Let us be terrible, to dispense the people from the need to be terrible themselves.

– Georges Danton, 1793

Chateau de Vaux le Vicomte

ABSTRACT/DESCRIPTION

This semester-long course is designed for upper-level history and humanities majors. It provides an overview of important elements, trends and developments in the political, social, economic, cultural, religious, and colonial history of France from the early seventeenth century through the French Revolution. These will be covered through a combination of lectures, in-class discussions, secondary readings, brief film clips, musical samples, and selected primary sources. Class meets once a week for 2.5 hours. No prior course-work in French history is required. Prior completion of Western Civilization is recommended.

I. STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will explore and think critically about the following themes and topics:
The consolidation of royal power; the geography and economy of early-modern France; the structure of social order; religious conflicts and philosophical debates; the nature patronage and royal administration; the function of the royal court at Versailles; the geo-political reasons for French overseas explorations and colonial ventures; daily life in Paris on the eve of the French Revolution; and the origins and course of the French Revolution.

II. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will learn to:

1. Identify contemporary political and social structures;
2. Identify the contours of the daily lives of the different social groups;
3. Identify the institutional arrangements that accompanied the rise and fall of absolute monarchy;
4. Appreciate the importance of French religious issues;
5. Recognize French contributions to European cultural history;
6. Demonstrate the ability to understand the key concepts of Enlightenment thought;
7. Use key vocabulary and concepts;
8. Identify and evaluate the nature of French colonial ventures;
9. Evaluate the severity of threats mounted by popular and elite revolts; and
10. Evaluate the long, medium and short-term causes of the French Revolution.

III. REQUIREMENTS

ASSIGNMENTS

- Weekly 2-page dialogic response essays in which students identify key passages, paraphrase them in their own words, and explain their significance or in-class quiz essays (for 40% of the final grade);
- An annotated research bibliography and prospectus (for 5% of the final grade);
- One 8 to 10-page research essay (for 35% of the final grade);
- A final examination (for the remaining 20% of the final grade).

The annotated bibliography for final paper will be due in the 12th week. Final essay topics will be handed out before the final exam. Research paper topics must be negotiated in advance with the professor.

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

To excel in this course, you should expect to do the following:

1. Study and prepare approximately 10 hours per week outside of class;
2. Carefully read approximately 100-120 pages per week outside of class;
3. Make school your first priority and attend class regularly;
4. Attend class and turn in all assigned work on time (see section on late work penalties);
5. Be prepared to write about 50+ typed pages, including a major research essay.
ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Students should arrive to class on time and remain for the entire class period. Polite and constructive participation is expected during class discussions. I adhere to the University Policy outlined in the current University Catalog. In the Catalog, it says that if you miss 25% of your classes without legitimate excuse, you may receive an ‘F’. Classroom Demeanor that contributes to a negative educational environment is unacceptable. I expect each student to adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty.

GRADING

A = 92-100; B+= 87-91; B = 82-86; C+= 77-81; C = 70-76; D+= 68-69; D = 60-67; F = 0-59; FX = failure as a result of academic dishonesty. The FX grade is treated as an F in the grade point average computation. With regard to Repetition of Course Work, courses that receive an FX grade are not eligible to be repeated under the university’s “Repeat Forgiveness” option, and instead may only be repeated via the “Standard Repeat” option. When assigned, the FX grade will become a part of the student’s internal academic record and will appear on unofficial transcripts and within the student information system. The FX grade will not appear on the student’s official transcript.

ESSAY GRADING

A= This paper is insightful. It addresses the assignment in a way that indicates your comprehension of and control over the assignment itself as well as an understanding of the underlying issues. The message is communicated clearly, concisely, and directly. There is confidence in this writing.

B= This paper meets and, at times, exceeds the basic requirements of the assignment. The paper indicates that you are beginning, at times, to think through and deal with major ideas in the assignment. The message is communicated with generally effective clarity, directness, and conciseness. Some unevenness in writing may be apparent.

C= While the paper offers little insight into the greater issues of the assignment, it meets the basic requirements. The message, for the most part, is reasonably clear, concise, and direct, although there may be unevenness in the writing.

D= The basic requirements of the assignment are partially met; however, additional revision is necessary if you are to communicate the message clearly. There is considerable unevenness in the writing.

F= The assignment’s basic requirements are met only marginally or are not met at all. The writing is neither clear, concise, or direct.

The University policy on Plagiarism is in effect. Plagiarism is the use of another’s work and the presentation of it as one’s own. Plagiarism is a serious violation of the ethics of scholarship and undermines the credibility of academic inquiry. Plagiarism takes many forms. The clearest abuse is the use of another’s language or written work without quotation marks and citation (even if it is in one’s own words). Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to: any limited borrowing, without attribution, of another person’s research findings, hypotheses, data, theories, rhetorical strategies, interpretations; the submission of laboratory reports, research papers, computer programs, etc., not authored by the
student; and the submission of material copied from any published source without attribution (including the Internet). More subtle abuses include the appropriation of concepts, data, or notes all disguised in newly crafted sentences, or reference to a borrowed work in an early note and then extensive further use without attribution. Note that the resubmission of a student’s previously submitted laboratory reports, research papers, computer programs, etc., without the instructor’s approval constitutes cheating.

STUDENT CONSULTATIONS

You are welcome to call me or stop by my office at any time. The best time to meet me is after class and during my scheduled office hours. If these times are inconvenient, I would be happy to meet with you at a more agreeable time. You may contact me by phone, by email, by skyping, or by leaving a note for me in my faculty mailbox.

LATE WORK

Assignments will lose one letter grade per class after the original deadline. This will also apply to papers returned for not properly following the formatting instructions. Remember to put your name, course number, and section number on your work.

MAKE-UPS

Students must take all exams and hand in all assignments at the specified times and places. If this is impossible due to extraordinary circumstances, inform me before class and alternative arrangements may be possible (extraordinary circumstances include documented illness, death in the family, or institutional activities as approved by the academic deans (such as playing sports, marching in a school band).

IV. REQUIRED READINGS


READINGS IN COURSE PACKET


INTERNET RESOURCES

CITATION GUIDE

16. Humboldt State University, Department of History Citation Guide http://www.humboldt.edu/history/citationguide.htm.

V. SCHEDULE OF CLASS MEETINGS AND READINGS

WEEK 1: THE HUMAN GEOGRAPHY OF FRANCE

- **Lecture:** France, the Oldest Nation in Europe
- **Read and Discuss:** Muchembled, “A World of Insecurity and Fears”
- **Film Clip:** Patrice Chéreau’s “Queen Margot” (1994) - on the court of Charles IX.

WEEK 2: THE ECONOMY AND CULTURE OF EARLY-MODERN FRANCE

- **Lecture:** The material conditions of daily life and the art of George de La Tour.
- **Film Clips:** Daniel Vigne’s “The Return of Martin Guerre” (1982) – on village customs and rural household arrangements
- **Musical Interlude:** “The Banquet of Veal” (1454)
- **Read and Discuss:** Doyle, “Economy” and Farr, “The Menu People.”

WEEK 3: ANCIEN RÉGIME SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

- **Lecture:** A Society of Orders and Corporations
- **Musical Interlude:** Jean-Féry Rebel, “The Dance Characters” (1734)
- **Paris Map:** <http://www.davidrumsey.com/view/google-earth-browser#paris-1716>
- **Film Clip:** Laurent Tirard’s “Molière” (2007) - on Monsieur Jourdain’s social ambitions

WEEK 4: RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS AND PHILOSOPHICAL DEBATE

- **Lecture:** Religious Wars and Political Truces
- **Film Clip:** Patrice Chéreau’s “Queen Margot” (1994) – on religious violence
- **Musical Interlude:** François Couperin, “Divertissements” (1660s)
WEEK 5: POLITICS, PATRONAGE AND THE CONSOLIDATION OF ROYAL POWER

- **Lecture:** Careers in Royal Administration
- **Film Clip:** Gérard Corbiau’s “The King is Dancing” (2000) – Louis in a masque
- **Musical Interlude:** Jean-Baptiste Lully, *Les Divertissements: Isis* (1677)

WEEK 6: THE ROYAL COURT AT VERSAILLES

- **Lecture:** The Court as Paradigmatic Institution
- **Musical Interlude:** Marin Marais, “Tombeau pour Sainte Colombe” (1701)
- **Film Clip:** Roland Joffé’s “Vatel” (2000) – on provisioning feasts and organizing entertainments
- **View:** “Virtual Tour of Versailles”
- **Read and Discuss:** Doyle, “Politics: Louis XIV,” and Spawforth, *Versailles*, pp. 44-144.

WEEK 8: COLONIAL VENTURES AND OVERSEAS EXPLORATIONS

- **Lecture:** From Fishermen’s to Traders’ Empire
- **Film Clips:** Milos Forman’s “Valmont” (1989) - riding and fencing sequences
- **Musical Interlude:** Marin Marais, “Suite in D” (1686)

WEEK 9: FRENCH STYLE AND CULTURE UNDER LOUIS XV

- **Lecture:** Nature and Culture in the Age of Rococo
- **Film Clips:** Stephen Frears’ “Dangerous Liaisons” (1988) – on libertinism and Patrice Leconte’s “Ridicule” (1996) – on wit, court, and nature
- **View:** The Fragonard and Boucher rooms at the Frick museum in NYC.

WEEK 10: VERSAILLES UNDER LOUIS XVI AND SINCE

- **Lecture:** Versailles under Siege and as National Museum
- **Film Clip:** J-C Guillosson, “Versailles, the Visit” (n.d.)
- **View:** “Versailles Art Project by Google”
- **Read and Discuss:** Doyle, “Politics: Louis XVI” and Spawforth, *Versailles*, pp. 218-241.

WEEK 11: DAILY LIFE IN PARIS ON THE EVE OF REVOLUTION

- **Lecture:** The Importance of Locality and Community
- **Musical Offering:** J.-J. Rousseau’s Symphony, *Le Devin du village* (1752)
• **Mapping Change (1705 and 1797).**

• **Read and Discuss:** Farge, “At the Workshop Door,” and Darnton, “Mesmerism,” and Mercier, *Panorama of Paris*, pp. 16-33, 58-61, 74-79, and 148-153

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**WEEK 12: THE ORIGINS OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION**

Annotated bibliography due this week

• **Lecture:** The Causes and Triggers of the French Revolution

• **Read and Discuss:** Neely, *French Revolution*, chs. 1-3 and Emmanuel Sieyes, “What is the Third Estate?” (1789)

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**WEEK 13: THE LIBERAL FRENCH REVOLUTION**

• **Lecture:** Liberals, Royalists, and a King without a Party

• **Film Clip:** Andrzej Wajda’s “Danton” (1983) – final courtroom speech

• **Read:** Neely, *French Revolution*, chs. 4-6, the “Declaration of the Rights of Man” (1789)

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**WEEK 14: THE RADICAL FRENCH REVOLUTION**

• **Lecture:** Radicalism and Violence in the French Revolution

• **Film Clips:** “The French Revolution” (History Channel, 2005) – on Marat and Robespierre

• **Read:** “The Brunswick Manifesto,” Olympe De Gouges’ “Declaration of the Rights of Women” (1791), and Neely, *French Revolution*, chs. 7-9

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**WEEK 15: REACTIONS TO REVOLUTION**

• **Lecture:** Napoleon, Haiti, and the Revolution’s Legacy

• **Film Clip:** Abel Gance’s “Napoleon” (1927) – on revolutionary mythology

• **Read:** Vovelle, “The Woman” and Spawforth, *Versailles*, pp. 242-254.

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**FINAL EXAMINATION: AS SCHEDULED**

• **Final Research Essay:** Due on the last day of exams week