

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
Department of History
Semester I, 2009-2010

HISTORY 600: Rights & Identity in Revolutionary Europe
Tuesday 1:20-3:20
Office hours: Tues.3:30-5 & Thurs. 12:30-1:15

Prof. Desan
5120 Humanities
smdesan@wisc.edu

In the late eighteenth century, Europeans wrestled with new concepts of human rights and identity. The Enlightenment had already placed these questions at the heart of its cultural project, when the French Revolution stunned Europe by attempting to reform virtually every aspect of French society, politics, and culture. It overthrew the monarchy in the attempt to create a republic, leveled aristocratic claims to power on behalf of equality and human rights, tried to replace traditional Catholic practice with revolutionary cults or secularism, waged war on Europe in the name of republicanism, and abolished slavery at the urging of slaves revolting in the French Caribbean. This revolution fascinated, converted, repulsed, and intrigued observers in the rest of Europe and the Americas. This History 600 will focus primarily on France and England in the revolutionary era. We will ask on how the revolutionary experience undercut traditional notions of selfhood and identity, and also raised the issue of civil and political rights for people of different religions, classes, races, and genders. In addition to examining political debates and movements, we will use memoirs and letters to explore individual responses to the revolutionary tumult and to think about possible sources for your papers.

The major purpose of the seminar is to offer students the opportunity to do a primary-source research paper on issues of rights or identity in the revolutionary era. Students can write on diverse topics (including issues not raised in our collective reading), but papers should focus on authors, contexts, and themes. Sources can include novels, political manifestos or political theory, travelogues, moral or medical treatises, works of political economy or philosophy, personal letters, satirical literature, drama, 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 revolutionary 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 short 5-page paper analyzing primary material; a two-page proposal; a bibliography; an outline; a group discussion of topics. Rough drafts of the final paper are due on Nov. 24 and will be shared & discussed by groups. Final paper is due Dec. 15. Participation in seminar discussions is also a crucial requirement of the course.

The book marked with an asterisk (*) has 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. 8) INTRODUCTION

Week 2: (Sept. 15) RIGHTS, ENLIGHTENMENT, & FRENCH REVOLUTION; WOMEN

*Lynn Hunt, Inventing Human Rights: A History (N.Y., 2007), read 15-69, skim 70-112, read 113-174
Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen from Sources of Western Tradition, II: 69-70
Documents on women's rights from Lynn Hunt, ed., The French Revolution and Human Rights (Boston, 1996), 119-121, 124-13 (NB: there are more pages in the packet than these assigned pages; you may want to use additional documents for your document papers.)

Week 3: (Sept. 22) FRENCH REVOLUTION OVERVIEW; RIGHTS, RELIGION, & JEWS

Lynn Hunt, The Making of the West, vol B, 1320-1830 (Boston, 2005), 752-772
Robert Darnton, "The Revolutionary Character of the French Revolution," Princeton Alumni Weekly (March 1989): 17-23
Ronald Schechter, Obstinate Hebrews: Representations of Jews in France, 1715-1815, 150-193
Documents on Jews in Lynn Hunt, ed., The French Revolution and Human Rights, 93-101

Week 4: (Sept. 29) RIGHTS AND REVOLUTION: SLAVERY & THE HAITIAN REVOLUTION
Laurent Dubois & John Garrigus, ed. Slave Revolution in the Caribbean, 1789-1804, 7-42
Abbé Guillaume-Thomas Raynal, excerpt from Philosophical and Political History of the Settlements and Trades of the Europeans in the East and West Indies (London, 1779), Book I: 1-3; and from Book XI in Peter Jimack, ed. A History of the Two Indies (Hampshire, Eng., 2006), 147-62
Jeremy D. Popkin, Facing Racial Revolution: Eyewitness Accounts of the Haitian Insurrection, 59-92
Richard Marius & Melvin Page, A Short Guide to Writing about History, 6th ed. (NY, 2006), 150-72

*** SHORT PAPER DUE, Thursday, Oct. 1 at 5 pm in my Box #5031 on the 5th floor of Humanities;
Document analysis

Week 5: (Oct. 6) RIGHTS UNDER DEBATE: BRITISH RESPONSES TO FRENCH REVOLUTION
George Woodcock, "The Meaning of Revolution in Britain," in The French Revolution and British Culture, ed. Ceri Crossley & Ian Small (Oxford, 1989), 1-30
Edmund Burke, from Reflections on the Revolution in France, in Western Societies, II: 232-238
Thomas Paine, from The Rights of Man in Social Thought from the Enlightenment, ed. A. Sica, 100-103
Mary Wollstonecraft, from A Vindication of the Rights of Men, in A Wollstonecraft Anthology, 64-72
"An Address to the Honorable Edmund Burke from the Swinish Multitude," in Political Writings of the 1790s, ed. Gregory Claeys (London, 1995), 129-136

Week 6: (Oct. 13) THE FOCUS ON RESEARCH: Using the Library & INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS
We will meet in 436 Memorial Library to have a special session with the European history librarian.

Week 7: (Oct. 20) SELF, NATION & POLITICS: BRITISH RESPONSES TO FRENCH REVOLUTION 2
William M. Reddy, The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions, 172-210
Helen Maria Williams, Letters Written in France, ed. N. Fraistat & S. S. Lanser, 63-73, 147-150, 163-173
Mary Wollstonecraft, "Letter on the Present Character of the French Nation," in The Works of Mary Wollstonecraft, ed. Janet Todd & Marilyn Butler, 443-446
Mary Wollstonecraft, from Letter to Joseph Johnson & An Historical and Moral View of the Origin and Progress of the French Revolution, in A Wollstonecraft Anthology, 120-21; 125-141

Week 8: (Oct. 27) INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS
*** 2 PAGE PROPOSAL = description of topic, key primary sources, and central questions, due at your meeting with me.

Week 9: (Nov. 3) 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. 6

Week 10: (Nov. 10) INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS
*** OUTLINE due at your meeting with me.

Week 11: (Nov. 17) GROUP MEETING: PRESENTATION OF TOPICS & SOURCES
Two sample student introductions

Week 12: (Nov. 24) EXCHANGE OF DRAFTS

*** Rough drafts due TUESDAY, Nov. 24.

Week 13: (Dec. 1) DISCUSSION OF ROUGH DRAFTS

Week 14: (Dec. 8) INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS

Week 15: (Dec. 15) FINAL PRESENTATIONS & CONCLUSIONS

*** Final Paper due on TUESDAY, Dec. 15