

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON  
Department of History  
Semester I, 2011-2012

HISTORY 600: Empire in the French Revolutionary Era  
Tuesday 1:20-3:20  
Office hours: Tues.3:30-4:30 & Thurs. 1:30-2:30

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

By the eighteenth century, European powers, such as France, England, and Spain, were building global empires, stretching from Chile to India. At the end of the century, revolutions in the Americas and Europe not only challenged imperial power but also generated new forms of colonization. Focusing on France and its colonies, this course asks how the French Revolution indirectly set off the largest slave revolt against empire and yet also ended with Napoleon's creation of an unprecedented empire within Europe. We will explore three main topics. First, as background, we look at the French colonies, especially in the Caribbean, and also read Enlightenment writings about colonization, commerce, and slavery before 1789. Second, during the explosive 1790s, we examine the slave revolt and break-away of Haiti, as well as French revolutionary attempts to redraw the map of Europe, creating Sister Republics as a challenge to old imperial monarchies. Finally, since Napoleon rose to power by staging a coup d'état against that very Revolution, we ask how he built a new form of European empire reaching from Spain to Poland before his dizzying fall from power. We focus on actions, ideas, and movements created by diverse groups, including Enlightenment thinkers, rebel slaves and plantation owners, French revolutionary leaders, and Napoleon himself.

The major purpose of the seminar is to offer students the opportunity to do a primary-source research paper on issues of empire 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. During most of seminar time we will discuss the reading; towards the end of each class, I will give some background information as context for the next week's reading. 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 and primary sources. Rough drafts of the final paper are due on Nov. 22 and will be shared & discussed by groups. Final paper is due Dec. 13. 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. 6) INTRODUCTION

Week 2: (Sept. 13) FRENCH COLONIES AND ENLIGHTENMENT THOUGHT

\*Laurent Dubois, Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution, pp. 1-90  
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 XI: 48-61  
Laurent Dubois & John Garrigus, ed. Slave Revolution in the Caribbean, 1789-1804 (Boston, 2006), 73-75, 78-83  
Buffon, A Natural History, General and Particular, in Race and the Enlightenment: A Reader, ed. Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze (Oxford, Engl., 1997), 15-28

Week 3: (Sept. 20) RIGHTS AND REVOLUTION: THE HAITIAN REVOLUTION

\*Laurent Dubois, Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution, 91-134, skim 135-151, read 152-93  
Jeremy D. Popkin, Facing Racial Revolution: Eyewitness Accounts of the Haitian Insurrection, 59-92  
Laurent Dubois & John Garrigus, ed. Slave Revolution in the Caribbean, 1789-1804, 111-115, 119-125

Week 4: (Sept. 27) FRENCH REVOLUTIONARY IDEAS ABOUT EMPIRE & REPUBLICS

Lynn Hunt, The Making of the West, vol B, 1320-1830 (Boston, 2005), 752-772. \*\*Those of you who have already studied the French Revolution can skip this survey, but DO READ the last few pages on revolutionary expansionism.  
Joel Barlow, A Letter Addressed to the People of Piedmont, on the Advantages of the French Revolution, and the necessity of adopting its principles in Italy (N.Y, 1795, orig. ed. Chambéry, France, 1793), ECCO, pp. 203-11, 218-20, 224-28, 230-35  
Andrew Jainchill, Reimagining Politics after the Terror: The Republican Origins of French Liberalism (Ithaca, NY, 2008), 165-196  
Marc-Antoine Jullien's "Notes of Advice to the Cisalpine Patriots" in From Jacobin to Liberal. Marc-Antoine Jullien, 1775-1848, ed. & trans. R. R. Palmer (Princeton, 1993), 82-86

\*\*\* SHORT PAPER DUE, Thursday, Sept. 29 at 5 pm in my Box #5013 on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor of Humanities; Document analysis

Week 5: (Oct. 4) NAPOLEONIC EMPIRE: EGYPT

J. C. Herold, "Napoleon in Action: The Egyptian Campaign," in Napoleon and his Times: Selected Interpretations, ed. Frank A. Kafker & James M. Laux (Malabar, FL, 1989), 22-36  
Darrell Dykstra, "The French Occupation of Egypt, 1798-1801," in The Cambridge History of Egypt, vol. II, ed. M. W. Daly (Cambridge, Eng., 1998), 113-138  
Philip G Dwyer and Peter McPhee, ed., The French Revolution and Napoleon: A Sourcebook (London, 2002), 133-136  
Rafe Blaufarb, ed., Napoleon: Symbol for an Age (Boston, 2008), 43-51  
Jane Hathaway, ed., Al-Jabartī's History of Egypt (Princeton, 2009), 175-181, 190-94

Week 6: (Oct. 11) 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. 18) NAPOLEON'S EMPIRE IN EUROPE

Rafe Blaufarb, ed., Napoleon: Symbol for an Age (Boston, 2008), 1-29, 137-142

Martyn Lyons, Napoleon Bonaparte and the Legacy of the French Revolution (NY, 1994), 229-243, 248-259, 321-25

Stuart Woolf, "The Construction of a European World View in the Revolutionary-Napoleonic Years"  
Past and Present 137 (1992): 72-101

Philip G Dwyer and Peter McPhee, ed. The French Revolution and Napoleon: A Sourcebook  
(London, 2002), 155-160, 172-174

Week 8: (Oct. 25) INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS

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

Week 9: (Nov. 1) WRITING A RESEARCH PAPER

Sample Student Paper: "On the "Throne of Hairdressing": Hairdos and Heroics in the Memoirs of  
Léonard Autié" (Marie-Antoinette's hairdresser)

We will have a visit from a Writing Lab Instructor.

\*\*\* BIBLIOGRAPHY of primary and secondary sources due Friday, Nov. 4

Week 10: (Nov. 8) INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS

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

Week 11: (Nov. 15) GROUP MEETING: PRESENTATION OF TOPICS & SOURCES

Two sample introductions & three sample conclusions

Week 12: (Nov. 22) EXCHANGE OF DRAFTS

\*\*\* Rough drafts due TUESDAY, Nov. 22.

Week 13: (Nov. 29) DISCUSSION OF ROUGH DRAFTS

Week 14: (Dec. 6) INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS

Week 15: (Dec. 13) FINAL PRESENTATIONS & CONCLUSIONS

\*\*\* Final Paper due on TUESDAY, Dec. 13