

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
Department of History
Semester I, 2021-2022

HISTORY 600: NAPOLEON
Thursday 1:20-3:15 in 5257 Humanities
Office hours: Tuesday 2-4 pm [Zoom]

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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 Dec. 2. You will be share them and discuss them in peer review groups. You will do written and oral peer reviews of 3 or 4 papers by your fellow students. Final paper is due Dec. 16. 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 course packet available at the Copy Center in 6120 Sewell Hall (the Social Sciences Building) or on reserve in H.C. White.

CREDIT HOURS & WORK LOAD:

The credit standard for this 3-credit course is met by an expectation of a total of 135 hours of student engagement with the course's learning activities (at least 45 hours per credit or 9 hours per week), which include regularly scheduled meeting times (group seminar meetings of 115 minutes most weeks), reading, research, writing, individual consultations with the instructor, and other student work as described in the syllabus.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Develop research skills and the ability to read difficult, unfamiliar texts
Improve written and oral communication skills and hone critical thinking skills by exploring unexpected historical events and diverse human reactions
Assess, interpret, and integrate diverse primary sources for a major research project
Craft an original argument in dialogue with existing secondary work
Conceptualize and compose a lengthy research paper
Analyze and reflect on deep-rooted and varied human issues, still present today, such as:
 Why and how do certain individuals forge power so effectively, or so dangerously, in any given context?
 What possible relationships exist between military power and political power?
 Why is it difficult to maintain a democratic system?
 What are the nature and consequences of empire-building?
 How do colonized peoples appropriate, resist, or negotiate with imperial forces from outside?
Debate and make concrete & understandable various core interpretive concepts, such as “agency”, “contingency”, “structure”, “ideology”, etc.
Gain greater understanding of the dynamics of the Napoleonic era and assess its impacts on the emerging modern world, both in Europe and beyond

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>.

NOTE-TAKING STYLE

For the papers and bibliography, use the “Chicago-Turabian Style” as outlined on the UW Writing Center website: <https://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/DocChicago.html>. That website gives examples of how to cite various sources. You can use either endnotes or footnotes. Here is a basic footnote¹:

¹Louis Gottschalk and Margaret Maddox, *Lafayette in the French Revolution, through the October Days* (Chicago, 1969), 231-235.

Here is the same text as a bibliography entry:

Gottschalk, Louis and Margaret Maddox. *Lafayette in the French Revolution, through the October Days*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969.

COVID-19: This course meets in person. To protect one another, we will all follow UW-Madison policy on masking indoors in buildings and classrooms. Office hours for the moment will happen via Zoom, but I hope to change that. If anyone falls ill or needs to quarantine, I will set up a computer in our classroom to facilitate class participation from quarantine via Zoom. I will make adjustments in assignments and due dates for any student who becomes sick and needs flexibility.

Week 1: (Sept. 9) INTRODUCTION

Week 2: (Sept. 16) YOUNG NAPOLEON BONAPARTE: LOVE, WAR, & POLITICS

* David A. Bell, Napoleon: A Very Short Introduction (2018) or Napoleon: A Concise Biography (2015), [=the same book], Chapters 1 & 2, [pp. 1-45 or 1-43]

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. 23) FROM CONSUL TO EMPEROR: NAPOLEON & POWER

* Bell, Napoleon: A Very Short Introduction (2018) or Napoleon: A Concise Biography (2015), Chapter 3, [pp. 46-67 or 43-63]

Philip Dwyer, Citizen Emperor, 116-137, 161-182

Suzanne Desan, 30" Lecture on St-Domingue & Louisiana: "Atlantic Ambitions", access to streaming via Canvas

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. 30) CONQUERING EUROPE: NAPOLEON AS MILITARY LEADER

* Bell, Napoleon: A Very Short Introduction (2018) or Napoleon: A Concise Biography (2015), Chapter 4 [pp. 68-88 or 64-83]

* Rafe Blaufarb, ed. Napoleonic Foot Soldiers and Civilians (Boston, 2011), 1-58, 65-72

Gunther Rothenberg, The Napoleonic Wars (N.Y., 2006), 22-37, 64-92

Alan Forrest, Napoleon's Men, ix-xv, 92-104

Week 5: (Oct. 7) RULING THE EMPIRE

Alexander Grab, Napoleon and the Transformation of Europe, 19-33

Ute Planert, "From Collaboration to Resistance: Politics, Experience, and Memory of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars in Southern Germany," Central European History 39 (2006): 676-705.

Rafe Blaufarb, ed., Napoleon: Symbol for an Age, 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, Monday, Oct. 11 at 5 pm in my Box #5013 on the 5th floor of Humanities; Document analysis

Week 6: (Oct. 14) INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS

Week 7: (Oct. 21) NAPOLEON'S FALL AND LEGACY

* Bell, Napoleon: A Very Short Introduction (2018) or Napoleon: A Concise Biography (2015), Chapter 5 & Epilogue, [89-120 or 84-113]

* Rafe Blaufarb, ed. Napoleonic Foot Soldiers and Civilians, 76-101, 123-147

Alan Forrest, Napoleon, 295-331

Documents on St. Helena: J.C. Herold, ed., The Mind of Napoleon, 272-281; & R.M. Johnston, ed., In the Words of Napoleon 321-329

Week 8: (Oct. 28) INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS

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

Week 9: (Nov. 4) WRITING A RESEARCH PAPER

*** BIBLIOGRAPHY of primary and secondary sources due Thursday, Nov. 4 at class

Reading = Sample Student Papers by previous history 600 students:

“Spanish Lower Clergy in the Napoleonic Peninsular Campaign: The Real Power behind Guerilla Warfare”

“On the ‘Throne of Hairdressing’: Hairdos and Heroics in the Mémoires of Léonard Autié” (not on Napoleonic era, but still a good example)

We will have a visit from a Writing Lab Instructor.

Week 10: (Nov. 11) INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS

*** OUTLINE due at your meeting with me.

Week 11: (Nov. 18) ORAL PRESENTATIONS

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

*** Oral presentation of your project.

Week 12: EXTENDED OFFICE HOURS TBA

No Class due to Thanksgiving

Week 13: (Dec. 2) EXCHANGE OF DRAFTS

*** Rough drafts due THURSDAY, DEC. 2 at class.

***Peer Review of each other’s drafts

Week 14: (Dec. 9) PEER REVIEWS

I will possibly try to schedule the peer reviews earlier in the week than our Thursday class time.

*** Final Paper due on THURSDAY, Dec. 16