

Ancien Régime and French Revolution

HIST 336

“Let *us* be terrible, to dispense the people
from the need to be terrible themselves.”

– Georges Danton, 1793



Chateau de Vaux le Vicomte

Course Description: This course is designed for history and humanities majors. It provides an overview of important elements, trends and developments in the political, social, economic, cultural, and colonial history of France from the early seventeenth century through the French Revolution. Class meets once a week for 3 hours.

Student Learning Objectives: Through a combination of lectures, in-class discussions, secondary readings, brief film clips and documentaries, musical samples, and selected primary sources, students will explore and think critically about the following themes and topics: The consolidation of royal power; the geography and economy of early-modern France; the structure of social order; religious conflicts and philosophical debates; the nature patronage and royal administration; the function of the royal court at Versailles; the geo-political reasons for French overseas explorations and colonial ventures; daily life in Paris on the eve of the French Revolution; and the origins and course of the French Revolution.

Desired Student Learning Outcomes: Students should learn to *identify contemporary political and social structures; *identify the contours of the daily lives of the different social groups; *identify the institutional arrangements that accompanied the rise and fall of absolute monarchy; *appreciate the importance of French religious issues; *recognize key French contributions to European cultural history; *demonstrate the ability to understand the key concepts of Enlightenment thought; *use key vocabulary and concepts; *identify and evaluate the nature of French colonial ventures; *evaluate the severity of threats mounted by popular and elite revolts; and *evaluate the long, medium and short-term causes of the French Revolution.

Educational objectives will be measured through the following assignments: weekly 2-page dialogic response essays in which students identify key passages, paraphrase them in their own words, and explain their significance or in-class quiz essays (for 40% of the final grade); an annotated research bibliography and prospectus (for 5% of the final grade); one 8 to 10-page research essay (for 35% of the final grade); and a final examination (for the remaining 20% of the final grade). The annotated bibliography for final paper will be due in the 12th week. Final

essay topics will be handed out before the final exam. Research paper topics must be negotiated in advance with the professor.

General Expectations to excel in this course, you should expect to do the following:

- 1) Study and prepare approximately 10 hours per week outside of class;
- 2) Carefully read approximately 100-120 pages per week outside of class;
- 3) Make school your first priority and attend class regularly;
- 4) Attend class and turn in all assigned work on time (see section on late work penalties);
- 5) Be prepared to write about 50+ typed pages, including a major research essay.

Attendance and Participation at all scheduled activities is necessary for you to learn. Each student should arrive at class on time and remain the entire class period. Polite and constructive participation is expected during class discussions. I adhere to the University Policy outlined in the current University Catalog. In the Catalog, it says that if you miss 25% of your classes without legitimate excuse, you may receive an 'F'. **Classroom Demeanor** that contributes to a negative educational environment is unacceptable. I expect each student to adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty.

Grading: A= 92-100; B+= 87-91; B= 82-86; C+= 77-81; C= 70-76; D+= 68-69; D= 60- 67; F= 0-59; FX= failure as a result of academic dishonesty. The FX grade is treated as an F in the grade point average computation. With regard to Repetition of Course Work, courses that receive an FX grade are not eligible to be repeated under the university's "Repeat Forgiveness" option, and instead may only be repeated via the "Standard Repeat" option. When assigned, the FX grade will become a part of the student's internal academic record and will appear on unofficial transcripts and within the student information system. The FX grade will not appear on the student's official transcript.

Student Consultations: You are welcome to call me or stop by my office at any time. The best time to catch me is after class and during my scheduled office hours. If these times are inconvenient, I would be happy to meet with you at a more agreeable time. You may contact me by phone, by email, by skypeing, or by leaving a note for me in my faculty mailbox.

Required Readings:

Charles Drazin, *The Man Who Outshone the Sun King* (Da Capo Press, 2008);
William Doyle, *Old Régime France* (Oxford University Press, 2001);
Louis-Sebastien Mercier, *Panorama of Paris* (Pennsylvania State Univ. Pr., 1991);
Sylvia Neely, *A Concise History of the French Revolution* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2007);
James Farr, *The Work of France* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2008);
Tony Spawforth, *Versailles* (St. Martin's Griffin, 2010);
Michel Vovelle, *Enlightenment Portraits* (The University Of Chicago Press, 1997).

Readings in Course Packet:

Robert Muchembled, *Popular culture and elite culture in France, 1400-1750* (LSU Press, 1985);
Gwendolyn Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana* (Louisiana State University Press, 1995).

Internet Resources:

Old Paris Maps @ <<http://hypercities.ats.ucla.edu/#Paris>>;
"Imaging the French Revolution" @ <<http://chnm.gmu.edu/revolution/imaging/home.html>>;

“Forum on Revolutionary Violence”, H-France, Volume 2, Issue 2 (Spring 2007) @ <http://www.h-france.net/forum/h-franceforumvol2.html>;

“Liberty, Equality, Fraternity” @ <http://chnm.gmu.edu/revolution/>;

Diderot’s *Encyclopedie* @ <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/d/did/>.

Old French Dictionaries @ <http://artfl-project.uchicago.edu/node/17>;

Schedule of Class Meetings and Readings

- Week 1 The Human Geography of France**
Lecture: France, the Oldest Nation in Europe
Read and Discuss: Muchembled, “A World of Insecurity and Fears”
Film Clip: Patrice Chéreau’s “Queen Margot” (1994) - on the court of Charles IX.
- Week 2 The Economy and Culture of Early-Modern France**
Lecture: The material conditions of daily life and the art of George de La Tour.
Film Clip: Daniel Vigne’s “The Return of Martin Guerre” (1982) – on village customs and rural household arrangements
Musical Interlude: “The Banquet of Veal” (1454)
Read and Discuss: Doyle, “Economy” and Farr, “The Menu People.”
- Week 3 Ancien Régime Social Organization**
Lecture: A Society of Orders and Corporations
Musical Interlude: Jean-Féry Rebel, “The Dance Characters” (1734)
Paris Map @ <http://www.davidrumsey.com/view/google-earth-browser#paris-1716>
Film Clips: Laurent Tirard’s “Molière” (2007)- on Monsieur Jourdain’s social ambitions
Read and Discuss: Doyle, “Society,” Farr, “Artisans,” and Farr, “Merchants, Large and Small.”
- Week 4 Religious Conflicts and Philosophical Debate**
Lecture: Religious Wars and Political Truces
Film Clips: Patrice Chéreau’s “Queen Margot” (1994) – on religious violence
Musical Interlude: François Couperin, “*Divertissements*” (1660s)
Read and Discuss: Doyle, “Culture and Religion,” Henri IV’s “Edict of Nantes (1588), Doyle, “The State and Political Culture,” and Vovelle, “The Priest.”
- Week 5 Politics, Patronage and the Consolidation of Royal Power**
Lecture: Careers in Royal Administration
Film Clips: Gérard Corbiau’s “The King is Dancing” (2000) – Louis in a masque
Musical Interlude: Jean-Baptiste Lully, *Les Divertissements: Isis* (1677)
Read and Discuss: Saint Simon, “The King’s Daily Routine,” Vovelle, “The Noble” and Farr, “The Professions.”

- Week 6** **The Royal Court at Versailles**
Lecture: The Court as Paradigmatic Institution
Musical Interlude: Marin Marais, “Tombeau pour Sainte Colombe” (1701) @ <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2nlq69pmADo>>
Film Clips: Roland Joffé’s “Vatel” (2000) – on provisioning feasts and organizing entertainments
View: “Virtual Tour of Versailles” @ <<http://en.chateauversailles.fr/homepage>>
Read and Discuss: Doyle, “Politics: Louis XIV,” and Spawforth, *Versailles*, pp. 44-144.
- Week 8** **Colonial Ventures and Overseas Explorations**
Lecture: From Fishermen’s to Traders’ Empire
Film Clip: Milos Forman’s “Valmont” (1989) - riding and fencing sequences
Musical Interlude: Marin Marais, “Suite in D” (1686) @ <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v3x06chS20Q>>
Read and Discuss: Doyle, “France Overseas,” “Le Code Noir” (1685), Hall, “The Chaos of French Rule,” and Vovelle, “The Explorer.”
- Week 9** **French Style and Culture under Louis XV**
Lecture: Nature and Cultural in the Age of Rococo
Film Clip: Stephen Frears’ “Dangerous Liaisons” (1988) – on libertinism
Film Clip: Patrice Leconte’s “Ridicule” (1996) – on wit, court, and nature
View: The Fragonard and Boucher rooms at the Frick museum in NYC: http://www.frick.org/virtual/fragonard_tour.htm
Read and Discuss: Doyle, “Politics: Louis XV” and Spawforth, *Versailles*, pp. 168-217, and Vovelle, “The Artist.”
- Week 10** **Versailles under Louis XVI and Since**
Lecture: Versailles under Siege and as National Museum
Film Clip: J-C Guilloson, “Versailles, the Visit” (n.d.)
View: “Versailles Art Project by Google” @ <<http://www.googleartproject.com/museums/versailles>>.
Read and Discuss: Doyle, “Politics: Louis XVI” and Spawforth, *Versailles*, pp. 218-241.
- Week 11** **Daily Life in Paris on the Eve of Revolution**
Lecture: The Importance of Locality and Community
Musical Offering: J.-J. Rousseau’s Symphony, *Le Devin du village* (1752)
Mapping Change (1705 and 1797) @ <<http://hypercities.ats.ucla.edu/#Paris>>.
Read and Discuss: Farge, “At the Workshop Door,” and Darnton, “Mesmerism,” and Mercier, *Panorama of Paris*, pp. 16-33, 58-61, 74-79, and 148-153.
- Week 12** **The Origins of the French Revolution**
****Annotated bibliography due this week****
Lecture: The Causes and Triggers of the French Revolution
Read and Discuss: Neely, French Revolution, chs. 1-3 and Emmanuel Sieyes, “What is the Third Estate?” (1789).

Week 13 The Liberal French Revolution
Lecture: Liberals, Royalists, and a King without a Party
Read and Discuss: Andrzej Wajda's "Danton" (1983) – final courtroom speech
Read: Neely, French Revolution, chs. 4-6, the "Declaration of the Rights of Man" (1789), and Olympe De Gouges' "Declaration of the Rights of Women" (1791).

Week 14 The Radical French Revolution
Lecture: Radicalism and Violence in the French Revolution
Film Clip: "The French Revolution" (History Channel, 2005)– on Marat and Robespierre
Read: "The Brunswick Manifesto" and Neely, French Revolution, chs. 7-9.

Week 15 Reactions to Revolution
Lecture: Napoleon, Haiti, and the Revolution's Legacy
Film Clip: Abel Gance's "Napoleon" (1927) – on revolutionary mythology
Read: Vovelle, "The Woman" and Spawforth, *Versailles*, pp. 242-254.

Final Research Essay: Due on the last day of exams week

Final Examination: As scheduled

Late work: Assignments will lose one letter grade per class after the original deadline. This will also apply to papers returned for not properly following the formatting instructions. Remember to put your name, course number, and section number on your work.

Make-ups: Students must take all exams and hand in all assignments at the specified times and places. If this is impossible due to *extraordinary* circumstances, inform me before class and alternative arrangements may be possible (extraordinary circumstances include documented illness, death in the family, or institutional activities as approved by the academic deans (such as playing sports, marching in a school band).

Citation Guide: <<http://www.humboldt.edu/history/citationguide.htm>>

Essay Grading:

A= This paper is *insightful*. It addresses the assignment in a way that indicates your comprehension of and control over the assignment itself as well as an understanding of the underlying issues. The message is communicated *clearly, concisely, and directly*. There is confidence in this writing.

B= This paper meets and, at times, exceeds the basic requirements of the assignment. The paper indicates that you are *beginning*, at times, to think through and deal with major ideas in the assignment. The message is communicated with generally effective clarity, directness, and conciseness. Some *unevenness* in writing may be apparent.

C= While the paper offers *little insight* into the greater issues of the assignment, it meets the basic requirements. The message, for the most part, is reasonably clear, concise, and direct, although there may be *unevenness* in the writing.

D= The basic requirements of the assignment are *partially met*; however, additional revision is necessary if you are to communicate the message clearly. There is considerable *unevenness* in the writing.

F= The assignment's *basic requirements* are met only marginally or are not met at all. The writing is neither clear, concise, or direct.

The University policy on **Plagiarism** is in effect. Plagiarism is the use of another's work and the presentation of it as one's own. Plagiarism is a serious violation of the ethics of scholarship and undermines the credibility of academic inquiry. Plagiarism takes many forms. The clearest abuse is the use of another's language or written work without quotation marks and citation (even if it is in one's own words). Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to: any limited borrowing, without attribution, of another person's research findings, hypotheses, data, theories, rhetorical strategies, interpretations; the submission of laboratory reports, research papers, computer programs, etc., not authored by the student; and the submission of material copied from any published source without attribution (including the Internet). More subtle abuses include the appropriation of concepts, data, or notes all disguised in newly crafted sentences, or reference to a borrowed work in an early note and then extensive further use without attribution. Note that the resubmission of a student's previously submitted laboratory reports, research papers, computer programs, etc., without the instructor's approval constitutes cheating.

Reasonable accommodation policy: Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent him or her from fully demonstrating his or her abilities should contact me personally so that we might discuss accommodations and resources necessary to insure your full participation and facilitate your educational experience here at Coastal. You also need to contact Counseling Services. They will assess your disability and provide you with documentation that you will pass on to me.

* The professor retains the right to alter the syllabus, assignments, and course requirements as deemed necessary for student learning.