University of Wisconsin-Madison  
Department of History  
Semester II, 2008-2009

History 707: THE OLD REGIME AND THE FRENCH REVOLUTION  
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This course will focus on the social, cultural, and political history of France from the seventeenth century through the French Revolution. We will pay particular attention to recent historiographical debates over method. We will study the Annales school, various approaches to the French Revolution, and recent work on popular culture, state-building, colonization, the Enlightenment and public sphere, gender, and political culture.

All books marked with an asterisk should be available at the University Bookstore. All of the books are on reserve in HC White. There is also a packet of articles and documents available in the Humanities Copy Center at 1650 Humanities. Several articles are online.

Each student will choose between two different options for the course’s written work: 1/ write three medium-length papers (c. 10 pages) which will analyze and critique historiographical or methodological issues raised by the readings; OR 2/ write two short (5-6 p.) reviews or think pieces on method, and one long final paper (c. 20 p.) on a pertinent historiographical or methodological issue. In either of these options, if it is appropriate, one paper may be a research proposal on a topic chosen by the student. Students will also be responsible for leading the discussions in certain weeks.

WEEK 1 (Jan. 21): INTRODUCTION

Those students who do not have much background in early modern French history may wish to use this period to read in surveys, such as selected essays in William Doyle, ed. Old Regime France; Robin Briggs, Early Modern France (survey, mainly 17th c.); James Collins, The State in Early Modern France; Alfred Cobban, History of Modern France, 1715-1799, vol. 1 (mainly 18th c. political history); or Colin Jones, The Great Nation: France from Louis XV to Napoleon (lively history).

Week 2 (Jan. 28): THE ANNALISTE APPROACH


NB: you should know about Histories: French Constructions of the Past, ed. Jacques Revel and Lynn Hunt. This book has a long intro on the evolution of French History, including the Annales school, and has many useful excerpts. (On reserve)

WEEK 3 (Feb. 4): ABSOLUTISM & LOUIS XIV


**WEEK 4 (Feb. 11): NOBLES, COMMONERS, JUSTICE, & IDENTITY: A MICROHISTORY**


**Week 5 (Feb. 18): PARISIAN CULTURE & CONSUMPTION**

** David Garrioch, *The Making of Revolutionary Paris* (Berkeley, 2002), read 1-83, skim 84-141, read 142-282


**WEEK 6 (Feb. 25): COLONIZATION AND RACE: FOCUS ON LOUISIANA**


Shannon Lee Dawdy, *Building the Devil’s Empire: French Colonial New Orleans* (Chicago, 2008), 1-23, 139-188, 219-246


**WEEK 7 (Mar. 4): ENLIGHTENMENT, PUBLIC SPHERE, & GENDER**


**PAPER DUE, Friday, March 6 (Box #5031)**
WEEK 8 (Mar. 11): THE ORIGINS OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION I

** Georges Lefebvre, The Coming of the French Revolution, trans. R. R. Palmer (Princeton, 2005, orig. ed. 1939), entire (If you absolutely need to skim, skim chaps. 12-15, but don’t tell Katie if you skim the October Days chapter. Be sure to read Conclusion.)

TCW Blanning, The French Revolution: Class War or Culture War (N.Y., 1998), 1-75


Week 10 (April 1) OVERVIEW OF REVOLUTION: CONTRASTING PERSPECTIVES


** Peter McPhee, Living the French Revolution, 1789-90 (London & N.Y., 2006), 1-131

Week 11 (April 8): INTERPRETING THE REVOLUTION via BIOGRAPHY: ROBESPIERRE

** Ruth Scurr, Fatal Purity: Robespierre and the French Revolution (N.Y., 2006). This is a long book, so skim as necessary. Better to skim in early chapters (e.g. chaps. 3 & 5). Be sure to read Part V (chaps. 9 &10) because interpreting Robespierre always means also interpreting the Terror.


** PAPER DUE on Fri., April 10

Week 12 (April 15): REVOLUTION IN SOCIETY AND CULTURE

** Peter McPhee, Living the French Revolution, 1789-90, 132-228

Joseph Clarke, Commemorating the Dead in Revolutionary France: Revolution and Remembrance, 1789-1799 (Cambridge, Eng., 2007), 1-9, 170-215

Week 13 (April 22) : INTERPRETING THE TERROR


Week 14 (April 29): POLITICS, CULTURE, AND GENDER

Lynn Hunt, Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution (Berkeley, 1984), 87-119


Week 15 (May 6): REVOLUTION BEYOND THE HEXAGON

David Bell, The First Total War: Napoleon’s Europe and the Birth of Warfare as We Know It (Boston, 2007), 84-119

Andrew Jainchill, Reimagining Politics after the Terror: The Republican Origins of French Liberalism (Ithaca, NY, 2008), 1-25, 141-196


Nick Nesbitt, Universal Emancipation: The Haitian Revolution and the Radical Enlightenment (Charlottesville, Va., 2008), 1-40

** Final PAPER DUE on Monday, May 11