History H620
Colloquium in Modern European History
The French Revolution
http://www.indiana.edu/~frrevn/

For over two centuries, the French Revolution has been a crucial topic of both historical
and historiographical debate. Its origins have been traced to low literature and high
politics; its effects have been detected in everything from economic theory and hair styles
to family dynamics and the map of Europe. From the Revolution, we get our
contemporary notions of political Left and Right, as well as the word “terrorist”; from the
Revolution, France got départements, the “rights of man,” and the metric system.

After an introductory section on eighteenth-century culture, politics, and society,
this course will concentrate on the revolutionary 1790s. Metropolitan France will provide
our primary focus, but we will also consider the meaning of revolution in France’s
Caribbean colonies and across much of Western Europe. In April 1792, revolutionary
France declared war against the kings of central Europe; war continued, almost
uninterrupted, until 1815. To study the Revolution is to study ideas of liberty and
equality; it is also to study practices of war and empire.

There are no prerequisites for this course and all required readings will be in
English. Students who have not studied this period before are encouraged to read Colin
Jones, The Great Nation: France from Louis XV to Napoleon in the first few weeks of the
semester.

Grading and Requirements. It is assumed that all students will do at least the required
readings for every week and that they will participate actively in all sessions. Repeated
absences will not be tolerated. Your final grade will be based on four components:
Annotating and leading discussion on a relevant primary-source document (15%)
Reviewing one book from the suggested further reading (15%)
Participation in discussion (20%)
Final project, the basic skeleton of a substantial research paper (50%)

Please note that I will only give a grade of “Incomplete” in the case of major illness or
personal upheaval (divorce, bereavement). Because of the university’s calendar for
examinations and final grades, I cannot accept work submitted after Monday, 10
December 2012.
Further notes on required work. I hope my comments below make my expectations clear. If you have \textit{any} questions, please feel free to ask them, either before/after class, in office hours, or by e-mail. If you cannot make my office hours, I am happy to make an appointment to meet with you at some other time. I try to answer all e-mail within 24 hours, though circumstances sometimes make this impossible.

**Primary-source document:** once in the semester, you will be responsible for identifying a primary source (3-5 pp. minimum) relevant to the week’s discussion, annotating it, and circulating it in electronic format to the entire class. The text you circulate should be in English; if you \textit{want} to translate a French text, you may, but this is not required. Your document should reach everyone 24 hours before class (i.e., at 5:45 on Sunday). You will be evaluated both on the appropriateness and the fruitfulness of the text you choose and on the quality of your annotations. I expect you to write a substantial introductory paragraph situating the document and its author(s) in historical context; you should also gloss any especially significant or difficult words/phrases in the text and identify any proper nouns mentioned. For example, if your text includes a reference to the \textit{Révolutions de France et Brabant} you should write something to the effect of “radical weekly newspaper edited by Camille Desmoulins, published from Nov. 1789-July 1791; suppressed in the aftermath of the Champ de Mars massacre, it resumed publication in Oct.-Dec. 1792. Desmoulins later edited \textit{Le Vieux Cordelier} (“The Old Shoemaker”) before being executed as an \textit{indulgent}.”

**Book review:** once in the semester, you will be responsible for reviewing one of the books listed as “further reading” on the website. Your review should be approximately 1000-1500 words; you should assume that you are writing for a university-educated audience with a particular interest in French history and culture. In it, you should briefly summarize the work’s argument and purpose, but you should devote most of your time to placing the work in historical and historiographical context and highlighting the elements you think most deserving of scholars’ attention. Make sure to comment on both the book’s strengths and its weaknesses, paying special attention to sources and methodology. Your book review is due in class. You may submit it earlier, if you like.

**Final project:** Given our shared reading obligations, I cannot reasonably expect you to write a full research paper this semester. Moreover, linguistic limitations may constrain some students’ research. I expect, however, that you will be able to envision, plan, and begin such a paper in this period. Your final project (12-15 double-spaced pages, not including notes and bibliography) should at least include: a polished and engaging introduction; a statement of your research question and method; a concise and pointed overview of the relevant historiography; analysis of several primary sources; some tentative conclusions.

**Class participation:** I expect you to be fully prepared for all discussion classes. Students who attend without participating helpfully will receive a C+ for participation. Engaged involvement in discussion means both making your own points and inviting others to elaborate on theirs.
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DRAFT course schedule and reading list
For further bibliographical suggestions, including guidance on locating primary sources, please see the course website.

20 August: The mother of us all?

27 August: The French Revolution and the Historians
Jean Jaurès, Socialist History of the French Revolution (1901), introduction and the chapter on the “Great Fear,” (online at marxists.org).
Jack Censer and Lynn Hunt, Liberty, Equality, Fraternity: the website (on-line at chnm).

3 September: no class (Labor Day)

10 September: “High Ideas and Low Enlightenment”

17 September: The Old Regime and the French Revolution
* Alexis de Tocqueville, The Old Regime and the French Revolution, at least the preface; part 1; part 2, chaps 1-3, 6-9; and part 3, chaps. 1, 3, 8

24 September: Origins and Inventions (continues on next page)

1 October: A *Bourgeois* Revolution?

8 October: Becoming a Revolutionary and Being One

15 October: The Limits of Equality
Ron Schechter, *Obstinate Hebrews* (2001), chapter 5; available as an ACLS e-book via IUCAT.

22 October. Religion and Cultural Revolution
Suzanne Desan, *Reclaiming the Sacred: Lay Religion and Popular Politics in Revolutionary France* (1990), chapter four; available as an ACLS e-book via IUCAT.
29 October: The Republic in the Year II

5 November: Explaining the Terror

12 November: A French Revolution?

19 November: no class (Thanksgiving)

26 November: War and Peace

3 December: Napoleon’s Legacy and Bonaparte’s Legend
Emmanuel, comte de Las Cases, *Memorial of Saint Helena: Journal of the Private Life and Conversations of the Emperor Napoleon* (1823), selections on the website.
“The Civil Code” or *Code Napoléon* (1801; 1804), selections on the website.