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HSTR 352.01: French Revolution 1789-1848

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FRENCH REVOLUTION

Required Reading

Wright, *France in Modern Times*

Tocqueville, *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*

Palmer, *Twelve Who Ruled*

Rowe, "Civilians and Warfare during the French Revolutionary Wars." (reserve)

Holtman, *The Napoleonic Revolution*

Walter, *Diary of a Napoleonic Soldier*

Supplementary readings are available at the reserve desk at the Mansfield Library.

Exams

This class is only offered for a traditional grade.

Midterm (tentative date June 8) will cover Wright pp. 3-56, Tocqueville, Rowe, Palmer, and readings on reserve.

Final will cover Wright, pp. 57-122, Holtman, and Walter, and readings on reserve.

Papers are due June 13 at the beginning of the class hour. No electronic submissions will be accepted. LATE PAPERS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

Length: 5-7 pages double spaced.

Style: Chicago Manual of Style, Footnotes.

All papers should be submitted with the usual scholarly apparatus, that is, title page, footnotes, and bibliography.

Plagiarism (see the Student Conduct Code) means not just failure of the specific assignment but failure in the class.

Failure to complete a requirement can mean failure in the class.

Students with disabilities will receive reasonable modifications in this course. Please contact Disability Services for Students to provide verification of the disability and its impact and then present this documentation to me with your accommodation request (forms available from DSS) at least 48 hours in advance of any requested accommodation.

Topics

ABSOLUTISM AND DESPOTISM IN EARLY MODERN FRANCE

“A despot, be he the best of men, commits a crime by governing according to his own sweet will. He is a good shepherd who reduces his subjects to the level of animals.” (Diderot)

THE ANCIEN REGIME

“We can see how it was that a successful revolution could tear down the whole social structure almost in a twinkling of an eye.” (Alexis de Tocqueville)

Reading: Wright, pp. 3-13

Loyseau, *A Treatise on Orders*

Bossuet, *Political Treatise*

Tocqueville up to 192, 225-256.

THE INTELLECTUAL ORIGINS OF THE REVOLUTION

“Our revolutionaries had the same fondness for broad generalizations, cut and dried legislative systems, and a pedantic symmetry; the same contempt for hard facts; the same taste for reshaping institutions on novel, ingenious, original lines; the same desire to reconstruct the entire constitution according to the rules of logic and a preconceived system instead of trying to rectify its faulty parts. The result was nothing short of disastrous.” (Alexis de Tocqueville)

THE ENLIGHTENMENT

The Revolution strayed from the primrose path of enlightened happiness to the strait and narrow road of Jacobin virtue, from the principle of representative and constitutional government to the rule of an authoritarian elite, from the philosophes' ideal of peace to the revolutionaries' crusading war and the Napoleonic war of conquest. Nothing could have been more alien to the Enlightenment than this transition from the ideals of democracy and peace to a policy of dictatorship and war...The influence of the Enlightenment cannot be disregarded in any history of the French Revolution; but the revolutionaries did not set their course by its light in the beginning, nor did they steer the ship of state into the haven of the Enlightenment in the end.”

Reading: Wright, pp. 24-32

Rousseau, *A Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*

Tocqueville, 195-217

THE ECONOMIC ORIGINS OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

“The art of taxation consists in so plucking the goose to obtain the largest amount of feathers, with the least amount of hissing.” (Colbert)

“The recent revolution would not have reached this point had the people had bread. And the people would forgotten freedom and the hope of freedom if they had been able to forget their stomachs.” (Friedrich Schulz, Über Paris und die Pariser)

“How though the reign of Louis XVI was the most prosperous period of the monarchy, this prosperity hastened the outbreak of the Revolution.” (Alexis de Tocqueville)

Reading: Wright, pp. 14-23
Turgot, *Endowments Parliamentary Remonstrance*
Tocqueville, pp. 217-224

STRUGGLE BETWEEN KING AND PARLEMENT

“The story of the resurgence of the French nobility is first and foremost the story of how the high robe was to demonstrate its power to obstruct the monarchy and win general recognition as the indispensable defender of privileged interests.” (Franklin Ford)

“It is astonishing that nowadays it is thought fitting to treat as founded the absolute power of the prince, without hearkening to the testimony of thirteen centuries during which we see the kingdom established solely by the blood, the labor, and the expenditures of the old nobility.” (Boulainvilliers, Lettres sur les anciens parlements de France)

Reading: Louis XV, *The Session of the Scourging*
Louis XV, *Desist*
Malesherbes, *Remonstrance of the Court of Aides*

THE FAILURE OF REFORM

“The Revolution was, in the words of Albert Schweitzer, ‘a fall of snow on blossoming trees.’ ” (Alfred Cobban)

Reading: Wright, pp. 33-40
Turgot, *Letter to the King on Finance*
Remonstrances of Parlement of Paris
Louis XVI, *Reply to the Parlement of Paris*

THE OVERTURN, MAY TO AUGUST 1789

“What then is the Third Estate? All; but an all that is fettered and oppressed. What would it be without the privileged order? It would be all; but free and flourishing. Nothing will go well without the Third Estate: everything would go considerably better without the two others.”
(Sieyès)

Read: Wright, pp. 41-51
Cahiers
Sieyès, *What is the Third Estate?*
Miot de Méliot, *Memoirs*

THE FALL OF THE BASTILLE TRIGGERS EVENTS

“Louis XVI: “It’s a revolt.”
I: “No, Sire, it’s a revolution.” (Duke of Lioncourt)

“What then, is their blood so pure?” (Barnave)

Reading:
The Decree Absolishing the Feudal System
Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen

THE SECOND PHASE OF THE REVOLUTION, 1789-1791

“Let us make haste while we are still in our political youth while the fire of liberty still burns within us and our holy and generous enthusiasm still endures.” (Duport)

Reading:
The Civil Constitution of the Clergy
Le Chapelier Law

THE FLIGHT TO VARENNES

“The nation can never give back its confidence to a man who, false to his trust, perjured to his oath, conspires a clandestine flight, obtains a fraudulent passport, conceals a king of France under the disguise of a valet, directs his course toward a frontier covered with traitors and deserters, and evidently meditates a return into our country, with a force capable of imposing his own despotic laws.” (Placard, 1 July 1791)

“What remains to the King other than a vain semblance of monarchy?”
(Louis XVI, 20 June 1791)

Reading: *The King’s Declaration*

THE WIDENING FISSURES

“La guerre révolutionna la Revolution.” (M. Reinhard)

Reading:
The Brunswick Manifesto

“THE SECOND REVOLUTION” – THE UPRISING OF AUGUST 10

“The Revolution is over.” (Robespierre, September 1791)

THE REVOLUTIONIZING OF THE REVOLUTION

“For the violence of the revolutionary movement tore apart the structure of French society, leaving a country so bitterly divided on political, religious, social and economic principles and policies as to be virtually ungovernable.”

“Nous sommes places entre l’anarchie du terrorisme et celle du royalisme.” (Florent Guiot, Representative on mission in the Nord)

Reading: Wright, 52-54
Saint-Just, *Speech*
Robespierre, *Speech Asking the Death Penalty for Louis XVI*

THE REIGN OF TERROR

“Les dieux onto soif.” (Camille Desmouline)

“There is no middle ground; France must be entirely free or perish in the attempt, and any means are justifiable in fighting for so fine a cause.”
(Parisian newspaper)

Reading: Wright, pp. 54-56
Palmer, 3-108, 130-177, 202-360
Law of 14 frimaire
Robespierre, *On Political Morality*
The Law of Suspects

THE TERROR AND PROPAGANDA

“There is nowhere so much talk of liberty as in a state where it has ceased to exist.” (Rousseau)

Reading: Palmer, pp. 177-201; Saint-Just, *Republican Institutions*

THE CREATION OF UNE VOLONTÉ UNIQUE

“Marat n’est point mort.” (Jacques Roux)

Reading:

Palmer, pp. 108-129

Robespierre, *Report on the Principles of a Revolutionary Government*

Decree on the Maximum

Levée en masse

WAR AND REVOLUTION

“Belgium, like all our conquests, must be treated like a conquered land.”
(Tallien)

Reading:

Decree of January 31, 1793

Carnot, *Letter*

La Harpe, *Protests*

Rowe, *Civilians and Warfare*

THE FALL OF ROBESPIERRE

“The blood of Danton chokes him.” (A Deputy)

Reading: Wright, pp. 56-57

Palmer, pp. 361-396

Desmoulins, *Plea for Clemency*

Thibadeau, *Mémoires*

Law of 22 Prairial

ART AND REVOLUTION

“David, where are you; take up your brush.” (Guiraut)

THE THERMIDOREANS

“There are as it were thirteen governments which can neither act harmoniously nor get on with one another.” (Thibadeau)

Reading: Carrier, *Letter*

THE DIRECTORY

“Studied barbarism, systematic atrocity, calculated corruption.”
(Joseph de Maistre)

Reading: Wright, pp. 57-61

Stofflet, *Proclamation*

Charette, *Declaration*

Price Chart

MIRAGE OF THE MODERATES

“Your tyrants have destroyed the altars of your God and the throne of your king.”
(Louis XVIII)

Reading: Babeuf, *Defense*

COUP OF 18 BRUMAIRE

“What’s in the new constitution?”
Reply: “Bonaparte.”

Reading: Wright, pp. 61-62
Holtman, 26-34, 120-138
Napoleon, *Letter to Josephine*

THE CONSOLIDATION OF HIS AUTHORITY

“If he lasts as year he will go far.” (Talleyrand)

Reading: Wright, pp. 63-68
Holtman, pp. 72-99
Méneval, *Description of Napoleon*

NAPOLEON AND FRANCE

“Napoleon was as great as a man can be without virtue.”
(Alexis de Tocqueville)

Reading: Wright, pp. 79-82, 119-130
Holtman, pp. 139-162, 99-120
Rémusat, *Memoirs*
Imperial Catechism

NAPOLEON’S ART OF WAR

“In war all that is useful is legitimate.” (Napoleon)

Reading: Holtman, pp. 35-71
Napoleon, *Observations on War*

NAPOLEON’S DEFEAT

“You accuse us of failing in our duty to our honor and Napoleon...We have done enough for him; our present duty is to save our country.”
(Lafayette)

Reading:

Pasquier, *Memoirs*, the Continental System
Constant, *Memoirs*, Crossing the Beresina
Walter, *Diary of a Napoleonic Soldier*

APPRAISAL

“In time of violent passions, we must surely keep from speaking reason.”
(Malesherbes)

Reading: Holtman, pp. 163-193
Burke, *Letters on a Regicide Peace*

THE VIENNA SETTLEMENT

“A World Restored?” (Kissinger)

THE BOURBON RESTORATION

“Given in Paris in the year of our Lord 1814, and of our reign the nineteenth.” (Louis XVIII)

Reading: Wright, pp. 89-92

THE HUNDRED DAYS

“An act of madness which can be dealt with by a few rural policemen.”
(*Moniteur*)

Reading: Wright, pp. 93-98
Holtman, pp. 194-212

CHARLES X AND THE REVOLUTION OF 1830

“The Charter cannot keep me from doing my will.”

Reading: Wright, pp. 98-105

THE JULY MONARCHY

“He had a profound knowledge of human beings, but he knew them only through their vices.” (Alexis de Tocqueville)

Reading: Wright, pp. 106-118

PROBLEMS OF THE MONARCHY

“Enrichissez-vous” (Guizot)

REVOLUTION OF 1848

“The revolution of contempt. (Lamartine)

Reading: Wright, pp. 118-122

THE WRONG REVOLUTION?

“There have been more mischievous revolutionaries than those of 1848, but I doubt if there have been any stupider.” (Alexis de Tocqueville)

DAUMIER

“Do you not feel a gale of revolution in the air?” (Alexis de Tocqueville)

THE ALTERNATIVE VISION

“Let us not pose as the apostles of a new religion.” (Proudhon)

RECAPITULATION & REVIEW