This course is a social, political, and cultural history of the French Revolution and Napoleonic era. After briefly surveying French society, economy, and politics at the end of the Old Regime, we will examine the origins of the Revolution and follow its course through increasingly radical stages, a conservative reaction, and the return to one-man rule under Napoleon Bonaparte. Although the course will focus largely on events in France, the Revolution had such important effects across Europe and the Americas that we will necessarily also consider the export of revolutionary ideas and institutions and the consequences of the revolutionary wars.

These are some of the questions to which we will seek answers in our survey of the French Revolution, its impact, and its legacy at home and abroad:

♦ What part did the new ideas of the Enlightenment play in the breakdown of the Old Regime?
♦ How did growing resentment against social inequities, disenchantment with divine right monarchy, and economic crisis also contribute to the breakdown of the Old Regime?
♦ Why did attempts to reform the old system fail, and why did the Revolution subsequently turn violent?
♦ When the attempt to replace absolutism with constitutional monarchy broke down, why was Louis XVI not just removed from the throne but executed as a traitor to France?
♦ Why did France go to war with the rest of Europe, and how did this lead to the Revolution’s most radical stage, the period known as the Terror?
♦ Just how bad was the Terror—what did it mean for the average French man or woman—and how was the yoke of revolutionary dictatorship ultimately thrown off?
♦ How did it happen that, just a few years after the return to republican rule, a soldier of fortune named Napoleon Bonaparte was able to seize power and establish himself at the head of yet another new government?
♦ Why did Napoleon go on to crown himself emperor, establishing a court and even a new aristocracy to replace the ones the Revolution had destroyed?
♦ What was the impact of Napoleonic rule on the average French citizen, and what survived of his achievements when he was toppled from his throne with military defeat?
♦ What was the impact of Napoleonic rule on the parts of Europe that he conquered, and what long-term consequences did his seizure of power have for the European state system?
♦ Why is the heritage of the French Revolution—from the proud proclamation of universal civil rights to the invention of new forms of tyranny—still contested today?

**Required Books:** (all available at the BU Barnes and Noble Bookstore)

- Laura Mason and Tracey Rizzo, *The French Revolution: A Document Collection* (Houghton Mifflin) [listed below as “Mason”]
- Timothy Tackett, *When the King Took Flight* (Harvard)
- Martyn Lyons, *Napoleon Bonaparte and the Legacy of the French Revolution* (St. Martin’s)
- Rafe Blaufarb, *Napoleon: Symbol for an Age: A Brief History with Documents* (Bedford/St. Martin’s)
Course Requirements:

Class meetings will combine lecture with discussion of course readings. **Written work will include three 6-8 page papers on topics related to the assigned readings and three objective quizzes (two in-semester quizzes plus one final quiz).** The three papers constitute the most important part of your grade and demonstrate your ability to synthesize the material you read into coherent arguments and persuasive explanations of historical change. The quizzes encourage you to keep up with the material presented in reading and lecture and to master a working knowledge of key events and participants in the Revolution and Napoleonic era.

I will announce the quizzes a week in advance and will give three during the course of the semester. I will drop the lowest grade of the three but will not give make-up quizzes. A fourth and mandatory objective quiz will be given on **Tuesday, May 8, between 9 and 11 am.** This is the course’s assigned final examination slot; do not ask to take the quiz early. The final quiz will be cumulative in scope and count for 10% of your final grade. **The first paper is due in class on Thursday, February 16** and will focus on the causes of the Revolution and initial attempts to create a constitutional monarchy. **The second paper is due in class on Thursday, March 27** and will deal with the radicalization of the Revolution and the causes and consequences of the Terror. **The third paper/take-home final is due on Tuesday, May 8** and will focus on the Napoleonic period and impact of the French Revolution. Questions for each paper will be distributed two weeks in advance of their due date.

**Grade scale:**

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**Grades based on written work will be subject to a half-grade adjustment up or down for class participation.** That is to say, you can raise your mark half a grade through unusually good participation in class discussion or lower it for abnormally poor attendance and/or failure to prepare and participate in discussion of assigned readings.

Please note that **all written work must be delivered in hard copy.** I cannot assume responsibility for downloading and printing out your assignments. If you cannot bring a paper to me in class, bring it to the History Department office (226 Bay State Road, room 308) and give it to the department secretary to put in my mailbox. As a safety feature, you should email me a back-up copy as a “doc” or “docx” file, so that I know exactly when the paper was turned in, but it is the hard copy that I will grade.

I expect students to attend class regularly and to contact me if illness or other serious problems cause them to miss more than a very occasional class. I also expect them to contact me ahead of time if they will miss a paper deadline, to provide a valid excuse for that missed deadline, and to make up the missed work as soon as possible. **Unexcused late papers will be marked down a half grade (e.g.: B+ becomes B) for every weekday they are late.** Finally, I expect students to adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty as outlined in the university’s **Academic Conduct Code**, available online at <www.bu.edu/cas/students/undergrad/resources/code/> All work handed in for credit must be your own. I will refer cases of suspected academic misconduct to the Dean’s Office and assign a grade of “F” for the course to any student whose work is judged by the Dean after a hearing to be plagiarized. If you are unsure what constitutes plagiarism, I would be happy to talk about this (or any other subject) with you in my office hours.

I encourage students to come by my office to introduce themselves early in the semester and to make liberal use of my office hours for questions, problems, and additional discussion of matters raised in lectures or reading. If you cannot make my office hours, you should phone, e-mail, or stop me after class to set up an alternative time to meet. I check my e-mail at least once a day and am happy to use this medium for setting up appointments and answering queries, but please do not expect me to go over lectures or reading at length in emails. You should plan instead to come speak to me in my office.
Cell phones and other communication devices should neither be seen nor heard in class. They distract you, your fellow students, and me. For the same reason, you may use computers only to take notes in class.

Please note that the last day to drop courses without a “W” is Tuesday, February 21. The last day to drop with a “W” is Friday, March 30.

Course Outline:

Readings should be completed by the day for which they are assigned. Please bring Rousseau, the Mason book, and Blaufarb to class on the dates for which readings are assigned in them; we will sometimes want to examine passages from these documents in class.

1 Tu 1/17 Introduction: The Problem of the French Revolution

2 Th 1/19 Society and Politics in the Old Regime
Reading: Neely, Introduction and chapter 1; Mason, 1-24.
Assignment: Prepare to discuss Loyseau’s “Treatise on Orders” (Mason, 16-24). How did the hierarchical structures of society generate tensions among various social groups?

3 Tu 1/24 Government Under the Last Three Louis
Reading: Mason, 24-29; Rousseau’s Social Contract, books 1 and 2.
Assignment: Prepare to discuss the role of Parlement and its relationship to the king. How did the self-interest of members of Parlement conflict with that of the king they served?

4 Th 1/26 The Enlightenment: The Role of Ideas
Reading: Mason, 32-36; Rousseau’s Social Contract, books 3 and 4.
Assignment: Prepare to discuss the Enlightenment’s critique of Old Regime political and social structures. What does Rousseau propose to put in its stead, and how does The Social Contract undermine the political structures of the Old Regime?

5 Tu 1/31 The Reform Crisis and Aristocratic Revolt
Reading: Neely, chapter 2; Mason, 29-32 and 42-48.
Assignment: Prepare to discuss (1) Necker’s purpose in making the king’s accounts public and (2) the way in which des Essarts’s “The Noailles Affair” shows a growing anger against the nobility. What characteristics are ascribed to the nobility in the latter document?

6 Th 2/2 The Calling of the Estates General
Reading: Neely, 55-64; Mason, 49-58.
Assignment: Prepare to discuss Abbé Sieyès’s “What Is the Third Estate?” and the Cahiers de Doléances of St. Germain-Airan and Vire. What do these documents tell us about a growing atmosphere of discontent?

7 Tu 2/7 The Meeting of the Estates
Reading: Neely, 64-69; Mason, 58-66.
Assignment: Prepare to discuss the “Declaration of the National Assembly” and the documents concerning the Royal Session. How has the Third Estate radicalized its position by June 17, and how does the king respond?

8 Th 2/9 Revolution in Paris and the Provinces
Reading: Neely, 69-84; Mason, 67-75 and 101-104.
Assignment: Prepare to discuss the impact of urban and rural revolts and the reasons for the surrender of feudal rights in August 1789. Why did the people of Paris storm the Bastille, and what were the causes and consequences of the “Great Fear”?
9 Tu 2/14  The Work of the Constituent Assembly  
Reading: Neely, chapter 4; Mason, 75-101.  
Assignment: Prepare to discuss the debate over the royal veto and the motives for the women’s march to Versailles. Why was the question of the veto such a tricky one?

10 Th 2/16  Legislateing the New Regime: What Rights and for Whom?  
Reading: Mason, 105-137; begin reading Tackett, When the King Took Flight.  
Assignment: Prepare to discuss the problems of civil rights and ending the seigneurial regime. Why were some people considered more deserving of rights than others, and why did the August decrees not end unrest in the countryside?  
Assignment: First Paper is due in class; a selection of topics will be given out two weeks in advance.

Tu 2/21  No class: Monday schedule

11 Th 2/23  The Constituent Divided  
Reading: Neely, chapter 5; Mason, 138-156; finish Tackett, When the King Took Flight.  
Assignment: Prepare to discuss the debate over the Civil Constitution of the Clergy and the motives for the king’s flight to Varennes. What did Louis XVI hope to gain by this, and what were the consequences of his flight?

12 Tu 2/28  The Fall of the Monarchy  
Reading: Neely, chapter 6; Mason, 157-174.  
Assignment: Prepare to discuss the debates over war and the king’s suspension. Why did France go to war, and how did this help bring about the fall of the monarchy?

13 Th 3/1  Political Struggles of the Convention  
Reading: Neely, chapter 7; Mason, 174-187.  
Assignment: Prepare to discuss the king’s trial. Was it really necessary to kill the king?

14 Tu 3/6  The Nation Under Arms; The Revolution in Crisis  
Reading: Neely, 189-211; Mason, 197-220; Palmer, 3-43.  
Assignment: Prepare to discuss the role of popular movements in radicalizing the Revolution. Who were the sans-culottes, and what did they demand of the government?

15 Th 3/8  The Machinery of Terror  
Reading: Neely, 211-220; Mason, 221-236; Palmer, 44-129.  
Assignment: Prepare to discuss the legislation instituting the Terror in 1793. Why did the Convention keep extending the scope of this legislation, and with what consequences?

Tu 3/13 and Th 3/15: No class; spring break

16 Tu 3/20  The Republic of Virtue and the Culture of Revolution  
Reading: Mason, 244-254; Palmer, 130-253.  
Assignment: Prepare to discuss the impact of the terror on the provinces. Why was the Terror so much fiercer in some parts of provincial France than in others?

17 Th 3/22  The Jacobins Under Pressure and the Coup of 9 Thermidor  
Reading: Mason, 236-244 and 254-262; Palmer, 254-396.  
Assignment: Prepare to discuss the problem of winding down the Terror. Why did Robespierre and his allies rachet up the Terror in the winter of 1794, instead of relaxing arbitrary measures on the ground that the Fatherland was no longer in danger?
18 Tu 3/27  The Thermidan Reaction and Creation of the Directory
Reading: Neely, 221-226; Mason, 263-279.
Assignment: Second Paper is due in class; a selection of topics will be given out two weeks in advance.

19 Th 3/29  The Directory at Home and at War
Reading: Lyons, 1-29; Mason, 281-333; Blaufarb, pp. 1-42.
Assignment: Prepare to discuss the ways in which the experience of the Terror influenced the government created under the Directory. Why was it so hard to create a stable government?

20 Tu 4/3  Bonaparte Comes to Power
Reading: Lyons, 29-42; Mason, 334-336; Blaufarb, 43-56 and 158-168.
Assignment: Prepare to discuss the motives Bonaparte and his co-conspirators had for seizing power in the Brumaire coup. Were their actions justified? Why, or why not?

21 Th 4/5  Bonaparte Consolidates Power
Reading: Lyons, 43-110; Mason, 336-348; Blaufarb, 56-75.
Assignment: Prepare to discuss the steps Bonaparte took to preserve what he saw as the gains of the Revolution. Why was obtaining a religious settlement so important to him, and how would you assess the terms on which his settlement was made?

22 Tu 4/10  The Empire at Home
Reading: Lyons, 111-194; Blaufarb, 75-117.
Assignment: Prepare to discuss Napoleon's reasons for making himself emperor. Was he motivated by selfish ambition or by France's best interests, as he claimed?

23 Th 4/12  The Empire at War
Reading: Lyons, 195-228; Blaufarb, 118-139.
Assignment: Prepare to discuss Napoleon's military ambitions. Was there a point at which he might have lived at peace with Europe's other rulers? If so, when was this point reached, and on what terms might a lasting peace have been established?

24 Tu 4/17  The Napoleonic Revolution in Europe and the Atlantic World
Reading: Lyons, 229-260; Mason, 348-351; Blaufarb, 140-157 and 168-174.
Assignment: Prepare to discuss the ways in which Napoleon altered not only the map but also laws and culture in many parts of Europe. What were the gains and losses experienced by territories that came under his rule? How would you assess the successes and failures of his policies in the New World?

25 Th 4/19  The Great Reversal
Reading: Lyons, 261-94; Blaufarb, 175-194.
Assignment: Prepare to discuss the reasons why Napoleon continued, despite serious losses, to make war. Might he have avoided the quagmires of Spain and Russia, and, if so, how? How did the growth of a new nationalism in Germany further weaken Napoleon's power in central Europe?

26 Tu 4/24  Waterloo and Abdication
Reading: Blaufarb, 195-203.
Assignment: Prepare to discuss the problems that beset the Bourbon Restoration and the continuing support that Napoleon enjoyed. Why was Napoleon successful in reclaiming the throne and fighting on for the Hundred Days?

Th 4/26  No class
**The Legacy of the French Revolution and Napoleon**

**Reading:** Lyons, 294-300; Blaufarb, 204-213.

**Assignment:** Prepare to discuss the continuities between the Revolution and the Napoleonic era and the lasting changes both eras made to French (and European) politics, society, and culture. How would you assess the positive and negative impact of these eras?

**Th 5/3**

Make-up class and review session

**Tu 5/8**

**Final quiz 9:00-11:00 a.m.**

**Assignment:** The final quiz will be multiple choice and short answer and should take less than an hour. It will be cumulative in scope but weighted toward material covered in the later part of the semester. **The third paper/take-home final is due at the time of the quiz.**