This course will introduce primarily second-year students to the study of European history through an involved examination of a particular historical episode. We will be looking at conventional questions of political and diplomatic history, as well as newer questions of social and cultural history. Students will be working in both primary sources (that is, sources written at the time of the events taking place) and secondary sources (sources written by historians). Because of the small size of the class, we will be able to spend a considerable amount of time both in discussion and working on students' writing.

The course is structured in two parts. In Part I, we will work through the French Revolution chronologically, emphasizing how primary sources can be related to a present-day textbook narrative. In Part II, will examine the Revolution thematically, through such topics as the Catholic Church, the army, male and female gender roles, etc.

Requirements:

The following should be purchased at the Oberlin College Bookstore:

Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Old Regime and the French Revolution* (originally published 1856)
Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the French Revolution* (originally published 1790)
Tom Paine, *The Rights of Man* (originally published 1791)

These readings are also available on reserve. Other primary documents will be distributed as handouts in class.

Discussion:

Approximately 50 percent of students' final grade will depend on their ability to contribute to classroom discussions. Successful discussions inevitably depend on timely and thorough completions of the readings. It also should go without saying that regular attendance is mandatory, though as a matter of principle I will take attendance only if it proves necessary. In Part I of the course, I will distribute questions about the readings in advance in order to facilitate and structure the discussions.
In Part II of the course, each student will be expected to prepare one presentation of about 15-20 minutes on a particular topic. They will choose from topics on a sign-up sheet. Bibliographical assistance will be provided. Students should also plan to go over the basics of their presentations in advance with the instructor. Members of the class will be expected to ask questions of the presenters, and to make suggestions for improvements to be made for the papers.

Writing:

The other 50 percent of students' final grade will be based on three short (5-page) papers and one final exam. The first paper will require students to contrast the interpretations of Edmund Burke and Tom Paine, and reflect on how this dispute ought to inform our understanding of the Revolution of 1789. The second will assess the significance of one of the other primary documents, of the student's choosing.

The third papers will be write-ups of students' presentations. The content and structure of these papers can vary according to the topic being considered. These papers must be submitted within one week after a student's presentation. Students will need to use a standard footnote format, and to prepare a short bibliography of works cited.

Students will have the option of rewriting the three papers. They should expect to consult with the instructor before doing rewrites. Rewritten papers are due no later than one week following the return of the original paper. The final grade on the paper will be that of the second (and improved) version. But students must turn in both the original and the rewritten version. Additional ground rules may be found at the end of the syllabus.

The final exam will involve a synthesis of the last half of the course. Students will be expected to draw from their colleagues’ presentations, and the assigned collective readings. They should plan on taking notes during these presentations, and on asking questions about what they believe needs further clarification.

Schedule of Classes and Assignments:

*Part I: The French Revolution in Primary and Secondary Sources*

**Introduction**

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<th>Date</th>
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<td>September 6</td>
<td>Introduction and General Bonding</td>
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Readings: Doyle, Ch. 1; begin assignment in Tocqueville (see below)
September 8: Lecture: Overview of the French Revolution, Part I
Readings: continue in Doyle, Tocqueville

September 11: Lecture: Overview, Part II

September 13: Lecture: Overview, Part III

September 15: No class, open office hours, exclusively for History 113

The Old Regime and the Origins of the Revolution through the Eyes of Alexis de Tocqueville

September 18: The Old Regime
Readings: Doyle, Ch.2

Tocqueville, *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*, Forward, Part II, Ch. 1-2, 5-6

September 20: The Origins
Readings: Tocqueville, Part III, Ch.3-6

September 22: No class, open office hours, exclusively for History 113

The Revolution of 1789

September 25: Edmund Burke: Tradition vs. Abstraction
Readings: Doyle, pp. 37-45


September 27: Tom Paine, Principle above All

September 29: No class, open office hours, exclusively for History 113

Note: This would be a good time to visit to discuss the first paper, if useful.

October 2: No Class, Yom Kippur

October 4: The Slavery Question
Readings:

"The Abolition of Negro Slavery" (1789); Motion made by Vincent Ogé (1789); "Memoir in favor of the People of Color" (1789); "Address to the National Assembly" (1790); "Speech of Barnave" (1790); "Discussion of Troubles in the Colonies" (1792); "Decree of the National Convention" (1794); and "Speech of Chaumette," (1794) (xerox handout, 18 pages total)

**FIRST PAPER DUE**

**The Rise and Fall of the Constitutional Monarchy**

October 9: The Constitution of 1791

Readings: Doyle, pp.45-52, Ch. 4 (pp. 65-80)

Text of the 1791 constitution (xerox handout)

October 11: The Fall of the Monarchy

Readings: Doyle, pp. 52-58

Speeches on the trial of the king by Saint Just, Paine, and Robespierre (xerox handout)

October 13: No Class, open office hours, exclusively for History 113

**FALL BREAK!!**

**The Reign of Terror**

October 23: The Legal Framework

Readings: Doyle, Ch.5 (pp.81-97)

Various Decrees from the Convention, (xerox handout)

October 25: The Cultural and Political Frameworks

Readings: Description of the Inauguration of a Temple of Reason; and speech by Robespierre on the Moral and Political Principles of Domestic Policy (xerox handout)

October 27: No Class (instructor out of town)

**Rule from the Dead Center**
October 30: The Directory

Readings: Doyle, pp.58-63

The Constitution of the Year III (xerox handout)

From Bonaparte to Napoleon

November 1: The Rise of Bonaparte

Readings: Doyle, pp.63-64

Proclamation of the Directory to the French People (25 Fructidor Year V); Letter from Bonaparte to Tallyrand; Decree Transferring the Legislative Body to Saint-Cloud (18 Brumaire, Year VIII); The Brumaire Decree (19 Brumaire, Year VIII); Bonaparte's Statement upon Becoming Consul (19 Burmaire, Year VIII); Proclamation of the Council of Five Hundred (19 Brumaire, Year VIII); Proclamation of the Consuls to the French People (24 Frimaire, Year VIII), (xerox handout, 11 pages total)

November 3: From Bonaparte to Napoleon: Whither the Revolution?

Readings:

"The Imperial Religious Settlement," "The French Civil Code," "Napoleon's Policies toward Saint-Domingue" (xerox handout)

Part II: Topics

November 6: How to Do a Brilliant Presentation

Readings: Doyle, Ch. 6 (pp. 98-108)

SECOND PAPER DUE

November 8 and 10: No Class, open office hours, exclusively for History 113

Note: This would be a good time to visit to discuss future presentations.

Note: the exact schedule of presentations will be worked out with the class before spring break. The dates below are approximate.

Violence and the Terror, Week of November 13

General Assignment (for November 13-15): Simon Schama, Citizens (1989), Ch.15,
Impure Blood (xerox handout)

**Slavery and Slave Rebellion, November 20**

**General Assignment**: Schama, assignment for November 13 (see above)

- **The Church, November 27**


- **The Peasantry, November 29**


- **The Army, December 1**


- **Subsistence and the Sans Culottes, Week of December 4**

  **General Assignment**: Albert Soboul, *The Sans Culottes* (originally published in French in 1968), Part II, "The Social Aspirations of the Paris Sans Culottes" (xerox handout)

- **Women & Gender, Week of December 11**

  **General Assignment**: Lynn Hunt, "The Many Bodies of Marie Antoinette: Political Pornography and the Problem of the Feminine in the French Revolution" (xerox handout)

**Final Exam, at a time to be set by the college exam schedule**
Additional Ground Rules:

1. Due dates and page-limit requirements are to be taken most seriously. I am not in the business of persecuting students if a genuine problem exists, but in principle I strongly dislike giving extensions. Normally, I take off 1/3 of a letter grade for every 24 hours a paper is overdue.

2. Three excuses for requesting extensions will never be acceptable: 1) a self-defined character flaw of procrastination; 2) extracurricular activities, including political activism; 3) work in other classes.

3. Papers must be double-spaced and have 1-inch margins. They must also be typed or word-processed with near letter quality resolution. I will return unread any illegible paper. No written work may be submitted electronically.

4. All written work at Oberlin College is covered by the Honor Code. A handout on plagiarism will be discussed on the first day of class.

5. All written work for the course must be completed in order to pass it. That is to say, a student who receives an A on the first three papers and does not complete the fourth will fail the entire course.