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SOS 280  
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**HISTORY 312  
FALL 2014**

**THE AGE OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION AND NAPOLEON**

**TU- TH, 2-3:30; VKC 109**



**Course Description**

Why devote an entire course to one event and the “age” that surrounds it? As with any major historical turning point, the French Revolution and the wars it provoked are a culmination and conjuncture of many complex developments that historians continue to reinterpret. Revolution and war had dramatic and enduring impacts on western and world civilizations. A close examination of the French Revolution offers keys to understanding not only the past but our contemporary world as well, for many of the issues it addressed and created remain central concerns of human societies. One of these issues is the political use of terror in the name of “freedom,” and how the modern meaning of terrorism has evolved.

This course will focus on understanding the paradoxes of nascent democracy, such as tensions between individual rights and civic duties, between freedom and equality, and between competing definitions of citizenship. We will examine how representative bodies formed, how they developed constitutions, whom they excluded, and how they established new hierarchies. We will consider how gender, class, and race became central issues in political and civil rights, what impact Napoleon had on France and Europe, and finally, the broader impacts of the Revolution’s enduring legacy. Do the Jacobins, with their use of terror, remain the “heralds of our future?”

**Note: This course counts toward the Law, History, and Culture major.**

## **Learner Outcomes:**

Objectives for students are the following:

- 1) A basic understanding and knowledge of the series of events that resulted in the French Revolution, the course it took, and the extremism that resulted from it.
- 2) Improved skills in reading, understanding, contextualizing, analyzing and writing about primary and secondary sources.
- 3) An appreciation for the on-going relevance of the French Revolution, civil war, and warfare in our own world.
- 4) Improvement in applied analytical and critical skills relevant to any field.

## **Reading List (Selections May Change)**

Jeremy Popkin, *A Short History of the French Revolution*

Keith Baker, ed. *Chicago Readings in Western Civilization*, vol. 7, *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Basic Political Writings*

RR Palmer, *Twelve Who Ruled*

Laurent Dubois and John D. Garrigus, *Slave Rebellion in the Carribean, 1789-1804: A Brief History with Documents*

David Bell, *The First Total War: Napoleon's Europe and the Birth of Warfare as We Know It*

In addition, there will be a selection of brief electronic readings available on Blackboard.

Course requirements will include class participation, two 4-6 page papers, a mid-term, and a final exam.

A complete syllabus will be available in August.