Europe from Napoleon to the PRESENT

DISCUSSION CLASSES MEET TODAY AND TOMORROW. MAKE SURE YOU HAVE THE READING before you leave today. Remember: If you miss more than two discussion classes, you will be in danger of failing the course—regardless of your other grades.

- Wednesdays 1:25-2:15 (Sy 002)
- Wednesdays 1:25-2:15 (Bu 429; Dr. Spang)
  [if you are doing the course for Honors credit, you must be in this class]
- Wednesdays 3:35-4:25 (JH A107)

- Thursdays 9:05-9:55 (FR C147B)
- Thursdays 11:15-12:05 (Sy 001)
Lectures do not repeat the textbook or the readings. Material presented in lecture is, generally, one of the following:

- a question (“Why start with Napoleon?”)
- an answer (“image management”)
- evidence, an example that supports the answer (“invasion of Egypt”)
- an explanation of a difficult conceptual term (such as “Orientalism”)

— lecture slides often also contain further information to help you understand the answer or example being presented [for instance, the caption of one of the Napoleon caricatures refers to Revelations, book 13; I cited a bit of that text on the slide so you would have it while looking at the caricature]

— historians often confront source materials (texts and images from the past) that contradict each other [for instance, Napoleon is the savior of Europe or he is the spawn of the devil]; when you review the lecture slides, you should ask yourself whether all the source materials support a single interpretation

— your job is to know the material and to think about it, not to “memorize” it
Pyramid (I.M. Pei) entrance to the Louvre Museum, Paris
Questions about the French Revolution

WHAT was it? WHO made it?

WHY does it matter to us? (significance)

HOW to explain what happened? (interpretation)

“Long live the nation!”—on this bit of patriotic pottery, c. 1789-1790, little baby France raises a toast to “the Nation” (represented by symbols of the Three Estates of pre-1789 France: clergy [bishop’s crozier], aristocracy [sword], everybody else [shovel])

design for a “national” dress, 1790

History 104: some basic types of historical questions, developed with reference to French Revolution
Basic phases of the French Revolution

1630s-1789: *France is an “absolutist” monarchy (divine right of Kings)*

May 1789 King Louis XVI opens Estates-General (first meeting in 175 years)

June 1789 members of Estates-General call themselves “National Assembly”

14 July 1789 crowds storm the Bastille Prison in Paris

August 1789-August 1792: *France is a constitutional monarchy*

April 1792 declaration of war on Austria

10 Aug. 1792 popular uprising in Paris; King arrested on suspicion of favoring the enemy

Sept. 1792-1799: *France is a Republic*

Nov. 1799 military coup brings General Bonaparte to power

1804 Bonaparte crowned “Emperor Napoleon”

1799-1815: *France is a military dictatorship*

Questions about French Revolution: WHAT?
History and the French Revolution

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times…
Charles Dickens, A Tale of Two Cities (1859).

Demolition of the Bastille Prison (Paris), July 1789

“Men are born and remain free and equal in rights. Social distinctions may be founded only upon the general good.” (article 1)

“The principle of all sovereignty resides essentially in the nation.” (article 3)

Questions about French Revolution: WHAT?

Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, 1789
History and the French Revolution

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French deaths during “The Terror” (1793-1794)
- Guillotined as enemies of the Revolution: 16,000
- Executed without trial (firing squad etc.): 12,000
- Death in prison (illness, suicide, etc.): 10,000
- Civil war (combat dead, civilian massacres): 100,000
- Deaths from illness and famine:

Execution of King Louis XVI, January 1793

Questions about French Revolution: WHAT?
French Revolution is best understood as the combination of
• elite claims about political sovereignty and
• episodes of popular, often violent, protest

Jacques Louis David, *Oath of the Tennis Court in 1789* (1791) detail

*The Punishment of Foulon* [high royal official who was rumored to be planning to starve the people of Paris into submission], 1789

Questions about French Revolution: WHAT?
Elite ambitions and popular demands were often different; this made for instability and an on-going revolutionary dynamic.

1. Men are born and remain free and equal in rights. Social distinctions may be founded only upon the general good.

2. The aim of all political association is the preservation of the natural and imprescriptible rights of man. These rights are liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression.

3. The principle of all sovereignty resides essentially in the nation. No body nor individual may exercise any authority which does not proceed directly from the nation.

4. Liberty consists in the freedom to do everything which injures no one else…
WHY is the French Revolution significant for modern history?

introduces idea (and ideal) of national sovereignty in European context; this is the beginning of “nationalism”

“Henceforth, until the enemies have been driven from the territory of the republic, the French people are in permanent requisition. The young men shall go to battle; the married men shall forge arms and transport provisions; the women shall make tents and clothes, and shall serve in the hospitals; the children shall turn old linen into bandages; the old men stimulate the courage of warriors and preach the unity of the Republic and hatred of kings.”

Mass conscription edict, August 1793.

“A force appeared that beggared all imagination... the people became a participant in war; instead of governments and armies as heretofore, the full weight of the nation was thrown into the balance”

Clausewitz, On War

Lethiere, The Fatherland in Danger (1799), detail.
WHY is the French Revolution significant for *modern* history?

In its aftermath, leaves:

- widespread fear (or hope!) of successful popular violence
- model of “revolution” as an intentional and complete transformation (versus “revolution” as a cycle, as in “the Earth’s revolution around the sun”)

Questions about French Revolution: WHY do we study it?
How has the French Revolution been related to history?

“France is a new world, and in order to hold on to this achievement, it is necessary to sow the rubble of our old servitude everywhere…”

“Patriot” Palloy

*Storming of the Bastille (watercolor, 1789?)*

Men carrying a model of the Bastille to be used in a civic festival, 1790-1791

French Revolution and history: as a complete break from the past
Republican clock (decimal)
note symbolism—Liberty bonnets, poles etc.

French Revolutionary ("republican") Calendar
begins Sept. 22—first day of republic and time of harvest
12 months: 30 days each, divided into three ten-day long décades
months named for natural events (rather than Roman emperors—so thermidor, the “hot month,” replaces 22 July-21 August)
days dedicated to crops and tools, not saints

French Revolution and history: as a complete break from the past

French Revolution and Remaking (Rationalization?) of Daily Life

Metric System
created to replace highly variable local weights and measures
system of measurement “for all men, for all time”
based on natural units; one meter = 1/40,000,000 of the Earth’s circumference
decimal basis to make conversion between units easier

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Revolution as a Dangerous Attack on Tradition

“Society requires not only that the passions of individuals should be subjected, but that even in the mass and body, as well as in the individuals, the inclinations of men should frequently be thwarted, their will controlled, and their passions brought into subjection. This can only be done by a power out of themselves, and not one subject to their own will. … In this sense the restraints on men, as well as their liberties, are to be reckoned among their rights. …

But in France, all is to be changed. All the pleasing illusions which made power gentle and obedience liberal, are to be dissolved by this new conquering empire of light and reason. All the decent drapery of life is to be rudely torn off. …

In England we have not yet been completely embowelled of our natural entrails; we still feel within us, and we cherish and cultivate, those inbred sentiments which are the faithful guardians, the active monitors of our duty, the true supporters of all liberal and manly morals. We have not been drawn and trussed, in order that we may be filled, like stuffed birds in a museum, with chaff and rags and paltry blurred shreds of paper about the rights of men.”

How to Explain the Revolution: “class conflict”

First Estate: Church
Second Estate: Aristocracy
Third Estate: everybody else