

## THE FRENCH REVOLUTION & NAPOLEON: 1789-1815

In the 1950s, the Chinese Premier Zhou En-Lai was asked what he thought about the French revolution of 1789. He answered that it was “too soon to tell.” Historians, social scientists, and politicians have studied and debated this extraordinary event for two centuries, and they still have not answered the many questions it poses. Why does a regime collapse? How is a new state built? Are revolutions *necessarily* protracted and violent? Writers and artists, too, have been captivated by the human drama of this tumultuous decade and a half. How did ordinary people survive? How were extraordinary careers made – and lost?

In this course we’ll use the French revolution to think about all these questions concretely. We have three aims. The first is to help you master the major events of the revolution itself. The second is to introduce issues of interpretation and historical methods, since the French revolution has long been a forcing ground for new theories of history and new approaches to the past. The required readings represent some of those approaches. Third, we hope you will learn how the revolution has become one of the defining points of modern history, how it has shaped the world we inhabit today, and how it compares with other revolutions, including ones going on right now.

Judith G. Coffin  
TA: Laurie Wood

Students enrolled in the course, see the full syllabus on Blackboard. This is abridged.

The following books are **REQUIRED reading**:

- William Doyle, *The French Revolution: A Very Short Introduction*
- Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*
- David Bell, *The First Total War*
- Timothy Tackett, *When the King Took Flight*
- *The French Revolution and Human Rights: A Brief Documentary History*, Lynn Hunt, ed.

**Additional required reading** will be on Blackboard. (Marked with an asterix \*) I will also send you to the excellent website: “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity:” (LEF) <http://chnm.gmu.edu/revolution>. Required documents are noted on the syllabus.

Optional reading:

For the Napoleon followers among you, I have ordered Englund, *Napoleon: A Political Life* (analytic and appreciative) and Schom, *Napoleon Bonaparte* (narrative and critical). If you would like more detail on the revolution, I recommend Simon Schama’s *Citizens*. I have ordered a few copies of Tolstoy’s *War and Peace* (the Peaver and Volokhonsky translation) in case a few of you would like to organize a W&P reading group.

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

\*\*→This is not an introductory course. You may enjoy it more if you have some background in History. The reading is difficult and we expect you to do it. You will need to learn names and dates. History is the discipline of what actually happened, and you need facts to discuss the broad and interesting issues, such

as violence, terror, the problems of forging a state and nation, or what the revolutionaries meant by “democracy.”

\*\* → Learning the basic material will be more difficult if you skip lectures. I don't post the powerpoints, since I often adjust a lecture to questions and interests. If you miss a class, get the notes from a fellow student, and do the reading with those notes in mind. Missing more than 2 classes may jeopardize your performance in the class.

We expect you to keep up with the reading, which is marked on the syllabus, and to be prepared to discuss it. We will have small and large group discussions, and we expect respectful, informed, and intelligent participation in those discussions. We will also have informal writing assignments in class. Those cannot be made up if you miss class.

I adjust the schedule over the course of the semester, partly in response to student requests. I *assume* you are present, paying attention to announcements, consulting with fellow students, and checking \*\*your Blackboard email.\*\* → **Keep track of changes in assignments, lectures, and discussions.**

**Your grade in the course will be based on:**

- 3 4-page take home papers (25% each) due Oct 1, Nov 21, and at the time of the final;
- mid-term test (20%); and
- various in-class assignments and participation (5%).

→ Historians care about writing. It is impossible to separate form from content, and both count in your grade. Check your grammar, sentence structure, and word usage. Go to the writing center. Have someone read and comment on your paper. Give yourself time to revise.

We evaluate the paper's argument, clarity, and thoroughness, how well you have synthesized the material in lectures, and how well you have understood the reading.

All papers and take-home exams must be double spaced, with 12 point font, and standard margins. Number the pages and put your name on each page. Hand them in; do not email. Back up your work and save copies.

**Graduate students** taking the course (even for undergraduate credit) will have additional readings and different requirements. Please see me.

I use plus and minus grading.

**SOME POLICIES:**

- 1) NO LAPTOPS, CELL PHONES, OR TEXTING in the classroom.
- 2) Check in at the beginning of class. PLEASE DO NOT disrupt class by talking, wandering in late, or leaving early. If for some reason you have to leave class early, let me know beforehand.
- 3) All the assignments are required, even if you are taking the course pass-fail.
- 4) It is easy to buy papers on the Web and to copy from websites. You will get a 0 for the assignment, from which it is hard to recover.
- 5) All federal, state, and university laws apply. These are spelled out at the end of the syllabus.

**SCHEDULE OF LECTURES, READINGS, AND ASSIGNMENTS**

**PART I: THE OLD REGIME**

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Absolutism**
- 3. The Enlightenment: different interpretations**
- 4. The Social Contract**
- 5. 1787-1789: The Making of a Crisis 1789**

**PART II: REGIME CHANGE**

- 6. 1790: Who would get the Rights of Man?** → MON OCT 1: paper #1 due
- 7. 1791: The King and the Popular movement**
- 8. 1792: The Second French revolution**
- 9. 1792-3: The King's trial and Midterm exam**

→ WED OCT 24: MID TERM TEST

- 10. 1792-4: Terror and Counter Revolution**

**PART III:  
NAPOLEON'S EMPIRE AND THE REVOLUTION ON THE WORLD STAGE**

- 11. 1794-1802: Robespierre to Buonaparte, and then to 'Napoleon'**
- 12. Black Jacobins: Empire and Revolution in the Caribbean (1792-1804)**

### **13. Napoleon's Superstate: Its Rise (1803-7) and Fall (1808-1812)**

→ WED NOV 21: Paper 2 due

### **THANKSGIVING BREAK**

### **14. War and Peace (1812-1815)**

### **15. The Revolution and its Legacies**

### **FINAL TAKE HOME DUE ON DATE OF FINAL EXAM**

(the University Schedule is posted by the middle of the semester at <http://utdirect.utexas.edu/rgexam/getyys.WBX>)

### **THE LEGAL MATTERS**

#### **Academic Integrity**

#### **University of Texas Honor Code**

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community. Each student in this course is expected to abide by the University of Texas Honor Code. Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the student's own work.

You are encouraged to study together and to discuss information and concepts covered in lecture and the sections with other students. Cooperating should never involve one student having possession of a copy of all or part of work done by someone else, in the form of an e mail, an e mail attachment file, a diskette, or a hard copy.

Should copying occur, both the student who copied work from another student and the student who gave material to be copied will both automatically receive a zero for the assignment. Penalty for violation of this Code can also be extended to include failure of the course and University disciplinary action.

#### **Use of E-mail for Official Correspondence to Students**

All students should become familiar with the University's official e-mail student notification policy. It is the student's responsibility to keep the University informed as to changes in his or her e-mail address. Students are expected to check e-mail on a frequent and regular basis in order to stay current with University-related communications, recognizing that certain communications may be time-critical. It is recommended that e-mail be checked daily, but at a minimum, twice per week. The complete text of this policy and instructions for updating your e-mail address are available at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.html>.

#### **Documented Disability Statement**

Any student with a documented disability who requires academic accommodations should contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at (512) 471-6259 (voice) or 1-866-329-3986 (video phone). Faculty are not required to provide accommodations without an official accommodation letter from SSD.

- Please notify me as early in the semester as possible if disability-related accommodations for assignments are required.
- Contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 1-866-329-3986 (video phone) or reference SSD's website for more disability-related information: [http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/for\\_cstudents.php](http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/for_cstudents.php)

#### **Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL)**

If you are worried about someone who is acting differently, you may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone your concerns about another individual's behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal>.

#### **Q drop Policy**

The State of Texas has enacted a law that limits the number of course drops for academic reasons to six (6). As stated in Senate Bill 1231:

“Beginning with the fall 2007 academic term, an institution of higher education may not permit an undergraduate student a total of more than six dropped courses, including any course a transfer student has dropped at another institution of higher education, unless the student shows good cause for dropping more than that number.”