motivation and Tactics in the Army of Revolutionary France, 1791-4*

Alan Forrest, *The Soldiers of the French Revolution*

Alan Forrest, *Conscripts and Deserters: The Army and French Society during the Revolution and Empire*

Owen Connelly, *Blundering to Glory: Napoleon's Military Campaigns*

J.P. Bertaud, *The Army of the French Revolution: From Citizen-Soldiers to Instrument of Power*

May 13

Imperial France

Reading for discussion:

Juan Cole, *Napoleon's Egypt* (entire)

Further reading:

Edward Said, *Orientalism*

Napoleon in Egypt: AlJabarti's Chronicle of the French Occupation, 1798

Paul Strathern, *Napoleon in Egypt*

May 20

Paper due by 4 p.m.