

Professor: Sean Takats

Office: Research 1, 485 (Thursdays 10-12 and by appointment)

Email: stakats@gmu.edu

Phone: 703-993-9271

The French Revolution is 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. Even as the Revolution unfolded, contemporaries struggled to understand it, and historians have continued the debate ever since. This course will explore the Revolution through a close examination of period texts paired with an overview of the most important recent historical interpretations.

Reading Responses, Discussion, and Presentation

Students will submit a brief (circa 500 word) reading response each week via the course blog (<http://chnm.gmu.edu/courses/stakats/revolution>). These reading responses must be complete at least 24 hours prior to our class meeting (i.e. by 7:20 PM Tuesday). Each week's discussion will be led through the first hour by a student, who may (and indeed should) use fellow students' reading responses to prepare. Students will deliver a 20 minute presentation of their final paper in the last two weeks of the semester. 30%

Document Analysis

Students will each choose one contemporary text, image, or song and prepare a 5-7 page document analysis contextualizing the piece. 20%

Review Essay

Students will prepare a literature review of 12-15 pages on three to five related pieces of recent scholarship on the Revolution. Alternatively students may write a 12-15 page research paper on two to three primary sources. 50%

Books

Andress, David. *The Terror: The Merciless War for Freedom in Revolutionary France*.

1st ed. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2006.

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

Burke, Edmund. *Reflections on the Revolution in France: A Critical Edition*. 1st ed. Stanford University Press, 2002.

Chartier, Roger. *The Cultural Origins of the French Revolution*. Translated by Lydia G. Cochrane. Durham: Duke University Press, 1991.

- Desan, Suzanne. *Reclaiming the Sacred: Lay Religion and Popular Politics in Revolutionary France*. The Wilder House series in politics, history, and culture. Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1990.
- . *The Family on Trial in Revolutionary France*. Studies on the history of society and culture 51. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.
- Doyle, William. *The Oxford History of the French Revolution*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989.
- Dubois, Laurent. *A Colony of Citizens: Revolution & Slave Emancipation in the French Caribbean, 1787-1804*. Chapel Hill, N.C: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Va., by the University of North Carolina Press, 2004.
- Hunt, Lynn. *The Family Romance of the French Revolution*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.
- Kates, Gary, ed. *The French Revolution: Recent Debates and New Controversies*. 2nd ed. Rewriting histories. New York: Routledge, 2006. Available free online via GMU.
- McMahon, Darrin M. *Enemies of the Enlightenment: The French Counter-Enlightenment and the Making of Modernity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Palmer, R. R. *Twelve Who Ruled: The Year of the Terror in the French Revolution*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941.
- Popkin, Jeremy D. *Facing Racial Revolution: Eyewitness Accounts of the Haitian Insurrection*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

Digital Resources

Liberty, Equality, Fraternity: Exploring the French Revolution

(<http://chnm.gmu.edu/revolution>)

The Encyclopedia of Diderot and d'Alembert: Collaborative Translation Project

(<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/d/did/>)

I reserve the right to supplement this reading list with additional electronic resources during the course of the semester.

Schedule

January 21 - Introduction

January 28 - Old Regime

Doyle, all

Petition of Women of the Third Estate to the King (LEF)

Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, 26 August 1789 (LEF)

February 4 - Models

Kates, all

February 11 - Cultural Origins

Chartier, all

Hunt, all

February 18 - Early Reactions

Burke, all

Louis Marie Prudhomme, *Les Révolutions de Paris*, 12–18 July 1789, in *The Press in the French Revolution: A Selection of Documents Taken from the Press of the Revolution for the Years 1789–1794*, ed. J. T. Gilchrist and W. J. Murray (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1971), 54–55.

The King Seeks Foreign Assistance (LEF)

“Regicide” (ENC)

February 25 - St. Domingue I

Dubois, all

Society of the Friends of Blacks, “Address to the National Assembly in Favor of the Abolition of the Slave Trade” (LEF)

Decree of the National Convention of 4 February 1794, Abolishing Slavery in all the Colonies (LEF)

March 4 - St. Domingue II

Popkin, all

Document analysis due

Spring Break

March 18 - Church

Desan, *Reclaiming the Sacred*, all

Poverty Observed: Journal of a Country Priest (LEF)

Report by the Jacobin Society of Besançon on Refractory Priests (LEF)

Petition of the Jews of Paris, Alsace and Lorraine to the National Assembly (LEF)

The Clergy as a Target: A Political Problem (LEF)

Admission of Jews to Rights of Citizenship (LEF)

March 25 - Terror

Palmer, all

Andress, all

Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, Year I (LEF)

April 1 - Family I

Desan, *Family on Trial in Revolutionary France*, all

Condorcet, “On the Admission of Women to the Rights of Citizenship” (LEF)

Olympe de Gouges, The Declaration of the Rights of Woman (LEF)

Prudhomme, "On the Influence of the Revolution on Women" (LEF)

How a Mother Survives (LEF)

April 8 - War

Bell, all

The Russian Campaign as Seen by an Ordinary Soldier (LEF)
An Ordinary Soldier's Account (LEF)

April 15 - Counterrevolution

McMahon, all

“The Vendée—Description of the Counterrevolution” (LEF)

April 22 - Presentations I

April 29 - Presentations II

Review essay due