

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
Department of History
Semester I, 2015-2016
History 320: EARLY MODERN FRANCE, 1500-1715

Prof. Suzanne Desan
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Reader: Kilian Harrer

5120 Humanities (262-8694)
Office Hours: Monday, 3:20-5:20

This course will focus on the social, cultural, and political history of France from 1500 to 1715, from the French Renaissance through the absolutist monarchy of Louis XIV. One major theme of the course will be the intersection between politics and culture. For example, as we study dissension between Catholics and Protestants, we will ask how religious matters informed political conflict, popular activism, and warfare, and also ask how religion contributed to shaping the French monarchy, colonization, and national identity. The power of Kings and the evolving nature of politics constitutes a second theme. Third, we will focus on down-to-earth life experiences and popular culture in early modern France and its colonies. In addition to exploring high culture of the nobility and of major philosophers such as Montaigne, Descartes, and Pascal, we will examine the life of the peasantry and the urban poor, with particular focus on witchcraft, peasant revolts, gender dynamics within households and villages, popular religiosity, and Franco-Indian contact in the New World.

Reading:

Natalie Zemon Davis, The Return of Martin Guerre
Allan Greer, Mohawk Saint: Catherine Tekakwitha and the Jesuits
René Descartes, Discourse on Method and Meditations on First Philosophy
Molière, The Bourgeois Gentleman
Course Packet from Copy Center at 6120 Social Sciences

The books, marked with an asterisk, are available at the University book store and on reserve at HC White. The xeroxed reader (required and very important) is available at the Copy Center 6120 Sewell Hall (the Social Sciences Building). All documents and articles in the reader are marked with (R).

Other Requirements: All students will take an in-class midterm exam (Wed., Oct. 14); and a final exam; and write two papers, due on Friday, Sept. 25, and Friday, Nov. 20. The papers will be based on primary and secondary source readings in the course. Student participation and discussion is crucial, so on Fridays, we will have discussion of the reading instead of lecture. Attendance for this discussion section is required. We may also do some discussion of reading in the lectures. Final grades will be based as follows: 25% discussion participation; 14% first, shorter paper; 18% midterm exam; 18% second paper; 25% final exam.

The History Lab: New this semester, the History Lab is a resource center where experts (PhD students) can aid you as you write your history papers. No matter your stage in the writing process—choosing a topic, conducting research, composing a thesis, outlining your argument, revising your drafts—the History Lab staff is here, along with your professors and teaching assistants, to help you sharpen your

skills and become a more successful writer. Sign up for a one-on-one consultation online: <http://go.wisc.edu/hlab>. We will also devote some course time to discussing writing.

Electronic Devices: Although technology can be incredibly useful, recent research suggests that laptop use in classrooms does not improve student learning and often actually hinders it. One study at York University found that students who took notes by laptop scored “11% worse on comprehension tests” than those who did not; students who were continually distracted by neighbors' computer screens earned grades 17% lower than those who were not. Stunning results: that makes one to two letter grades lower on their test scores. The researchers interpreted these results as evidence of our tendency to overestimate our ability to multi-task. In addition, a study done at UCLA and Princeton determined that taking notes by hand caused students to focus their attention more sharply and to reformulate and process the material as they listened. As a result, the students tended to remember and understand the material more fully.¹ We are all interested in promoting the most effective student learning, so laptop and phone use will not be allowed during class.

Plagiarism: The UW Writing Center offers this definition of plagiarism from the Merriam Webster Dictionary: "to steal and pass off (the ideas and words of another) as one's own" or to "present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source." Plagiarized work constitutes a serious offense and will receive an F. Students must produce all of their own work without borrowing any sentences or sentence fragments from the web, books, or articles. All quotations should be put into quotation marks and cited. If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it, here are two sources: <http://www.plagiarism.org>; and <http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QuotingSources.html>. These sites also have useful tips on paraphrasing and quoting from others' work.

Week 1 (Sept. 2-4) INTRODUCTION: THE DIVERSITY OF FRANCE

Reading: R J Knecht, “France around 1559,” in The French Civil Wars, 1562-1598, 3-28 (R)

Week 2 (Sept. 9-11) RENAISSANCE MONARCHY AND COURT CULTURE

Reading: Mack Holt, “The Kingdom of France in the Sixteenth Century,” in Renaissance and Reformation France, 5-26 (R)

Claude de Seyssel, The Monarchy of France, 38-39, 46-66 (R)

Michele Suriano, “The Strength and Weakness of France,” (1561) in The Portable Renaissance Reader, 305-319 (R)

Week 3 (Sept. 14-18) RURAL FRANCE: NOBLES & PEASANTS

Reading: William Beik, “Domination by the Nobility,” in A Social and Cultural History of Early Modern France, 66-97

Jonathan Dewald, Aristocratic Experience and the Origins of Modern Culture, 45-68 (R)

“The Body, Its Functions, and Social Behavior,” in The Century of Louis XIV, 73-78 (R)

¹ Faria Sana, Tina Weston, and Nicholas J. Cepeda, “Laptop multitasking hinders classroom learning for both users and nearby peers,” *Computers & Education*, March 2013, Volume 62: 24-31; Pam Mueller and Daniel Oppenheimer, “The Pen Is Mightier Than the Keyboard: Advantages of Longhand Over Laptop Note Taking,” *Psychological Science*, April 2014, (25) 6: 1159-1168. With thanks to Katie Jarvis for these references.

Week 4 (Sept. 21-25) CULTURE, GENDER, AND SOCIETY

Reading: * Natalie Zemon Davis, The Return of Martin Guerre, 1-93, 123-125

Documents on Images of Women and Men, Compiled by Natalie Davis (R)

** PAPER DUE ON FRIDAY, Sept. 25 at class

Week 5 (Sept. 28-Oct. 2) RELIGION: THE CATHOLIC/PROTESTANT DIVIDE

Reading: Philip Benedict and Virginia Reinburg, "Religion and the Sacred," in Renaissance and Reformation France, ed. Mack P. Holt (Oxford, 2002), 119-146 (R)

Robert J. Knecht, "The Rise of Protestantism," in The French Civil Wars, 1562-1598, 44-63 (R)

Selection from Calvin, The Christian Institutes (R)

Week 6 (Oct. Oct. 5-9) EXPLORATION & CONTACT WITH THE NEW WORLD

Reading: Jean de Léry, History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil, Otherwise Called America, vii-xi, 3-6, 56-61, 66-68, 122-140, 152-157, 172-177

Michel de Montaigne, The Essays: A Selection, 3 (To the Reader), 79-92 (On Cannibals)

Week 7 (Oct. 12-16) REVIEW AND EXAM

No reading

** MIDTERM EXAM on Wed. Oct 14.

No class on Friday, Oct 16

Week 8 (Oct. 19-23) WARS OF RELIGION

Reading: Philip Benedict, "The Wars of Religion, 1562-1598," in Renaissance and Reformation France, 147-175 (R)

Kathleen Wellman, Queens and Mistresses of Renaissance France, 224-273 (R)

Selection from "Vindiciae Contra Tyrannos" (R)

Michele Suriano, "The Strength and Weakness of France," (1561), 319- 327

Week 9 (Oct. 26-30) EARLY SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY POLITICS & CULTURE

Reading: Richard Dunn, Age of Religious Wars, 1559-1689 (N.Y., 1970), 128-39 (R)

Robert Schneider, "Swordplay and Statemaking: Aspects of the Campaign against the Duel in Early Modern France," in Statemaking and Social Movements, 265-296 (R)

Cardinal Richelieu, The Political Testament of Cardinal Richelieu, 3-6, 71-83, 111- 119 (R)

Week 10 (Nov. 2-6) SOCIETY AFTER THE WARS: PEASANT REVOLTS & WITCHES

Reading: Selections from Witchcraft in Europe, 1100-1700, 260-275; and from The Witchcraft Sourcebook, 82-87, 104-109 (R)

William Beik, Urban Protest in Seventeenth-Century France, 28-63 (R)

Week 11 (Nov. 9-13) PHILOSOPHICAL SEARCHING

Reading: For Wednesday: Mary Lynn Rampolla, A Pocket Guide to Writing in History, 8th ed. (Boston, 2015), 51-81

For Friday: René Descartes, Discourse on Method and Meditations on First Philosophy (Hackett

Publishing, 4th ed., 1999), Discourses 1-4; Meditation 5
Selections from Pascal, Thoughts, in Classics of Western Thought, ed Hirschfeld & Knobel, 38-54 (R)

Week 12 (Nov. 16-20) FRENCH COLONIZATION: NEW FRANCE

Reading: ** Allan Greer, Mohawk Saint, 1-31, 47-61, 71-84, 98-124, 132-70, 193-205

Two Conversion Accounts in The Jesuit Relations, ed. Allan Greer, 140-146; 171-185

** PAPER DUE, Friday, Nov. 20

Week 13 (Nov. 23) REBELLION & THE YOUNG LOUIS XIV

THANKSGIVING BREAK. No Reading.

Week 14 (Nov. 30-Dec.4) LOUIS XIV AND ABSOLUTIST MONARCHY

Reading: Dunn, "France under Louis XIV," in Age of Religious Wars, 153-64 (R)

Voltaire, "Louis XIV: Builder of France," in The Impact of Absolutism in France, 120-140 (R)

Bossuet, from Politics drawn from the Very Words of Scripture (R)

Duc de Saint Simon, "Memoirs" in Sources of the West, I: 344-47 (R)

Week 15 (Dec. 7-11) MOLIERE AND COURT POLITICS

Reading: * Molière, The Middle-Class Gentleman

Week 16 (Dec. 14) REVIEW

Review

** FINAL EXAM: Monday, Dec. 21 at 10:05