History 868: Seminar in Modern French History

This course will focus on key issues in the political, social and cultural history of France in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Readings and preparation: All books are on reserve at College Library.

Each week (by 9 pm on the evening before class) all students should post two broad "discussion questions" to the Discussion Board on the course pages of the Learn@UW website.

Each week, the designated “discussion leader” will prepare a short (5 minute) introduction to the week’s readings and a list of questions and issues for discussion. As part of the introduction, the discussion leader should present an overview of the week’s topic, situating it in the broader literature.

If you need to brush up on your French history, scan one or more of the following:
Charles Sowerwine, France since 1870; D.L.L. Parry and Pierre Girard, France since 1800; Rod Kedward, France and the French: A Modern History; Robert Gildea, France since 1945; Jeremy Popkin, A History of Modern France

Papers: Each student will write three papers during the semester (see due dates below).

You may write the first two papers in the order you prefer. Those with an adequate knowledge of French will be required to review some French language books.

1. Historiographical Essay (6-7 pages): Write a historiographical essay on one of the week’s themes—giving careful attention to how a given topic has been treated by scholars writing in different time periods.

2. New York Review of Books-Style Book Review (6-7 pages): Choose two or three relatively new books on one of the week’s themes. Write a New York Review of Books-style essay—reviewing the books and also using them to reflect on larger issues.

3. A longer paper (15 pages) due at the end of the semester on a topic of your choice. I encourage you to use this paper to begin work on an MA essay, explore a future PhD topic, or (for those doing a French history prelim) prepare for one of your prelim fields.
Week 1. January 23. Introduction and Course Requirements

Week 2. January 30. Napoleon


Martyn Lyons, Napoleon Bonaparte and the Legacy of the French Revolution (St-Martin’s Press, 1994), 1-4 ; 77-128, 294-300.

David Bell, The First Total War: Napoleon’s Europe and the Birth of Warfare as We Know It (Houghton Mifflin, 2007), 1-20; 187-317.

Michael Broers et al., The Napoleonic Empire and the New European Political Culture (Palgrave, 2012) (available as a digital book on library website), 1-17, 24-37, 38-48, 100-22, 216-26, 313-36.

Possible books for review: Geoffrey Ellis, Napoleon (Longman’s, 1996); numerous biographies by Jean Tulard including Napoléon et le mythe du sauvet (1977); Louis Bergeron, France under Napoleon [L’épisode napoléonien] (Princeton); Isser Woloch, The New Regime: Transformations of the French Civic Order, 1789-1820s (Norton, 1994); François Furet, Revolutionary France; Steven Englund, Napoleon : A Political Life (New York, 2004); Sudhir Hazareesingh, The Legend of Napoleon (Granta, 2005),

Week 3. February 6. 1848


*Karl Marx, The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte (New York, 1963). (parts I and VII are the most important ; read the rest to get the point)


Roger V. Gould, Insurgent Identities: Class, Community and Protest in Paris from 1848 to the Commune (Chicago, 1995), 1-31 (skim to get the point), 32-64.


Possible books for review: Ronald Aminzade, Ballots and Barricades. Class Formation and Republican Politics in France, 1830-1871 (Princeton, 1993); Maurice Agulhon, The Republic in the Village [La république au village]

Week 4. February 13. The French Political Model


Possible books for review: Pierre Rosanvallon, Democracy Past and Future (Columbia University Press, 2006)

Week 5. February 20 Paris Commune


Karl Marx, The Civil War in France, (especially part III)


Roger V. Gould, Insurgent Identities: Class, Community and Protest in Paris from 1848 to the Commune (Chicago, 1995), 153-206.

François Furet, Revolutionary France, chapter on the Republic, 1870-80.

Possible books for review: Carolyn Eichner, Surmounting the Barricades: Women in the Paris Commune (Indiana, 2004); Gay Gullickson, Unruly Woman of Paris: Images of the Commune (Cornell, 1996)

Week 6. February 27. Imperialism


Marie-Paule Ha, French Women and the Empire: The Case of Indochina (Oxford, 2014), 1-19, 159-182, 216-50

H-France Forum on Conklin's, In the Museum of Race: http://h-france.net/forum/h-franceforumvol9.html (read all the contributions and Conklin’s response)

Possible books for review: Edward Berenson, Heroes of Empire: Five Charismatic Men and the Conquest of Africa (University of California Press, 2011); Mary Lewis, Divided Rule: Sovereignty and Empire in French Tunisia, 1881-1938 (Berkeley, 2013)

*** First review essay due Monday February 23 ***

Week 7. March 6. The Great War


Stéphane Audoin Rouzeau and Annette Becker, 14-18: Understanding the Great War (Hill and Wang, 2003), 1-69; 94-174.


François Buton, André Loez, Nicolas Mariot, and Philippe Olivera, "1914-1918: Understanding the Controversy," La vie des idées (PDF)

Jean-Yves Le Naour, "Le champ de bataille des historiens," La vie des idées (PDF)

Week 8. March 13. Fascism


Week 9.  March 20.  **Vichy France**


Robert Gildea, Marianne in Chains (NY, 2002), 1-19; 42-89, 246-70, 403-11

Kevin Passmore, The Right in France from the Third Republic to Vichy (Oxford, 2013), 348-68.


Week 10. March 27. **A New Deal in France?**

*** Second paper due Tuesday April 6 ***


Week 11. April 3. **Spring Break**

Week 12. April 10. **Rural Society**


Week 13. April 17. **No Class.**

Week 14. April 24. **Tourism and Sport**
Eric Reed, Selling the Yellow Jersey: The Tour de France in the Global Era (Chicago, 2015), 1-22, 54-167.


Laurent Dubois, Soccer Empire: The World Cup and the Future of France (Berkeley, 2010), preface, 1-22, 47-71, 97-176, 241-266.

Stephen Harp, Au naturel: Naturism, Nudism, and Tourism in Twentieth Century France (LSU press), pp. TBA

Week 15. May 1. **May 1968**

Julian Jackson, Anna-Louise Milne and James S. Williams eds., May 68: Rethinking France’s Last Revolution (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 3-57, 178-187; 231-244


Possible books for review: Didier Fassin and Eric Fassin eds, De la question sociale à la question raciale? (Paris, 2006); Pap Ndiaye, La condition noire: Essai sur une minorité française (Paris, 2008); John Bowen, Why the French don’t like Headscarves: Islam, the

*** Final 15 to 20 page Paper due Thursday May 14 ***