

History of France since 1815

Fall 2013

AHIS 349 (9215)

Tue and Thu, 10:15-11:35, HU 39

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Course Description and Purpose

This class is a survey of French political, cultural, and social history from the end of the Napoleonic Era through the Fifth Republic of today. Accordingly, we will examine a wide range of topics chronologically: the legacy of the French Revolutionary tradition; modernization and industrialization; the rise and fall of the French colonial empire; the Great War; Vichy France and the Occupation; contemporary problems of immigration, race, and national identity; and the place of France in the new Europe and the world. We will also investigate several recurring themes in modern French history, seeking to answer fundamental questions about French politics, culture and society:

- How have French people struggled over the last two centuries to live up to the lofty liberal and republican ideals the nation embraced during the Revolution of 1789, articulated in that year's Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen? One of the ways we will seek answers to this question is by examining the experiences of people often treated as "outsiders" in French culture, who frequently had to fight for the rights and equal treatment promised in the Declaration: women, the poor, subject colonial populations, immigrants and ethnic minorities, religious minorities (including both Jews and Muslims), homosexuals, and others.
- How, more generally, has France worked through the political implications of its turbulent recent history, which includes at least four (perhaps more) major revolutions, several monarchs from two different dynastic families, two Napoleonic empires, five republics, and one quasi-fascist dictatorship? Is French political history mere chaos, or can we discern underlying patterns of meaning and development in these disparate events and regimes?
- How have French people coped with the recurring trauma and destruction of war over the last two centuries, especially one of the most traumatic and destructive of them all, the Great War of 1914-1918? What do these large-scale events, involving millions of people, mean to individual families, and the men, women, and children of which they are composed? In short, and perhaps most importantly, how do societies grieve and mourn?

- What have been the various responses of people in France from all walks of life—from writers and intellectuals and politicians, to peasants and schoolteachers and factory workers and immigrants—to the forces of modernity, primarily industrial and technological advancements, modern mass communication and culture, and the development of modern “bourgeois” political and cultural sensibilities? Who benefits from and promotes such forces of modernity? What fears do these forces conjure in the minds of some people? And what are the fates of those who resist or transgress these developing forces?

The study of history is about interrogating the past—asking why and how, as well as who, what, where, and when—and French history is no different, so this is how we will proceed. We will do our best to answer these questions, though with the full knowledge that hard, concrete answers will more often than not be elusive. Still, when we have finished this course, we will not only know more about the facts and figures of French history, but we will be in a better position to understand how that history has developed from 1815 to our own day, to do what historians (for that’s what you are learning to be in this course) are really supposed to do: explain, as best they can, change over time.

Skills Learned in This Course

The History Department has identified several general skills students in our 300-level courses will acquire—advanced analytical skills that historians must possess and that will, in particular, prepare our students for success in the History major capstone course. Accordingly, as a student in this course you will:

- Retain, refine, and extend skills learned in history courses at the 100 and 200 levels
- Master more detailed, sophisticated, and in-depth content
- Become more intimately acquainted with historical methodologies and historiographical debates
- Communicate effectively with others about history and historical concepts, in writing and discussion, at an advanced and mature level
- Understand historical authorship, in print and other formats, and begin to engage in such authorship themselves
- Ask historical questions and articulate the importance of historical context
- Deploy evidence to support arguments effectively
- Produce written documents in clear and grammatically correct prose, with a clearly-articulated argument supported by primary and secondary evidence that is cited in standard style
- Engage in library research
- Gain some experience defining and designing research projects organized around compelling historical questions (producing annotated bibliographies, proposals, and so on, if not following all the way through to a complete research paper)
- Understand the ethics of scholarship, including issues of plagiarism, but moving beyond them to the responsible use of evidence, balanced and nuanced interpretation, and other norms of scholarly discourse

Readings

(Available for purchase at the UAlbany Bookstore, and several are also on 3-hour reserve at the Main Library. Please note: I have made every effort to keep the cost of buying books for this class to a minimum, working with the bookstore to find used copies, and with publishers to find economical editions. That being said, it is your responsibility to obtain access to and complete all the assigned readings. Note also that I have chosen specific editions of Popkin's and Balzac's books, and the page numbers in the schedule at the end of this syllabus refer to these editions. If you use different editions, page numbers will be different, and the translation of Balzac may be different and inferior. So, to avoid confusion, please get these editions.)

- Jeremy D. Popkin, *A History of Modern France*, 4th ed. (Prentice Hall, 2013, 9780205846825)
- Honoré de Balzac, *Colonel Chabert* (trans. Carol Cosman, New Directions, 1997, 0811213595)
- Alain Corbin, *Village of Cannibals* (Harvard, 0674939018)
- Emilie Carles, *A Life of Her Own* (Penguin, 978-0140169652)
- Azouz Begag, *Shantytown Kid* (Nebraska, 9780803262584)

Films

(Available on reserve at the library and electronically through Blackboard. Or you may wish to purchase copies yourself, or rent them.)

- *Noirs et blancs en couleur (Black and White in Color)*
- *La vie et rien d'autre (Life and Nothing But)*
- *Un long dimanche de fiançailles (A Very Long Engagement)*
- *Un amour à taire (A Love to Hide)*
- *Indigènes (Days of Glory)*
- *La haine (Hate)*
- *L'ordre et la morale (Rebellion)*

Class Requirements and Grading

Grades will be based upon the completion of all of the following assignments:

- Exam 1 (5%)
- Exam 2 (10%)
- Exam 3 (15%)
- Paper 1 (10%)
- Paper 2 (15%)
- Paper 3 (25%)
- Quizzes (20%)

Exams will consist of multiple choice questions that are largely interpretive and thematic in nature. In other words, they will test not only your ability to remember facts and figures reviewed in class lectures and assigned readings and films (who, what, where, when), but also—and more importantly—your understanding of major themes and developments in French history (why and how).

Papers will address specific questions focused on topics covered in readings, films, and class. The first, 3-4 page paper will focus on *Colonel Chabert*. The second, 5-6 pages, will compare the experiences of life in modern France recorded in the memoirs of Émilie Carles and Azouz Begag. The third paper, 5-6 pages, will focus on the presentation of France's colonial past and its legacies in a number of films. You will receive specific topics and guidelines a few weeks prior to the due date for each paper.

Quizzes will consist of a few multiple choice and/or short answer questions. They will be simple, short reading comprehension tests designed to reward students who do the readings and watch the films assigned in the class.

Grades will be determined, according to the weights given above, on an A-E scale: A=92-100; 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; E=0-59.

Policies:

- **Attendance** is mandatory. Out of consideration for your fellow students' efforts to learn, and your instructor's efforts to teach, you are required to arrive on time for class and to remain seated (barring an emergency) until the class is finished. For the same reasons, please turn off cell phones, and do not send or receive text messages, play video games, read the newspaper, dance, sing, or otherwise goof off and distract other people in the room. Repeated violations of any of the above rules shall be grounds for sanction or dismissal from the class. Please understand that these rules are not designed to make your lives difficult, but to ensure that we all benefit from the courtesy, respect, and opportunity to learn and to succeed, to which we are entitled.
- You must complete all of the **assigned reading/viewing** by the date indicated on the schedule below. Exams, quizzes, and papers are due on the dates and times (the beginning of that day's class) indicated below, unless you have made prior arrangements, for legitimate reasons, with the course instructor. Otherwise, **late assignments** will be penalized 10 points per day. Unless you have made alternative arrangements, with formal approval from the instructor, you may not make up missed quizzes.
- The policy of the Department of History on **plagiarism** is as follows: "Plagiarism is taking (which includes purchasing) the words and ideas of another and passing them off as one's own work. If in a formal paper a student quotes someone, that student must use quotation marks and give a citation. Paraphrased or borrowed ideas are to be identified by proper citations. Plagiarism will result, at the minimum, in a failing grade for the assignment." I would add that plagiarism violates the educational mission of the University, the ethical foundations of the scholarly endeavor, and the essential trust between instructors and students. Do not do it. If you do, and I catch you, I will enforce the appropriate penalty, including referral to University authorities for formal adjudication and sanction.
- As you may imagine, the University at Albany as a whole also takes plagiarism and other issues of academic integrity very seriously. Please familiarize yourself

with the **Standards of Academic Integrity** published in the Undergraduate Bulletin (http://www.albany.edu/undergraduate_bulletin/regulations.html).

- I will make reasonable **accommodations** in this course for students with documented physical, sensory, systemic, cognitive, learning and psychiatric disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring accommodation in this class, please notify the Director of the Disability Resource Center (Campus Center 137, 442-5490). That office will provide the course instructor with verification of your disability, and will recommend appropriate accommodations.

Schedule

(Reading—author, page numbers—or viewing assignments due for each day appear in parentheses after the topic of the day’s lecture or discussion)

Week 1

8/27: Introduction (read syllabus)

8/29: The French Revolution (Popkin, 1-7, 36-70)

Week 2

9/3: The French Revolution

9/5: Classes Suspended

Week 3

9/10: Napoleon and the Legacy of the French Revolution (Popkin 71-83)

9/12: Back to the Future: Monarchy and Politics, 1815-1848 (Popkin, 84-101)

Week 4

9/17: Society and Culture: The Bourgeoisie and Romanticism (Popkin, 102-114; Balzac, 1-101) **[quiz]**

9/19: Revolution and Republic, Part Deux (Popkin, 115-123) **[Paper 1 due]**

Week 5

9/24: Back the Future, Again: Napoleon III’s Second Empire (Popkin, 124-140)

9/26: War and the Commune: Revolution and Republic, Part Trois (Popkin, 141-149)

Week 6

10/1: *Village of Cannibals*: Popular Violence and Emerging Sensibilities (Corbin, 1-38) **[quiz]**

10/3: *Village of Cannibals*: Popular Violence and Emerging Sensibilities (Corbin, 39-119) **[quiz]**

Week 7

10/8: **Exam 1**

10/10: The Third Republic: Crisis and Consolidation and Crisis... (Popkin, 150-200)

Week 8

- 10/15: ...and Consolidation and Crisis... (On Blackboard: Jules Ferry, “Speech Before the French Chamber of Deputies, 1884,” and Alice Conklin, “Colonialism and Human Rights”) **[quiz]**
10/17: The Great War (Popkin, 201-220; Film: *Black and White in Color*) **[quiz]**

Week 9

- 10/22: The Great War and Its Legacy (Film: *Life and Nothing But*) **[quiz]**
10/24: The Great War and Its Legacy (Film: *A Very Long Engagement*) **[quiz]**

Week 10

- 10/29: France between the Wars: The Search for Stability (Popkin, 221-253)
10/31: **Exam 2**

Week 11

- 11/5: Strange Defeat (Popkin, 254-273; on Blackboard: Marc Bloch, “Strange Defeat”) **[quiz]**
11/7: Occupied France, Vichy France (on Blackboard: speeches by Maréchal Pétain) **[quiz]**

Week 12

- 11/12: Outsiders on the Inside (Film: *A Love to Hide*) **[quiz]**
11/14: Libération and Épuration (Film: *Indigènes*; on Blackboard: Nicola Cooper, “Days of Glory?”) **[quiz]**

Week 13

- 11/19: Dirty Wars and Decolonization (Popkin, 274-295; on Blackboard: Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*; Henri Alleg, *The Question*) **[quiz]**
11/21: Les Trentes Glorieuses and mai ‘68 (Popkin, 296-314)

Week 14

- 11/26: France in the World, the World in France (Film: *La Haine*; Popkin, 315-332) **[quiz]**
11/28: Thanksgiving—eat turkey

Week 15

- 12/3 and 12/5: Modern French Lives: Une sacrée bonne femme and a Shantytown Kid (Carles, Introduction and 1-264; Begag, Introduction and 1-199) **[Paper 2 due on 12/3]**

Week 16

- 12/10: France since 1815: The Grandeur and Misery of the Rights of Man (Film: *L'ordre et la morale*; Popkin, 333-347) **[Paper 3 due]**

12/16 (Monday): Exam 3, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.