The French Revolution and Napoleon

Professor James H. Johnson

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Office hours: Tuesdays 1:00-2:30, Wednesdays 2:30-4:00, and by appointment

The French Revolution and Napoleon covers a pivotal and formative moment in European history whose consequences reverberate to this day. In little more than a decade, French revolutionaries overturned almost all social and political norms. The institutions that followed included virtually every known form of rule, spanning liberalism, radical egalitarianism, conservatism, and military authoritarianism. Making sense of this is a complicated undertaking.

The course begins with France’s history of monarchy, turns to the Revolution’s origins, principal events, and animating ideas, and concludes with Napoleon as both carrier of and traitor to the Revolution’s ideals. The approach will be by turns political, social, and cultural. Its themes include the appeal and application of Enlightenment ideas, an unstable political dynamic that produced ever-greater radicalization, the persistence of both popular and institutional violence, and Napoleon’s achievements domestically and internationally. Special topics will cover the press, revolutionary festivals, women, music, and painting.

Grades - Final grades will be based on the following assignments:

- Three in-class quizzes - 5% each
- Three exams - 15% each
- Final exam - 30%
- Participation - 10%

Attendance is required in every class. For each multiple of three unexcused absences your final grade will be lowered one-third (e.g., B becomes B-). Please notify your professor of any illnesses, family emergencies, or other excused absences by email, preferably in advance of your absence.

Laptops are not permitted in class.

Academic Conduct - The work you perform in this course must be your own. Presenting the work of someone else without attribution is plagiarism, and it will be punished by an F for the assignment and possibly for the course as well, with possible further sanctions by the University Academic Conduct Committee.

The Boston University Academic Conduct Code describes plagiarism as including the following: “copying the answers of another student on an examination, copying or substantially restating the work of another person or persons in any oral or written work without citing the appropriate source, and collaboration with someone else in an academic endeavor without acknowledging his or her contribution.” The Code may be found at: http://www.bu.edu/cas/students/undergrad-resources/code/#II.
It is your responsibility to read these pages carefully and know exactly what constitutes plagiarism.

All websites consulted for use in written work must be acknowledged in your papers. Unacknowledged use of material from the internet will be considered plagiarism and punished as such.

**Faculty-in-Residence Open Hours** - I am a faculty member in residence in South Campus. Each Wednesday evening between 6:00 and 9:00 p.m. I have open hours, which usually include home-made cookies, jazz, and good conversation. The address is 522 Park Dr., Rm. 151. I hope you’ll drop by.

**Required Readings**

Keith Baker, ed., *The Old Regime and the French Revolution* (University of Chicago)
Rafe Blaufarb, *Napoleon: Symbol for an Age* (Bedford)
Lynn Hunt and Jack Censer, *The French Revolution and Napoleon: Crucible of the Modern World* (Bloomsbury)
Andrew Roberts, *Napoleon: A Life* (Penguin)
Simon Schama, *Citizens* (Random House)

**Schedule of Classes**

**January 23 - Introduction to the Course**

**January 25 - France in the “Old Regime”**

**January 28 - Discussion: Human Nature and Society**
Required Reading: Charles Loyseau, from *Treatise on Orders* (RWC, 13-31); Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet, from *Politics Derived from the Words of Holy Scripture* (RWC, 31-47)

**January 30 - The Enlightenment in France**
Required Reading: Denis Diderot, *The Definition of an Encyclopedia* (c. 1755) (RWC, 71-89)

**February 1 - Rousseau and the Social Contract**

**February 4 - Discussion: Rousseau and the Social Contract**
Required Reading: Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, Books 3 & 4

**February 6 - The Citizens’ Temperament**
Required Reading: Schama, *Citizens*, 123-62, 170-74

**February 8 - Peasants and the Countryside**
Required Reading: Schama, 305-22; “Peasant Grievances” (RWC, 208-17)

**February 11 - Workers and the City**
Required Reading: Schama, 322-32
February 13 - A Government in Crisis  
Required Reading: Schama, 388-94, 369-78

February 15 - The Press and the Revolution  
Required Reading: Hunt & Censer, The French Revolution and Napoleon, Chapter 1

February 18 - No class (Presidents’ Day)

February 19 (Substitute Monday) - Discussion: Rumblings and Resentment  
Required Reading: Emmanuel-Joseph Sièyes, What is the Third Estate? (RWC, 154-79)

February 20 - The Estates-General Convenes  
Required Reading: Schama, 333-56

February 22 - The Bastille and Its Fall  
Required Reading: Schama, 389-94, 399-406, 419-25

February 25 - Exam #1

February 27 - Discussion: The End of Feudalism and the Rights of Man  
Required Reading: Decrees of the National Assembly (RWC, 226-31); Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen (RWC, 237-39); Civil Constitution of the Clergy (RWC, 239-42); Viefville des Essars, On the Emancipation of the Negroes (RWC, 242-47)

March 1 - October, 1789  
Required Reading: Schama, 456-70; “The October Days” (RWC, 231-37)

March 4 - Festivals and the Revolution  
Required Reading: Hunt & Censer, Chapter 2  
Quiz #1

March 6 - Discussion: The Constitution and its Unfaithful King  
Required Reading: Constitution of 1791 (RWC, 249-61); Schama, 543-61

March 8 - August, 1792  
Required Reading: Schama, 597-63

March 18 - Discussion: Louis XVI on Trial  
Required Reading: Schama, 655-75; The King’s Trial (RWC, 302-24)

March 20 - Music and the Revolution  
Required Reading: Hunt and Censer, Chapter 3

March 22 - Jacobins and Girondis  
Required Reading: Schama, 714-46

March 25 - Exam #2
March 27 - The Reign of Terror
   Required Reading: “Make Terror the Order of the Day” (RWC, 342-62)

March 29 - Discussion: Maximilien Robespierre
   Required Reading: Report on the Principles of Political Morality (RWC, 368-84)

April 1 - Radical Jacobinism
   Required Reading: Schama, 793-832; Festival of the Supreme Being (RWC, 384-91)

April 3 - Women and the Revolution
   Required Reading: Schama, 793-832; Olympe de Gouges, Declaration of the Rights of Woman (RWC, 261-68)
   Quiz #2

April 5 - Thermidor and its Aftermath
   Required Reading: Schama, 822-47

April 8 - Napoleonic France
   Required Reading: Blaufarb, Napoleon: Symbol for an Age, 1-29; Roberts, xxxiv-xliv

April 10 - General Bonaparte
   Required Reading: Roberts, Napoleon: A Life, 53-73, 132 (from “Since the campaign had begun”) -137, 161-84

April 12 - Painting and Napoleon
   Required Reading: Hunt & Censer, Chapter 5

April 15 - No class (Patriots’ Day)

April 17 - Napoleon Consolidates Power
   Required Reading: Roberts 327-56; Blaufarb, 52-69, 79-81

April 19 - The Empire in Europe
   Required Reading: Hunt and Censer, Chapter 6; Roberts, 527-51; Blaufarb, 140-49
   Quiz #3

April 22 - The Empire at Home
   Required Reading: Roberts, 463-73 (to “He simply could not bear winning”); Blaufarb, 96-117

April 24 - Exam #3

April 26 - Discussion: Liberator or Tyrant?
   Required Reading: Blaufarb, 70-75, 127-37, 140-57

April 29 - Waterloo and St. Helena
   Required Reading: Roberts, 740-802

May 1 - Review and Conclusion

May 11 - Final Exam, 12:30-2:30 p.m.