

HIS237-01

The Spectacle of Modern France

Spring Semester 2019 Term 2 • M-F 1:00-2:50 p.m. CDT



Véronique de Viguier, Getty Images

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

The story of France from the eighteenth century is traditionally told through a narrative focused upon recurring political crises. France is said to have an uneasy relationship with modernization and economic competition, sliding instead into hazy nostalgia for a triumphant past rooted in the myths – and realities – of tradition, of powerful national leaders like Louis XIV and Napoleon. This class examines the contradictions of liberal democracy articulated during the revolution as well as its simultaneous engagement with image-making and theater. We then move forward chronologically through more recent historiography attending to the centrality of culture, ideas, and especially the spectacle of race and gender in shaping the nation.

COURSE GOALS

At the end of the term, students will be familiar with the principal developments and contradictions of the modern French nation from the mid-eighteenth century through the mid-twentieth. We will emphasize oral communication skills as well as active listening and response during discussions. Students will cultivate analytical thinking with both primary and secondary sources, paying particular attention to the methods and arguments employed in historical scholarship. Finally, students will strengthen their abilities to develop clear and concise written work, emphasizing the crafting of precise thesis statements and the use of carefully-chosen supporting evidence.

PRINCIPLES, REQUIREMENTS, & GRADING

Principles

As we navigate together the upside-down C19 world of online learning, please bear in mind the THRIVE principles codified at the College in the spring of 2020. These are:

Talk to improve transparency,
Health and safety must remain a top priority for our entire campus community,
Re-imagine and reconsider what is possible and necessary,
Inclusion requires flexibility,
Value all experiences of vulnerability,
Empathy requires all of us to be aware, sensitive, and responsive.

This means that above all, we are working TOGETHER as a community to learn, to push each other, to respect each other, to empathize with each other, and to be humans together. This task is made more difficult when we cannot physically BE together, so I am doubling down here on the necessity for us to embrace mutual support and grace as we move through the semester. Requirement number one, then, is that we all do our best as humans.

Class Meetings

As for the nuts and bolts, please arrive on time to synchronous meetings and be prepared to stay with the group through the scheduled end of the meeting. **Come to class having done the work listed on the syllabus for that day and collected in advance your thoughts, questions, and comments for discussion.** A fruitful conversation stems from prepared participants who come ready to engage, both by speaking AND by listening and responding to others' ideas.

We will all undoubtedly experience connectivity problems at some point or another, so let's plan to roll with those and not let them derail us. We will also experience various outside interruptions from time to time – these are par for the course – so please do your best to mute your audio and video as needed, to handle the situation with minimal disruptions to the class, and to return as soon as possible. Finally, in my roles as a pedagogue and a community member, it is most useful for me if you are able to keep your video on for the duration of synchronous meetings. Ultimately it is your decision whether to be visually present or not, and there is no penalty for going audio-only as long as you demonstrate sustained engagement with the class materials and the community in other ways.

Attendance

Because of the nature of the C19 pandemic and its effects, I am not implementing a hard and fast penalty for absences from class. However, pandemic or no, I DO value communication with you above all things. If you must miss class for whatever reason, please alert me via email as soon as possible. We can discuss ways to get materials that you missed to you.

Similarly, because participation in synchronous discussions and discussion boards is such an integral part of the class (see below), your grade will suffer from extended absences from class and boards. Please do your best to keep up at all times.

Grading

Your overall grade will be calculated according to the following formula:

Participation	30%
In Class Writing Portfolio	25%
End of Term Roundtable Presentation	15%
Take Home Final Exam	30%

Students with any form of documented disability are encouraged to contact me early in the semester so we can arrange for your learning needs to be met and for you to participate fully in the class. You will also need to provide documentation of your condition(s) to the Dean for Student Academic Support and Advising, Joyce Stern, on the third floor of the Rosenfield Center (x3702).

PARTNERS & RESOURCES

I want every person in this class to succeed and am deeply committed to creating an environment that helps make that possible. I encourage students with documented disabilities in any form to discuss reasonable accommodations with me. If you have not yet, please start a conversation about and provide documentation of your disability to Jae Hirschman, Coordinator for Student Disability Resources, at hirschma@grinnell.edu.

Grinnell's Writing, Reading, and Speaking Center supports students working on papers, projects, presentations, and applications. Schedule a session with one of the Center's professional instructors and get feedback as you interpret readings, talk through your ideas, analyze evidence, develop and organize arguments, craft introductions and conclusions, rewrite sentences and paragraphs, or plan presentations. Center instructors do not proofread papers, but they can show you how to edit your own work effectively. Make an appointment online: <http://mywco.com/grinnell>

COURSE MATERIALS**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

Robin Mitchell

Vénus Noire: Black Women and Colonial Fantasies in Nineteenth-Century France

University of Georgia Press, 2020 [ISBN: 0820354316]

Jennifer Boittin

Colonial Metropolis: The Urban Grounds of Anti-Imperialism and Feminism in Interwar Paris

University of Nebraska Press, 2015 [ISBN: 0803277067]

Additional readings (indicated by a bullet [•]) will be available on Pioneer Web, on JSTOR, or on the web. Be aware that the scheduling of all reading assignments is subject to change based on the ebb and flow of class discussions.

COURSE SCHEDULE

R 4/1 Course Introduction

F 4/2 Starting Points

- *World Atlas: The World's Most Visited Countries* (6/5/2020)
- *NYT: George Floyd Protests Stir a Difficult Debate in France* (6/16/2020)
- *NYT: Will American Ideas Tear France Apart? Some of Its Leaders Think So* (2/9/21)
- *NPR: Steps toward Diversity at the Paris Opéra Ballet* (3/30/21)

PART I: THE REVOLUTIONARY CRUCIBLE

Week 1

M 4/5 Absolutism's Éclat, Limitations, and "Enlightened" Critics

- Bossuet, *Politics Derived from the Words of Holy Scripture* [excerpts] (1709)
- Voltaire, *Treatise on Tolerance* [excerpts] (1763)
- Condorcet, *Sketch of Historical Picture of the Human Mind* [excerpts] (1795)
- Peter Burke, "Introducing Louis XIV" in *The Fabrication of Louis XIV* (1994)

T 4/6 Whose Enlightenment?

- Robert Darnton, "The High Enlightenment and the Low-Life of Literature" from *The Literary Underground of the Old Regime* (1982)

W 4/7 OFFICE HOURS

R 4/8 No synchronous class meeting: watch French Revolution lecture

F 4/9 Revolutionary First Steps

- *Cahiers de Doléances* [excerpts] (1789)
- Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen (1789)
- Olympe de Gouges, Declaration of the Rights of Woman (1791)
- Petition of the Jews (1790)

Week 2

M 4/12 Revolutionary Insiders/Outsiders I

- Joan Wallach Scott, "French Feminists and the Rights of 'Man'" *History Workshop* 28 (1989) <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4288921>

T 4/13 Revolutionary Radicalization

- Constitution of 1793
- Robespierre, "Report on the Principles of Political Morality" (Feb 1794)
- The Festival of the Supreme Being (8 June 1794)
- Babeuf, *The Plebeians' Manifesto* [excerpts] (1795)

W 4/14 OFFICE HOURS

R 4/15 Revolutionary Insiders/Outsiders II

- Akala, Oxford Union Address [excerpt on the Haitian Revolution]
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FVBoy2b97Jo>
- Constitution of Haiti (1805)
- Johnhenry Gonzalez, “The New World ‘sans-culottes’: French Revolutionary Ideology in Saint-Domingue” in Hendrix and Baumgold, eds., *Colonial Exchanges* (2017), pp. 100-115
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvnb7mcv.9>

F 4/16 Revolutionary Memory

- Nathan H. Dize, “Monumental L’Ouverture: French/Haitian Sites of Memory and the Commemoration of Abolition” (2018) <https://ageofrevolutions.com/2018/04/09/>

PART II: SPECTACLE AND CONSUMPTION

Week 3

M 4/19 No synchronous class meeting: watch Nineteenth Century lecture

T 4/20 Robin Mitchell, *Vénus Noire*

preface, acknowledgements, introduction, + Chapter 1, pp. xiii-30

W 4/21 OFFICE HOURS

R 4/22 Robin Mitchell, *Vénus Noire*

Chapters 2 + 3, pp. 51-103

F 4/23 Robin Mitchell, *Vénus Noire*

Chapter 4 + conclusion, pp. 105-140

Week 4

M 4/26 Reviewing Mitchell: H-France Forum V 15 (2020), Issue 6

- Sara Fila-Bakabadio (in French), Mary Dewhurst Lewis, Adlai Murdoch, Rebecca Rogers
- Robin Mitchell, response

Experiencing the City

- Baudelaire, *The Flowers of Evil* and *Paris Spleen* [excerpts] (1857, 1869)

T 4/27 Paris as Spectacle: The Commune, the “Capital”

Commune documents

- Proclamation for National Defense (15 Sept 1870)
- Call for the Establishment of the Commune (6 Jan 1871)
- The Revolutionary Socialist Party Resolutions (20/23 Feb 1871)
- 18 March 1871 – Eyewitness Account and Socialist Report
- Petition from the New Education Society (20 April 1871)

(Commune, con't)

- Meeting of a women's club (12 May 1871)
- Barron, Revolutionary reflections (1871)
- Appeal to Versailles Army (23 May 1871)
- Announcement by MacMahon (28 May 1871)

- Walter Benjamin, "Paris, the Capital of the Nineteenth Century" (1935)

W 4/28 OFFICE HOURS

R 4/29 Consumption as Spectacle

- Émile Zola, *The Ladies' Paradise* (1883), Chapters 4 + 9

F 4/30 Policing Consumption

- Patricia O'Brien, "The Kleptomania Diagnosis: Bourgeois Women and Theft in Late Nineteenth-Century France" *Journal of Social History* 17/1 (1983)
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3787239>

over the weekend: watch Twentieth Century lecture

Week 5

M 5/3 Spectacular Sites: Boulevard and Cabaret

- Vanessa Schwartz, "Setting the Stage: The Boulevard, the Press and the Framing of Everyday Life" in *Spectacular Realities: Early Mass Culture in Fin-de-siècle Paris* (1998), 13-44
- Jerrold Seigel, "Publicity and Fantasy: The World of the Cabarets" in *Bohemian Paris: Culture, Politics, and the Boundaries of Bourgeois Life, 1830-1930* (1986), pp. 215-241

PART III: THE REVOLUTION CONTINUES

T 5/4 Interwar Internationalism

- Blum, Speech at the Congress of Tours (1920)
- Duhamel, "Meditation on the Cathedral of Commerce" from *America: The Menace* (1931)

W 5/5 OFFICE HOURS

R 5/6 Jennifer Boittin, *The Colonial Metropolis*

Acknowledgments, Introduction, Chapters 1 + 2, pp. ix-75

F 5/7 Jennifer Boittin, *Colonial Metropolis*

Chapters 3 + 4, pp. 77-132

Week 6

M 5/10 Jennifer Boittin, *Colonial Metropolis*

Chapters 5 + 6, conclusion, pp. 133-221

T 5/11 Occupied Paris as Spectacle

- <https://www.messynessychic.com/2016/10/12/where-the-nazis-hung-out-in-occupied-paris/>

W 5/12 OFFICE HOURS

R 5/13 Frantz Fanon and the Politics of Decolonization

- Dennis McEnnerney, “Frantz Fanon, The Resistance, and the Emergence of Identity Politics” in Peabody and Stovall, eds., *The Color of Liberty: Histories of Race in France* (2003)
- Fanon, “On Violence,” “On National Culture,” and “Colonial War and Mental Disorders” [excerpts] from *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961)

F 5/14 The Revolutionary Spectre, Continued

- “The Merchant of Revolution: François Maspero and Radical Publishing in France,” Sarah K. Miles on the French History Podcast 9.28.2019 (26’)
- “Amnesty of Blinded Eyes;: “Join the Revolutionary Commune of the Imagination,” and graffiti from May 1968

Week 7

M 5/17 Roundtable Presentations

T 5/18 Roundtable Presentations

W 5/19 Roundtable Presentations

R 5/20 Last day of classes

T 5/25 FINAL EXAM DUE 5:00 p.m.