

## **History 499: The French Revolution**

Sean Takats  
Fall Semester 2009  
W 4:30-7:10  
Innovation Hall 135

Office Hours: Wed 3:30-4:30  
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The French Revolution was one of the great defining events of modern history, and for many historians it marks the very beginning of “modernity” itself. The Revolutionary period was a time of extremes: on one hand it promised a new social order governed by universal suffrage, women’s rights, and civil equality; on the other hand, the Revolution unleashed horrifying violence and oppression, most notoriously in the form of the Terror and its famous guillotine. Even as the Revolution unfolded, contemporaries struggled to understand it, and historians have continued the debate ever since. By studying historians’ diverse interpretations, we can learn much about the practice of history itself.

The goal of this course is for students to move from consumers to producers of history, and we will use the French Revolution and its debates to frame the process of formulating a historical question, conducting research, and writing a polished paper. In addition to the main texts assigned, we will investigate a series historical texts interpreting the event that came to be recognized as the Revolution’s most important moment: the fall of the Bastille on 14 July 1789.

### **Reading**

Most of the assigned course reading will be available via the Zotero group or otherwise online, but the following two books are also required. The first provides a good background to the Revolution, and the second contains edited examples of scholarship on the Revolution that we’ll examine along with our other reading. The Kates volume will also be particularly helpful as you explore Revolutionary historiography with an eye toward planning your research paper.

Popkin, Jeremy D. *A Short History of the French Revolution*. 5th ed. Upper Saddle River, N.J: Prentice Hall, 2009.

Gary Kates, *The French Revolution: Recent Debates and New Controversies* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

### **Course Requirements**

Students will be expected to (1) read the required texts by the class meetings and contribute to class discussion in every meeting; (2) conduct primary source research in a library or physical archive on the topic they choose of their senior thesis; (3) complete

short written assignments as outlined in the class schedule; (4) write a typed, double-spaced, footnoted first draft of the thesis, (5) critique other students' first drafts; and (6) complete a final draft (ca. 20-25 page) senior thesis in response to comments and criticism from me and fellow students. I will distribute to you a list of suggested topics, and all topics must be approved by me. All students are required to use Zotero (<http://zotero.org>) to prepare and organize their research. Although the short written assignments may seem onerous, they will greatly help you to move through the research and writing process in a smooth and timely fashion.

### **Special Accommodations**

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at (703) 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office. The need for accommodations should be identified at the beginning of the semester and the specific accommodation has to be arranged through the Disability Resource Center. Faculty cannot provide accommodations to students on their own.

### **Grading**

Short assignments (20%); presentations and classroom participation (30%); final draft and related Zotero library and research notes (50%).

### **Schedule**

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| Sep 2 | <b>Course Overview:</b><br>What is the French Revolution?<br>Introduction to Zotero  |
| 9     | <i>Wikipedia</i> , "The Storming of the Bastille"<br>( <a href="http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Storming_of_the_Bastille">http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Storming_of_the_Bastille</a> )<br>Popkin<br><b>Zotero installed and synchronized with the class library</b>  |
| 16    | <b>Analysis of Multiple Versions</b><br>Georges Lefebvre, <i>The Coming of the French Revolution</i> , transl. R. R. Palmer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947), 110–22. ( <i>Zotero group</i> )<br>François Pierre Guillaume Guizot, <i>The History of France from the Earliest Times to 1848</i> , transl. Robert Black, 8 vols. (New York: American Publishers Corporation, 1869–78), 6: 16–21. ( <i>Zotero group</i> )<br>Louis Marie Prudhomme, <i>Les Révolutions de Paris</i> , 12–18 July 1789, in <i>The Press in the French Revolution: A Selection of Documents Taken from the Press of the Revolution for the Years 1789–1794</i> , ed. J. T. Gilchrist and W. J. Murray (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1971), 54–55. ( <i>Zotero group</i> )<br>Alice Gérard, "Lefebvre, Georges," and Charles Olivier-Carbonell, "Guizot, François," in <i>Great Historians of the Modern Age</i> , ed. Lucien Boia (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1991), 247 and 242–43. ( <i>Zotero group</i> ) |

Jack Censer, "Prudhomme, Louis Marie," in *Historical Dictionary*, 2: 797.  
(Zotero group)

23 **Library Visit**

**One page report on proposed research topic due Friday, 9/25  
(relevant sources/notes should already be in Zotero)**

30 **Michelet vs. Taine**

Jules Michelet, *History of the French Revolution*, trans. Charles Cocks, ed. Gordon Wright (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), 149–80.  
(Zotero group)

Hippolyte Taine, *The Origins of Contemporary France*, transl. John Durand, ed. Edward Gargan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 96–124. (Zotero group)

Douglas Johnson, Jules Michelet," in *The Blackwell Dictionary of Historians*, ed. John Cannon (New York: Blackwell Reference, 1988), 277–78. (Zotero group)

Thomas Kaiser, "Hippolyte Taine," in *Historical Dictionary*, 2: 926–28.  
(Zotero group)

Oct 7 **Primary Sources**

Albert Soboul, "The French Revolution in the History of the Contemporary World" in Kates.

Two other readings TBD.

**Annotated bibliography due in our class Zotero group**

14 **Bicentennial Histories**

J. F. Bosher, *The French Revolution* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1988), 147–50. (Zotero group)

William Doyle, *The Oxford History of the French Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 108–11. (Zotero group)

George Rudé, *The French Revolution* (London: Weidenfield and Nicolson, 1988), 53–58. (Zotero group)

Simon Schama, *Citizens: A Chronicle of the French Revolution* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1989), 399–406. (Zotero group)

D. M. G. Sutherland, *France, 1789–1815: Revolution and Counterrevolution* (London: Fontana, 1985), 63–68. (Zotero group)

21 **Return of the Bourgeoisie**

Colin Jones, "Bourgeois Revolution Revivified: 1789 and Social Change" in Kates.

Maza, Sarah C. "Luxury, Morality, and Social Change: Why There Was No Middle-Class Consciousness in Prerevolutionary France." *The Journal of Modern History* 69 (June 1997): 199-229. (Kates or Zotero group)

**Outline due - submit as a standalone note in Zotero**

- 28     **Gendering the Revolution**  
 Lynn Hunt, "The Many Bodies of Marie Antoinette" in Kates.  
 Desan, Suzanne. "War between Brothers and Sisters: Inheritance Law and Gender Politics in Revolutionary France." *French Historical Studies* 20, no. 4 (Autumn 1997): 597-634. (*Kates or Zotero group*)
- Nov    4     **Colonial Dimensions**  
 Laurent Dubois, "'The Price of Liberty': Victor Hugues and the Administration of Freedom in Guadeloupe, 1794-1798," in *The William and Mary Quarterly* 56, no. 2, (April 1999): 363-392. (*Kates or Zotero group*)  
 Carton, Adrian. "Shades of Fraternity: Creolization and the Making of Citizenship in French India, 1790-1792." *French Historical Studies* 31, no. 4 (October 1, 2008): 581-607. (*Zotero group*)  
**First draft due**
- 11     Group 1 Individual meetings to discuss papers
- 18     Group 2 Individual meetings to discuss papers
- Thanksgiving Break**
- Dec    2     Group 1 presents papers
- Dec    9     Group 2 presents papers  
**FINAL DRAFTS DUE**