

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON  
Department of History  
Semester I, 2012-2013

HISTORY 600: NAPOLEON  
Wednesday 11-1  
Office hours: Wednesday 1-3pm

Prof. Desan  
5120 Humanities  
[smdesan@wisc.edu](mailto:smdesan@wisc.edu)

This course focuses on Napoleon and the Napoleonic Era. Napoleon Bonaparte, son of a minor Corsican noble, stunned Europe with his dramatic rise to power. Having made his name as a revolutionary and a victorious general in the French Revolutionary armies, he then seized power by leading a coup d'état against that very Revolution, and crowned himself Emperor of much of Europe, only to fall from power in 1814, bounce back to rule for the Hundred Days, and meet definitive defeat at Waterloo in 1815. We will explore his fascinating life story, and we will examine crucial questions about the cultural, social, political, and military history of his era. Since we have a limited number of weeks for reading in common, the reading in the first part of the course will proceed through his life and rule, and focus on a different theme each week.

The major purpose of the seminar is to offer students the opportunity to do a primary-source research paper on any issue to do with Napoleon and his era. Students can write on diverse topics, including issues not raised in our collective reading. Sources can include pamphlets, memoirs, personal letters, novels or other literary sources, political manifestos, travelogues, newspapers, moral or medical treatises, works of military theory, political caricature, etc. During the first half of the course, we will do some background reading and sample a variety of primary sources. The second half of the course will be devoted to researching and writing your papers, and also discussing each other's research projects.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS: The central requirement of this course is a research paper (c. 20-25 pp.) on a topic related to the Napoleonic era. Choice of topic and compilation of bibliography will begin early in the semester, and the second half of the semester will focus primarily on the research and writing of the paper. Short assignments earlier in the semester will be oriented toward preparing you for this final paper. These short assignments include: a 5-page paper analyzing primary material; a two-page proposal; a bibliography; an outline; an oral presentation of your project. Rough drafts of the final paper are due on Nov. 21. You will be share them and discuss them in peer review groups. Final paper is due Dec. 12. Participation in seminar discussions is also a crucial requirement of the course.

The two books marked with an asterisk (\*) have been ordered at the University Bookstore and placed on reserve at H.C. White. Other articles and documents are in a packet available at the Copy Center in the basement of the Humanities Building in room 1650 or on reserve in H.C. White.

Week 1: (Sept. 5) INTRODUCTION

Week 2: (Sept. 12) YOUNG NAPOLEON BONAPARTE & THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

\* J. Christopher Herold, The Age of Napoleon (NY, 1963), 6-83

Alan Forrest, Napoleon (London, 2011), 41-91

J.M. Thompson, ed. Napoleon's Letters, 16-21

Rafe Blaufarb, ed., Napoleon: Symbol for an Age, 43-51

Week 3: (Sept. 19) FROM CONSUL TO EMPEROR: NAPOLEON & POWER

- \* J. Christopher Herold, The Age of Napoleon, 120-163, 302-13
- Steven Englund, Napoleon: A Political Life, 209-251
- Robin Blackburn, The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery, 1776-1848, 245-264
- Madame de Stael in J.K. Sowards, ed., The Makers of Western Tradition, 83-88
- Rafe Blaufarb, ed., Napoleon: Symbol for an Age, 104-08, 158-165, 212-213

Week 4: (Sept. 26) CONQUERING EUROPE: NAPOLEON AS MILITARY LEADER

- \* J. Christopher Herold, The Age of Napoleon, 164-267
- \* Rafe Blaufarb, ed. Napoleonic Foot Soldiers and Civilians (Boston, 2011), 1-58, 65-72
- Alan Forrest, Napoleon's Men, ix-xv, 92-104

Week 5: (Oct. 3) RULING THE EMPIRE

- \* J. Christopher Herold, The Age of Napoleon, 268-299
- Alexander Grab, Napoleon and the Transformation of Europe, 19-33
- Rafe Blaufarb, ed., Napoleon: Symbol for an Age (Boston, 2008), 137-55
- Philip G Dwyer and Peter McPhee, ed. The French Revolution and Napoleon, 159-60
- \* Rafe Blaufarb, ed. Napoleonic Foot Soldiers and Civilians, 73-75

\*\*\* SHORT PAPER DUE, Friday, Oct. 5 at 5 pm in my Box #5013 on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor of Humanities; Document analysis

Week 6: (Oct. 10) THE FOCUS ON RESEARCH: Using the Library

We will meet in 231 Memorial Library for a special session with the European history librarian.

Week 7: (Oct. 17) NAPOLEON'S FALL AND LEGACY

- \* J. Christopher Herold, The Age of Napoleon, 340-419
- David Jordan, "Napoleon as Revolutionary" in Philip G. Dwyer and Alan Forrest, ed. Napoleon and His Empire, 29-43
- \* Rafe Blaufarb, ed. Napoleonic Foot Soldiers and Civilians, 76-101, 123-147
- Jean Tulard, "A Legend," in Frank A. Kafker and James M. Laux, ed., Napoleon and His Times: Selected Interpretations, 273-277

Week 8: (Oct. 24) INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS

\*\*\* 2 PAGE PROPOSAL = description of topic, key primary sources, and central questions, due at your meeting with me.

Week 9: (Oct. 31) WRITING A RESEARCH PAPER

Sample Student Paper

We will have a visit from a Writing Lab Instructor.

\*\*\* BIBLIOGRAPHY of primary and secondary sources due Friday, Nov. 2

Week 10: (Nov. 7) INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS

\*\*\* OUTLINE due at your meeting with me.

Week 11: (Nov. 14) ORAL PRESENTATIONS

We will have short presentations of your research and will also discuss sample introductions and conclusions.

\*\*\* Five-minute oral presentation of your project.

Week 12: (Nov. 21) EXCHANGE OF DRAFTS  
\*\*\* Rough drafts due WEDNESDAY, Nov. 21.

Week 13: (Nov. 28) DISCUSSION OF ROUGH DRAFTS

Week 14: (Dec. 5) INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS

Week 15: (Dec. 12) WRAP UP CLASS

\*\*\* Final Paper due on TUESDAY, Dec. 12