

OLD REGIME AND REVOLUTIONARY FRANCE

History 303, Fall 2020

Professor Michael Kwass

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Preferred Pronouns: he, him, his

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Course Objectives

This course surveys the social, political, and cultural history of old regime and revolutionary France. We will examine such themes as the structure of old-regime society, the rise of absolutism during the reign of Louis XIV, the ideas of the Enlightenment, the formation of an overseas empire, and the outbreak of the French and Haitian Revolutions. Lectures will introduce chronological and thematic background material, while readings and discussion will focus on specific historical texts, problems, and events.

Required Readings (available for purchase at the JHU bookstore [<https://tinyurl.com/JHU-F20-100-303-01>] and on e-reserve at the JHU Library)

Doyle, ed., *Old Regime France*

Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre*

Molière, *The Misanthrope and Other Plays*

Corneille, *The Cid, Cinna, The Theatrical Illusion*

Beik, *Louis XIV and Absolutism*

Farge and Revel, *The Vanishing Children of Paris*

Dubois and Garrigus, *Slave Revolution in the Caribbean, 1789-1804*

PLEASE NOTE: Several additional required readings have been placed on e-reserve at the JHU library.

Course Requirements

This seminar is designed to impart the skills of reading, writing, and discussing history in a critical fashion. I will give short lectures providing historical background on readings, but the class will mainly be oriented to discussion. The day before discussion (by 10pm EST), students are expected to post via Blackboard at least one question on the reading that aims to prompt class discussion. Students should post a short statement (a few sentences will suffice) that explains why this question is significant and how it might provoke useful debate. The questions can be specific or general, but they should be designed with discussion in mind. After each lecture, students will be divided into small break-out discussion groups, pool their questions, and select one question (and one back-up question) to be put on the board for the class to consider. Students will then reunite as a class, Gregory Smaldone, a designated student, and I will use the questions on the board in addition to our own questions to co-lead class discussion. **Everyone is expected to contribute to discussion. Class participation is worth 25% of your grade.**

Students are also expected to write three double-spaced 6-7-page papers based on class readings. The papers will be due on October 8, November 10, and December 16. Each paper is worth 25% of your grade. Papers are to be formatted as Word documents and sent both to me and Gregory Smaldone via email attachment by 4:00 pm on the day they are due.

Please Note:

1) The strength of the university depends on academic and personal integrity. In this course, you must be honest and truthful. Ethical violations include plagiarism, reuse of assignments, improper use of the Internet and electronic devices, unauthorized collaboration, alteration of graded assignments, forgery and falsification, lying, facilitating academic dishonesty, and unfair competition. Please report any violations you witness to the instructor. For more information, see <https://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/policies-guidelines/undergrad-ethics/>.

2) JHU provides students with mental health services and counseling. Feel free to make use of them. For information, visit <https://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/counselingcenter/>

3) Please don't forget to register to vote. Democracies are fragile and depend on the active participation of citizens like you.

Course Schedule

I. The Society of Old Regime France

Week 1 (Sept 1 and Sept 3): Introduction to Class

T: Distribute and review syllabi. Introduction to early modern society.

Th: Lecture on Social Hierarchy. Discussion of Doyle, *Old Regime France*, 42-54; and Loyseau, "A Treatise on Orders," in Baker, ed., *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*, 13-31, on e-reserve. **Schedule discussion leaders: everyone must lead discussion once.**

Week 2 (Sept 8 and 10): The Peasantry

T: Lecture on Social Hierarchy. Doyle, *Old Regime France*, 62-8; and Davis, *Martin Guerre*, 1-61.

Th: Lecture on Peasantry (slides on les Bories). Discussion of Davis, *Martin Guerre*, 62-125.

Week 3 (Sept 15 and 17): The Bourgeoisie

T: Lecture on the Bourgeoisie, Artisans, and Urban Life. Discussion of Doyle, *Old Regime France*, 69-75; and Molière, *The Misanthrope and Other Plays*, "The Would-Be Gentleman," 3-22 (Acts 1 and 2).

Th: Lecture on the Bourgeoisie, Artisans, and Urban Life. Molière, *The Misanthrope and Other Plays*, "The Would-Be Gentleman," 22-62 (Acts 3-5).

Week 4 (Sept 22 and 24): The Nobility

T: Lecture on the Nobility. Discussion of Doyle, *Old Regime France*, 57-62; and Corneille, *The Cid, Cinna, The Theatrical Illusion*, "The Cid," Acts I-II.

Th: Lecture on the Nobility. Corneille, *The Cid*, *Cinna*, *The Theatrical Illusion*, “The Cid,” Acts III-V. **Distribute Essay Questions for First Essay and Writing Guidelines.**

II. Absolutism and the Rise of Louis XIV

Week 5 (Sept 29 and Oct 1): Absolutism

T: Lecture on Absolutism. Discussion of Beik, *Louis XIV and Absolutism*, 1-16; and Bossuet, “Politics Derived from the Words of Holy Scripture,” in Baker, ed., *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*, 31-47, on e-reserve.

Th: Lecture on Absolutism (slides of Versailles). Discussion of Beik, 82-90 and 108-120; and Dubois and Garrigou, *Slave Revolution in the Caribbean, 1789-1804*, 49-54 (The Code Noir).

Week 6 (Oct 6 and 8): Absolutism: Versailles, Provinces, and Colonies

T: Lecture on Absolutism. Discussion of Beik, 50-81.

Th: No Class. **First Drafts of Paper Due**

III. The Eighteenth Century: Absolutism Challenged

Week 7 (Oct 13 and 15): The Enlightenment I

T: Lecture on Enlightenment. Discussion of Doyle, *Old Regime France*, 78-82, 89-104; Voltaire, “Reflections on Religion” on e-reserve.

Th: Lecture on Enlightenment. Discussion of Diderot, “Encyclopedia,” on reserve; and Rousseau, “Discourse on the Arts and Sciences” (also known as “Discourse Which Won the Prize of the Academy of Dijon...” or “The First Discourse”), on reserve.

Week 8 (Oct 20 and 22): The Enlightenment II

T: Lecture on Enlightenment. Discussion of Rousseau, “Discourse on the Origin of Inequality,” on reserve; “The Social Contract,” on reserve; and Abbé Raynal, *Philosophical and Political History of the Settlements and Trade of the Europeans in the East and West Indies* (1770), excerpt from: <https://revolution.chnm.org/items/show/572>, on reserve.

Th: Fall Break

Week 9 (Oct 27 and 29): Parliamentary Politics

T: Lecture on Parlements. Discussion of Doyle, 155-60; and “Remonstrance of the Cour des Aides,” in Baker, ed., *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*, 51-60, on reserve.

Th: Lecture on Parlements. Discussion of Doyle, 207-212, 215-222; and “Remonstrance of the Cour des Aides,” in Baker, ed., *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*, 60-70, on reserve.

Distribute Essay Questions for Second Paper

Week 10 (Nov 3 and 5): Popular Politics and Social Change in the Eighteenth Century

T: Lecture on Popular Politics. Discussion of Farge and Revel, *The Vanishing Children of Paris*, 1-79. **Don’t forget to vote!**

Th: Lecture on Eighteenth-Century Social Change and Colonial Expansion. Discussion of Farge and Revel, *The Vanishing Children of Paris*, 81-132.

IV. The French Revolution

Week 11 (Nov 10 and 12): The Origins of the French Revolution / The Liberal Revolution

T: Lecture on Political Crisis and the Calling of the Estates General. Discussion of Mason, 10-15, and Sieyes, "What is the Third Estate" in Baker, ed., *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*, 155-79, on reserve. **Second Paper Due.**

Th: Lecture on Liberal Revolution. Discussion of Mason, 67 (introductory paragraph only), 69-73, 73-75, 83-87.

Week 12 (Nov 17 and 19): From Liberal to Republican Revolution: Politics High and Low

Tue: Lecture on Transition from Liberal to Republican Revolution. Discussion of Mason, 89-97, 101-104, 144-152, 167, 177-187.

Th: Lecture on Republican Revolution. Discussion of Mason, 189-195 (stop at the Thermidorian Reaction), 197-198, 204-206, 254-258, 258-262.

Week 13 (Nov 24 and 26): Thanksgiving VacationWeek 14 (Dec 1 and Dec 3): The Haitian Revolution

Tue: Lecture on the Haitian Revolution. Discussion of Dubois and Garrigus, 67-70, 70-72, 75-8, 78-82, 82-83, 84-85, and 86-88.

Th: Lecture on the Haitian Revolution. Discussion of Dubois and Garrigus, 93-94, 95-99, 120-125, 129-132, 167-170, 188-191, and 191-196. **Handout essay questions for final paper.**

Week 15 (Dec 8):

Tue: No Class

Third paper due on December 16