The French Revolution was one of the great defining events of modern history, and for many historians it marks the very beginning of “modernity” itself. The Revolutionary period was a time of extremes: on one hand it promised a new social order governed by universal suffrage, women’s rights, and civil equality; on the other hand, the Revolution unleashed horrifying violence and oppression, most notoriously in the form of the Terror and its famous guillotine. Even as the Revolution unfolded, contemporaries struggled to understand it, and historians have continued the debate ever since. By studying historians’ diverse interpretations, we can learn much about the practice of history itself.

The goal of this course is for students to move from consumers to producers of history, and we will use the French Revolution and its debates to frame the process of formulating a historical question, conducting research, and writing a polished paper. In addition to the main texts assigned, we will investigate a series historical texts interpreting the event that came to be recognized as the Revolution’s most important moment: the fall of the Bastille on 14 July 1789.

**Reading**
Most of the assigned course reading will be available via the Zotero group or otherwise online, but the following two books are also required. The first provides a good background to the Revolution, and the second contains edited examples of scholarship on the Revolution that we’ll examine along with our other reading. The Kates volume will also be particularly helpful as you explore Revolutionary historiography with an eye toward planning your research paper.


**Course Requirements**
Students will be expected to (1) read the required texts by the class meetings and contribute to class discussion in every meeting; (2) conduct primary source research in a library or physical archive on the topic they choose of their senior thesis; (3) complete
short written assignments as outlined in the class schedule; (4) write a typed, double-spaced, footnoted first draft of the thesis, (5) critique other students' first drafts; and (6) complete a final draft (ca. 20-25 page) senior thesis in response to comments and criticism from me and fellow students. I will distribute to you a list of suggested topics, and all topics must be approved by me. All students are required to use Zotero (http://zotero.org) to prepare and organize their research. Although the short written assignments may seem onerous, they will greatly help you to move through the research and writing process in a smooth and timely fashion.

**Special Accommodations**
If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at (703) 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office. The need for accommodations should be identified at the beginning of the semester and the specific accommodation has to be arranged through the Disability Resource Center. Faculty cannot provide accommodations to students on their own.

**Grading**
Short assignments (20%); presentations and classroom participation (30%); final draft and related Zotero library and research notes (50%).

**Schedule**

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| Sep 2 | **Course Overview:**  
What is the French Revolution?  
Introduction to Zotero |
| 9    | *Wikipedia*, “The Storming of the Bastille”  
Popkin  
**Zotero installed and synchronized with the class library** |
| 16   | **Analysis of Multiple Versions**  

23

Library Visit
One page report on proposed research topic due Friday, 9/25
(relevant sources/notes should already be in Zotero)

30

Michelet vs. Taine

Oct 7

Primary Sources
Two other readings TBD.
Annotated bibliography due in our class Zotero group

14

Bicentennial Histories
D. M. G. Sutherland, France, 1789–1815: Revolution and Counterrevolution (London: Fontana, 1985), 63–68. (Zotero group)

21

Return of the Bourgeoisie
Outline due - submit as a standalone note in Zotero
Gendering the Revolution

Nov 4 Colonial Dimensions

First draft due

11 Group 1 Individual meetings to discuss papers

18 Group 2 Individual meetings to discuss papers

Thanksgiving Break

Dec 2 Group 1 presents papers

Dec 9 Group 2 presents papers

FINAL DRAFTS DUE