

Europe and the French Revolution

History 342
Sarah Curtis

Fall 2008
TTh 11:00-12:15

Course objectives:

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." In this course, we will examine the late eighteenth-century origins of the revolutionary outburst, the events of the Revolution itself, and its impact on Europe. Special attention will be paid to women's role in the Revolution and the revolt of African slaves in the French colony of St-Domingue, which became independent (as Haiti) in 1804. Finally, in the last weeks of the course, we will consider the rise to power of Napoleon and the French conquest of Europe until his downfall in 1815.

Reading:

The following books can be purchased at the bookstore:

Jeremy D. Popkin, *A Short History of the French Revolution*, 4th ed. (Prentice Hall)

Laura Mason and Tracey Rizzo, *The French Revolution: A Document Collection*
(Houghton Mifflin)

Denis Diderot, *The Nun* (Penguin)

Timothy Tackett, *When the King Took Flight* (Harvard)

Paul Johnson, *Napoleon* (Penguin)

Jakob Walter, *The Diary of a Napoleonic Foot Soldier* (Penguin)

There are also two assigned articles from the *American Historical Review*. These are available on the SFSU Library's online database JSTOR (look up at <http://www.library.sfsu.edu/find/dbs/dbselector.php>). If you do not know how to use this database to access articles electronically, please ask a reference librarian.

Course requirements:

This course will combine lecture and discussion. The week's assigned readings (especially the documents) should be completed by Thursday, when we will have some time to discuss them. Twice (September 16 and November 13) during the semester, you will be asked to use the readings as the basis of short (4-6 pp.) papers; topics will be handed out in class. There will also be a midterm (October 9) and a final examination (December 18); study guides for the exams will be handed out in class.

Graduate students in history will have one additional assignment. Please see information sheet.

Grading:

Grades will be calculated as follows: midterm 25%, final 25%, each paper 20% (total 40%), participation 10%. (Graduate students: midterm 20%, final 25%, each paper 15%, participation 10%, book review 15%.) Students who wish to take the course CR/NC can change their grading status via “My SFSU” by October 21.

Make-up midterms or finals will only be allowed in cases of medical or other serious emergency with documentation.

If you are unable to complete the course requirements by the end of semester, it is your responsibility to withdraw from the course. I will issue no instructor-initiated withdrawals or incompletes. Student-initiated incompletes are reserved for serious medical excuses (with documentation) or other natural disasters within the last three weeks of the semester. The last day to drop a course without a “W” is September 23, and the last day to withdraw with a “W” (except in extreme circumstances) is November 21.

Office hours and contact information:

Tuesday 3:30-5:00, Thursday, 12:30-2:00, and by appointment

office location: Science 267

phone: (415) 338-2250

e-mail: scurtis@sfsu.edu

website: <http://bss.sfsu.edu/scurtis>

Schedule:**Week 1 August 26-28****The Old Regime**

Mason and Rizzo, docs. 1, 3, 7

Diderot, *The Nun*, pp. 21-104

Week 2 September 2-4**The Impact of the Enlightenment**

Popkin, chap. 1

Mason and Rizzo, doc. 6

Diderot, *The Nun*, pp. 104-89

Week 3 September 9-11**The Crisis of 1787-89**

Popkin, chap. 2

Mason and Rizzo, docs. 9-15

Robert Darnton, “An Early Information Society: News and the Media in Eighteenth-Century Paris,” *American Historical Review* 105 (2000) 1-35 (JSTOR)

Week 4 September 16-18

From Reform to Revolution

Tuesday: PAPER DUE

Popkin, chap. 3

Mason and Rizzo, docs. 16-17, 19, 29, 30

Week 5 September 23-25

The Dilemmas of Citizenship

Mason and Rizzo, docs. 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26, 33

Week 6 September 30-October 2

Revolution in Haiti

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

Mason and Rizzo, docs. 4, 23, 27, 48, 49, 50

Week 7 October 7-9

The Failure of Constitutional Monarchy

Thursday: MIDTERM

Week 8 October 14-16

The French Republic

Popkin, chap. 4

Mason and Rizzo, doc. 34

Begin Tackett, *When the King Took Flight*, chaps. 1-5

Week 9 October 21-23

Terror is the Order of the Day

Popkin, chap. 5

Mason and Rizzo, docs. 37, 38, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 51, 52, 64

Tackett, *When the King Took Flight*, chaps. 6-8

Week 10 October 28-30

Creating the Republican Citizen

Mason and Rizzo, docs. 28, 31, 53, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63

Week 11 November 4-6

Thermidor and After

Popkin, chap. 6

Mason and Rizzo, docs. 66, 67, 68, 71, 73, 76, 77, 79, 80, 81

Week 12 November 11-13

The Rise of Napoleon

Tuesday: Veterans' Day Holiday

Thursday: PAPER DUE

Johnson, chaps. 1-2

Mason and Rizzo, doc. 84

Week 13 November 18-20

Napoleon in France

Popkin, chap. 7

Mason and Rizzo, docs. 85, 86

Graduate book review due Thursday

Week 14 December 2-4

Liberators or Conquerers? France in Europe (and Haiti)

Popkin, chap. 8

Johnson, chaps. 3-4

Mason and Rizzo, doc. 87

Week 15 December 9-11

Endgame and Legacy

Popkin, chap. 9

Johnson, chaps. 5-7

Walter, *Diary of a Napoleonic Foot Soldier*

Thursday, December 18, 10:45-1:15: FINAL EXAM

Graduate student assignment (due November 20)

Graduate students in history enrolled in History 342 will be expected to complete the regular assignments as well as a book review on one of the following books:

Robert Darnton, *The Literary Underground of the Old Regime*
 Roger Chartier, *The Cultural Origins of the French Revolution*
 Alfred Cobban, *The Social Interpretation of the French Revolution*
 John Markoff, *The Abolition of Feudalism*
 François Furet, *Interpreting the French Revolution*
 Timothy Tackett, *Becoming a Revolutionary: The Deputies of the French National Assembly and the Emergence of a Revolutionary Culture*
 Dena Goodman, ed., *Marie-Antoinette: Writings on the Body of a Queen*
 Albert Soboul, *The Sans-Culottes*
 Lynn Hunt, *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution*
 Lynn Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution*
 Mona Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution*
 Olwen Hufton, *Women and the Limits of Citizenship in the French Revolution*
 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*
 Suzanne Desan, *The Family on Trial in Revolutionary France*
 Isser Woloch, *The New Regime: Transformations of the French Civic Order, 1789-1820s*

Guidelines:

Book reviews should be 5-6 pp. long, typed, and double-spaced. The full bibliographic data for the book (author, title, place and date of publication, publisher) should be typed at the beginning of the review. If you quote from the book, you should indicate the source of quotations by placing page numbers in parentheses after the quote.

The review should summarize the main arguments and conclusions of the book(s), situating them in historical and historiographical context. You should discuss briefly the author's method and/or sources, and mention any serious flaws with the book. But I do not expect you to tear a book to pieces; concentrate on its strengths.

You should not simply summarize the contents of the book, although you do need to first answer the question: "**What is this book about?**" Assume that the reader of your review is familiar with the history of this period in a general way, but has not read the book or plunged deeply into arguments about it.

The next question you need to answer is: "**Why is this book important?**" In other words, what does it add to the field or subject of study, how does it fit in with other books on the subject (if known) or the way in which the subject has been generally studied. Since the French Revolution has been the subject of lively debates, you should try to situate the book in its historiographical context. You may wish to consult published reviews of the book in order to get a sense of this aspect of the book. Published reviews may also be useful as models of how to write book reviews.

The final question that you want to answer is "**What does the reader learn from the book?**" In other words, how does it advance our knowledge about the period? Here you may want to criticize the content or method of the book, but do not criticize a book for not being another book; pay attention to the author's own statements about what s/he is trying to accomplish.

Please let me know what book you have chosen by October 16.