

HIST 405  
French Revolution and Napoleon



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Student hours: MWF 1:30-2:30 PM, and by appointment

Spring 2021

This course intends to acquaint students with some of the major events of the French Revolution and Napoleonic era (roughly 1789 to 1815), focusing on particular ways that revolution and war changed France and influenced the world. Topics we will address include the following: the Old Regime and the origins of revolution; widening political participation of the masses and the meanings of citizenship; the challenges of reconciling absolutism and liberalism; extending rights to Jews, blacks, and (not) women; the Terror and varieties of revolutionary violence; slave revolts and emancipation in the Caribbean; Napoleon as a revolutionary figure; twenty years of warfare under the Revolution and Napoleon; experiences of soldiers and civilians; the “New Regime” of Napoleon.

Additional goals are to cultivate and improve students’ analytical, oral communication, and writing skills through class discussion, informal writing exercises, formal essays using assigned primary and secondary sources, and a game in which students assume roles of figures and factions from 1791. In the game the winners are those who deploy historical understanding most persuasively.

**Learning outcomes.** At the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Explain causes, developments, and consequences of the French Revolution and Napoleonic era in France, Europe, and beyond
- Read, understand, and evaluate primary source documents and secondary historical scholarship
- Write a persuasive interpretation with a thesis, content, and supporting evidence from primary source documents and secondary scholarship
- Work with a team to strategize and win adherents to a position based on mastery of historical figures and conditions

- Formulate positions regarding citizenship and sovereignty in a democracy based on foundational eighteenth-century texts

Texts that students must obtain:

- Jeremy D. Popkin, *A Short History of the French Revolution* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.)  
 Philip G. Dwyer and Peter McPhee, eds., *The French Revolution and Napoleon: A Sourcebook* [abbreviated as DM]  
 Jennifer Popiel, Mark C. Carnes, and Gary Kates, *Rousseau, Burke, and Revolution in France, 1791* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) [abbreviated as RTTP]  
 Rafe Blaufarb and Claudia Liebeskind, *Napoleonic Foot Soldiers and Civilians* [abbreviated as BL]

Required reading includes some articles and documents available online or on Brightspace.

Requirements:

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| Short formal papers (4) based on assigned readings (15% each)   | 60% |
| Participation in class discussion (in person or on Brightspace) | 20% |
| Reacting to the Past (speeches/questions, quiz, newspapers)     | 20% |

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| W Jan 20 | Introduction to the course and overview of topics  |  |
| F Jan 22 | Absolutist monarchy and its problems   | Popkin, ch. 1  |
| M Jan 25 | What did French people want?<br>through “From Failed Reforms to Revolutionary Crisis)<br>Siyès and <i>Cahiers de doléances</i>             | Popkin, pp. 24-29 (ch. 2<br>DM, pp. 3-15 (from Siyès, “What is Third Estate?” through “Cahiers de doléances, Parisian Flower Sellers”) |
| W Jan 27 | 1789 – a revolutionary year<br><br>Urban and rural activism<br>(“Tennis Court Oath,” “Storming of Bastille,” “Arthur Young,” “Great Fear”) | Popkin, pp. 29-41 (remainder of ch. 2)<br><br>DM, pp. 16-19, 21-23   |
| F Jan 29 | The end of the Old Regime<br>(“March of Parisian Market Women”)<br>Decrees on feudalism, Declaration of Rights, March on Versailles        | DM, pp. 24-30 (ch. 3 through   |
| M Feb 1  | Constitution, inclusions and exclusions<br>Claims from Jews, blacks, and women<br>(“Constitution of 1791” and ch. 4)                       | Popkin, ch. 3<br>DM, 57-59, 35-42 (ch. 6   |
| W Feb 3  | Film: <i>The French Revolution</i><br>*paper due: did the Revolution transform people’s lives?   |  |

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| F Feb 5  | Setup session 1<br>Discuss Montesquieu, Young, Voltaire, Rousseau   | RTTP, 19-43, 87-107, ch. 3  |
| M Feb 8  | Setup session 2<br>Starting a revolution<br>Discuss Sieyès, Young, decrees  | RTTP, 43-47, 108-120, ch. 3<br>roles of Louis XVI, Lafayette                  |
| W Feb 10 | Setup session 3<br>Rousseau and Burke<br>Meet with factions   | Rousseau, on Brightspace<br>RTTP, 145-167, 120-123<br>other roles             |
| F Feb 12 | Setup session 4<br>Preparing for National Assembly<br>*Quiz (on Brightspace)  | Role sheet on Brightspace<br>RTTP, chs. 3 and 4, 123-125<br>GM news service 1 |
| M Feb 15 | Game session 1<br>Catholic Church, President's agenda<br>Vol. 1 factional newspapers due  | RTTP, 117-120, 125-6, 128-36  |
| W Feb 17 | Reading Day – no class  |   |
| F Feb 19 | Game session 2<br>President's agenda<br>Other papers due  | RTTP, 128, 136-145<br>GM news service 2                                       |
| M Feb 22 | Game session 3<br>President's agenda<br>Vol. 2 factional newspapers due   |   |
| W Feb 24 | Game session 4<br>President's agenda<br>Other papers due  | RTTP, 126-7, 120-123<br>GM news service 3                                     |
| F Feb 26 | Game session 5<br>President's agenda<br>Vol.3 factional newspapers due  | Review Burke and Rousseau   |
| M Mar 1  | Game session 6<br>Other papers due<br>Who wins the game?  | Handout on Brightspace  |
| W Mar 3  | Postmortem discussion<br>Analyze game and history<br>Rousseau versus Burke<br>Violence – necessary? Justified?<br>Contested meanings of citizenship | Handout; Popkin, ch. 4  |

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| F Mar 5  | Women, family, gender  | Desan on Brightspace  |
| M Mar 8  | War and the end of monarchy                                  | Popkin, ch. 5 through “Mounting Tensions”   |
| W Mar 10 | King versus country  | DM, 51-55, 68-79  |
| F Mar 12 | Revolution in the colonies                                   | Popkin, ch. 6 “the Directory, Europe, and the colonies”   |
|          | Sex, race, and war on St. Domingue                           | Sansay, on Brightspace  |
| M Mar 15 | Republic and radicalization                                  | Popkin, ch. 5 “Victory of Montagnards” through “Dictatorship of the Committee of Public Safety” |
|          | Constitution of 1793   | DM, 93-96   |
| W Mar 17 | Terror at work   | DM, 103-113   |
| F Mar 19 | Film: <i>Danton</i>  | Popkin, remainder of ch. 5  |
| M Mar 22 | Film: <i>Danton</i>  |   |
|          | *Paper due – did French Revolution transform people’s lives? |   |
| W Mar 24 | Ending Terror, revenge, and stabilization                    | Popkin, ch. 6   |
| F Mar 26 | Film: <i>Napoleon</i>  |   |
| M Mar 29 | Napoleon’s early military career                             | DM, 128-139   |
| W Mar 31 | Consulate 1799-1804  | Popkin, ch. 7   |
| F Apr 2  | Napoleon – revolutionary or not?                             | DM, 141-2, 149-154, 155-156   |
|          | Decree Limiting Press, Concordat, Empire, Civil Code         |   |
| M Apr 5  | Continental Blockade and Empire                              | DM, 160-168   |
|          | the Empire”  | Popkin, ch. 8 through “Culture under  |
| W Apr 7  | Total war?   | BL, 1-22  |
| F Apr 9  | Accounts from the French army                                | BL, 25-29, 54-58  |
|          | Historical analysis of military values                       | Martin, on Brightspace  |
| M Apr 12 | A soldier in the Russian campaign                            | BL, 76-101  |
| W Apr 14 | A British soldier’s experience                               | BL, 30-54   |

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| F Apr 16 | Decline of the empire  | Popkin, remainder of ch. 8, DM 169-186 |
| M Apr 19 | Film: <i>Waterloo</i> (clips)<br>*Paper due on soldiers in Napoleonic Wars |  |
| W Apr 21 | Civilians in war   | BL, 101-147                            |
| F Apr 23 | Historical analysis of war and gender                                      | Hagemann, on Brightspace               |
| M Apr 26 | Film: <i>Waterloo</i> (clips)  |  |
| W Apr 28 | Film: <i>Waterloo</i> (clips) and discussion                               | Jordan, Brightspace                    |
| F Apr 30 | Memories of revolution and war   | Popkin, ch. 9<br>DM, 202-208           |
| M May 3  | *Paper due on civilians in revolution and war                              |  |

### **Notes and instructions for Reacting to the Past (RTTP) Feb 5 – Mar 3**

This reacting to the past game of the French Revolution in 1791 allows students to enter the mindset of historical actors through primary source documents from the eighteenth century. Individually and as part of teams or factions, students win the game by deploying these historical positions effectively. So, embrace your historical identity!

The learning outcomes are familiarity with foundational texts and controversies surrounding the meanings of citizenship and the workings of democracy. By assuming the roles of historical actors, students engage in a student-centered learning process, in contrast to listening to lectures.

The textbook *Rousseau, Burke, and Revolution in France, 1791* (RTTP) is the indispensable foundation for the historical roles students will assume in the form of a competitive game. Handouts (on Brightspace) will also provide necessary information about each student's historical figure and specific assignments. The game will work only if individuals come to class prepared, and factions do their parts fully to argue their positions.

Some class time will be devoted to discussions and consultations so that factions can strategize and discuss their arguments and positions for papers and speeches. Additionally, students should be prepared for meetings with their faction and with the Game Master outside of class (via Zoom or other online platforms).

Grading will be based on the following elements: **speaking, participating, and writing.**

All students must complete the quiz which will help prepare them for the speaking and writing components. The quiz is worth 5% of the final course grade.

Each student must give at least one formal speech from the National Assembly podium. Students may read from notes, but not read a speech verbatim. Effective speeches occur when the speaker makes eye contact with the audience, grabs the attention of the audience, modulates the voice and uses body language for dramatic effect. Speeches must reflect a good understanding of the primary source documents and of the historical character making the speech. Students will also make informal speeches, ask questions, even heckle other speakers; more speeches improve the likelihood of a good grade.

Most students must work together with a faction to present the group's case in National Assembly debates and in newspapers. Class attendance, meetings with faction members, contributions to the faction's success, and wearing symbolic articles (for example, a red Phrygian cap, white cockade, or red, white, and blue cockade) to signal factional allegiance are part of this grade. This is worth 5%.

Each student must write 3 short papers, 400-450 words minimum, conveying the historical character's views on different aspects of the French Revolution and the debates occurring in the National Assembly based on primary documents and other sources. For most, the papers will be incorporated in the faction newspapers, but some will write independent papers and submit them to the Game Master or to a faction newspaper. This is worth 10%.

### **Some course policies and suggestions for doing well**

This syllabus may change for the convenience and wellbeing of students as the semester progresses. Any such changes to the syllabus will be minor (for example, rearranging assigned readings or activities), and announced in class and on Brightspace. All required texts will be used in class, so please be sure to obtain all texts.

Students should check Brightspace and their Purdue email accounts regularly.

Active engagement in class is essential if a student wishes to do well. I adhere to Purdue policies regarding COVID-19, bereavement absences, and military absences. Students who contract COVID or who are quarantined are expected to keep up or catch up through viewing Boilercasts and posting responses on Brightspace; we will work out accommodations for missed assignments. Students who are unable to attend a class for any reason must notify me as soon as possible. Since this course is designed for in-person learning, students who anticipate frequent absences should consider taking a different course.

Communication is always important, especially during this pandemic. Students should feel free to contact me at any time.

Students should complete **all** assigned readings **before** the appropriate class meeting, and be prepared to discuss them or play the reacting to the past game on designated days. Be sure to bring to class the textbook or reading under discussion on a given day. If necessary, Brightspace postings may be required at any time to ensure that students are engaged in the class.

Students will write a total of four (4) short (4-5 pages), formal essays, in addition to three (3) news articles as part of the Reacting to the Past game. Papers are due on the dates indicated on the syllabus and on Brightspace; therefore, students should manage

their time accordingly. Good writing is a valuable skill for students in any major and aspiring to any career. It also requires a lot of time and effort. I encourage students to discuss their papers with me at any time in the writing process, and to take advantage of the services of the Writing Lab: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>. Rewrites are an option, provided that students confer with me regarding ways to improve writing.

Students must fulfill all written and participation requirements in order to be eligible to pass the course.

### Grading Scale

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| A+ | 97 - 100 |
| A  | 94 - 96  |
| A- | 90 - 93  |
| B+ | 87 - 89  |
| B  | 84 - 86  |
| B- | 80 - 83  |
| C+ | 77 - 79  |
| C  | 74 - 76  |
| C- | 70 - 73  |
| D+ | 67 - 69  |
| D  | 64 - 66  |
| D- | 60 - 63  |

I support and expect students to adhere to the Honor Pledge as written by Purdue students: “As a boilermaker pursuing academic excellence, I pledge to be honest and true in all that I do. Accountable together - we are Purdue.” Plagiarism or any other form of academic dishonesty will result automatically in an F for the course, at a minimum. More severe penalties may be sought. For more information on academic integrity, see: <http://www.purdue.edu/odos/osrr/academic-integrity/index.html>

Please be aware of the following resources available to students (also listed on Brightspace):

**If you find yourself beginning to feel some stress, anxiety and/or feeling slightly overwhelmed, try WellTrack, <https://purdue.welltrack.com/>.** Sign in and find information and tools at your fingertips, available to you at any time.

**If you need support and information about options and resources,** please see the Office of the Dean of Students, <http://www.purdue.edu/odos>.

**If you're struggling and need mental health services:** Purdue University is committed to advancing the mental health and well-being of its students. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of mental health support, services are available. For help, such individuals should contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at (765)494-6995 and <http://www.purdue.edu/caps/> during and after hours, on weekends and holidays, or by going to the CAPS office of the second floor of the Purdue University Student Health Center (PUSH) during business hours.

**Disclaimer:** In the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines, and grading policies are subject to changes that may be required by a revised semester calendar or other circumstances. For more information on Purdue's Emergency Notification System, see [https://www.purdue.edu/ehps/emergency\\_preparedness/](https://www.purdue.edu/ehps/emergency_preparedness/)

