

HIS567 The Enlightenment and the French Revolution Fall 2011

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Office Hrs.: Tuesday 9:30-10:30
And by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course will begin with an overview of the French Enlightenment, one of the most important sites in the construction of “modernity.” After an attempt to define the Enlightenment against the backdrop of traditionalist assumptions, we will consider various interpretations of the Enlightenment (from Peter Gay’s defense of it as a “recovery of nerve” to Michel Foucault’s critique as the origins of the “disciplinary society”). Next, we will consider one of the thorniest problems facing historians of the period: namely, the relation between the ideas of Enlightenment and the events of the Revolution.

Finally, we will take on the French Revolution itself. Our first concern will be reconstructing a narrative account of the Revolution, from its liberal origins, through the radicalism of the Terror during its middle years, to its thrust onto the larger European stage during the Napoleonic years. Finally, we will examine the great historiographical debates that have engaged several generations of historians over the meaning and significance of the French Revolution.

READING LIST:

1. Books to be purchased:

Dorinda Outram, *The Enlightenment*, Second Edition (Cambridge)

Jeremy Popkin, *A Short History of the French Revolution*, Fourth Edition
(Prentice Hall)

2. On Electronic Reserve:

All the other readings are on Electronic Reserve (ER) and can be downloaded by going to Blackboard, scrolling down to HIS 567, clicking, then scrolling down to e-reserves (on left) and clicking again.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance. Attendance is required not optional. The class depends on your regular attendance and participation. All unexcused absences will affect your grade.

Examinations. Two exams. Essay format. The second examination will be given on the last day of class and will cover material only since the mid-term.

Semester Paper

--Requirements for Undergraduate Students. Recommended length: eight pages. All papers should be typed, double-spaced, and fully documented (University of Chicago Style). The topic should be an *interpretive* problem, selected from topics covered on the course syllabus, and approved by me. The vehicle for this approval will be a short but thoughtfully-conceived and well-written prospectus describing your interpretive problem. You should also include a short bibliography indicating the sources that you intend to use. These sources must include at least one book and two articles beyond the assigned course reading. All sources must be serious pieces of historical scholarship (if in question, check with me). All "due dates" (see below), barring certified medical emergencies or family sickness, are to be taken seriously; late papers will be marked down at the discretion of the instructor.

--Requirements for Graduate Students. Recommended length: ten to twelve pages. All papers should be typed, double-spaced, and fully documented (University of Chicago Style). The topic should be an *interpretive* problem, selected from material covered in the course, and approved by me. The vehicle for this approval will be a short but thoughtfully-conceived and well-written prospectus describing your interpretive problem. You should also include a short bibliography indicating the sources that you intend to use. These sources must include at least three books and three articles beyond the assigned course reading. All sources must be serious pieces of historical scholarship (if in question, check with me). All "due dates" (see below), barring certified medical emergencies or family sickness, are to be taken seriously; late papers will be marked down at the discretion of the instructor.

Class Discussion. The readings are keyed to syllabus topics. You should have the readings completed before the day a particular topic is scheduled to be addressed in class; this is especially important for days designated for a discussion of particular readings (indicated by a "D"). Your discussion grade will be determined by the frequency and quality of your contribution to class discussion.

Grades. The following elements will determine the final grade:

mid-term exam--30%

second exam--30%

paper--30%

discussion grade--10%

Undergraduate Grading Scale. The undergraduate grading scale cut-off are as follows:

A+	97	C	73
A	93	C-	70
A-	90	D+	67
B+	87	D	63
B	83	D-	60
B-	80	F	59
C+	77		

Graduate Grading Scale. The graduate grading scale is the same as the undergraduate scale with two exceptions: first, “A” is the highest possible grade; second, “C” is the lowest possible passing grade (anything below a “C” is recorded as an “F”).

Plagiarism and the Academic Honor Code. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense that occurs when someone uses the words or ideas of someone else without giving that person credit in a formal citation. Punishment for violations are outlined in the Academic Integrity Policy. For an explanation see the UNCG website under “Academic Integrity Policy.”

CLASS SCHEDULE OF READING ASSIGNMENTS:

*=books to be purchased

ER=reading on electronic reserve and can be downloaded from Blackboard

(D)=discussion day; be prepared

PART I: THE ENLIGHTENMENT

8/23: Introduction

8/25: The Enlightenment Worldview I

Reading: Kant and D’Alembert, “The Enlightenment Spirit” ER

8/30: The Enlightenment Worldview II

Reading: Gay, “Recovery of Nerve” (part A) ER

9/1: The “Liberal” Enlightenment (D)

Reading: Gay, “The Recovery of Nerve” (part B) ER

9/6: Foucault’s Enlightenment (D)

Reading: Michel Foucault, “Discipline and Punish,” ER; Robert Darnton, “The

Case for the Enlightenment” ER

PART II: FROM ENLIGHTENMENT TO REVOLUTION

9/8: The Ancien Régime I

Reading: McPhee, “France in the 1780s” ER

9/13: The Ancien Régime II

Reading: Outram, *The Enlightenment*, chaps. 1-4*

9/15: The Enlightenment in Recent Scholarship (D)

Reading: Outram, *The Enlightenment*, 5-8*

9/20: Enlightened Political Thought: Locke, Voltaire, and Montesquieu

Reading: Kramnick, “Politics and the State” ER

9/22: Enlightened Political Thought: Rousseau

Reading: Kramnick, “Discourse on the Origin of Equality” & “Social Contract” ER

9/27: The Darnton Thesis (D)

Reading: Darnton, “The High Enlightenment and the Low-Life of Literature in Pre-Revolutionary France” ER

9/29: Habermas and the “Public Sphere” (D)

Reading: Chartier, “Cultural Origins of the French Revolution” ER

10/4: Mid-term Exam (bring blue book)

PART III: THE REVOLUTION

10/6: The Collapse of the Old Regime

Reading: Jeremy Popkin, *Short History of the French Revolution*, chaps. 1-2*

10/11: Fall Break

10/13: The Liberal Revolution, 1789-1791

Reading: Popkin, *Short History of the French Revolution*, chap. 3*

10/18: The Collapse of the Liberal Regime, 1791-1792

Reading: Popkin, *Short History of the French Revolution*, chap. 4*

10/20: The Radical Republic, 1792-1794

Reading: Popkin, *Short History of the French Revolution*, chap. 5*

Due: Prospectus for Semester Paper

10/25: Robespierre, the Terror, and After

Reading: Popkin, *Short History of the French Revolution*, chap. 6*

10/27: The Napoleonic Aftermath

Reading: *Popkin, *Short History of the French Revolution*, chaps. 7-9*

PART IV: INTERPRETING THE REVOLUTION

11/1: Sister Revolutions? The French and American Revolutions

Reading: Susan Dunn, "Sister Revolutions" ER

11/3: Marxist Orthodoxy

Reading: Albert Soboul, "The French Revolution in the History of the Contemporary World" ER

11/8: The Revisionist Wave I: The Offensive of the Social Historians (D)

Reading: Colin Lucas, "Nobles, Bourgeois, and the Origins of the Revolution," ER

11/10: The Revisionist Wave II: The Offensive of the Cultural Historians (D)

Reading: François Furet, "Interpreting the French Revolution," ER

11/15: Debating Furet (D)

Reading: Darnton, "Diffusion vs. Discourse" ER & Tackett, "The Constituent Assembly and the Terror" ER

11/17: The "New" Cultural History

Reading: Hunt, "The Rhetoric of Revolution" & "Symbolic Forms of Political Practice" ER

11/22: The Revolution in Images: Side Show

Due: Semester Paper

11/24: Thanksgiving

12/29: The Revolution at 200

Reading: none

12/1: Second Exam (bring blue book)