Professor Helena Rosenblatt  
**History 71200-The French Revolution**  
Tuesday 4:15-6:15 p.m. 3 credits  
[Hrosenblatt@gc.cuny.edu](mailto:Hrosenblatt@gc.cuny.edu)

**Course Description:**

This course is an in-depth introduction to the French Revolution and the heated debates it has engendered. We will privilege political/cultural/intellectual perspectives, focusing on the Revolution's relationship with "modernity" and its various ideologies (socialism, liberalism, totalitarianism, feminism, etc.) Scholarship on the French Revolution will be placed in historical and political context in an effort to answer the question: "what is at stake when scholars adopt certain methodologies and perspectives on the French Revolution?"

**Course Learning Objectives:**

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to  
* Read texts more critically and effectively  
* Identify and summarize key ideas in texts in an articulate and persuasive manner, verbally and in writing  
* Demonstrate a command of the narrative and major events of the French Revolution  
* Display a grasp of some of the main ideological debates connected to the French Revolution

**Course Requirements:**

* Regular and intelligent class participation demonstrating thorough reading of all assigned materials: 30%  
* One-page analytical summaries of the weekly readings and two interesting discussion questions for every class: 30% (Summaries must be handed in to me at the beginning of class; questions must be emailed to me and the class by 8 a.m. on Tuesday)  
* A 15-20 page paper on a topic chosen in consultation with me. Topics must be decided and approved by Nov. 7; final paper submitted by Dec. 12. No late papers will be accepted. 40%  

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS IS A DRAFT SYLLABUS—THE READINGS AND TOPICS ARE SUBJECT TO MINOR REVISION. THE FINAL VERSION WILL BE HANDED OUT IN CLASS ON THE FIRST DAY.

RECOMMENDED SURVEYS OF THE REVOLUTION:


**Sept 1** Introduction

**REQUIRED:**

**Sept. 8** Recent Approaches


Albert Soboul, “The French Revolution in the History of the Contemporary World” (article will be provided)

**Sept. 25** The Birth of Conservatism

The Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, 1789 (to be provided)


**Sept. 29** Jean-Jacques Rousseau

*On the Social Contract*

**RECOMMENDED:**


**Oct. 6 The Terror**

**REQUIRED:**

Keith Baker, “The Idea of a Declaration of Rights” article to be provided


**RECOMMENDED**


Oct 13 Feminism I

REQUIRED

Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*

Lynn Hunt, “The Many Bodies of Marie Antoinette. Political pornography and the Problem of the Feminine in the French Revolution,” article to be provided.

Oct 20 Feminism II

REQUIRED

Olwen Hufton, “In Search of Counter-Revolutionary Women,” article to be provided


RECOMMENDED


Olwen Hufton, *Women and the Limits of Citizenship in the French Revolution*


**Oct.27** Liberalism

**REQUIRED:**

**RECOMMENDED:**

*French Liberalism from Montesquieu to the Present Day*, Raf Geenens and Helena Rosenblatt eds.

George Kelly, *Constant, Tocqueville and French Liberalism*

Aurelian Craiutu, *A Virtue for Courageous Minds. Moderation in French Political Thought*

Helena Rosenblatt, *Liberal Values: Benjamin Constant and the Politics of Religion*

**Nov. 3** Secularization?

**REQUIRED:**

Timothy Tackett, “The French Revolution and Religion to 1794” article to be provided

Suzanne Desan, “The French Revolution and Religion, 1795-1815” article to be provided
Mona Ozouf, “The Revolutionary Festival: A Transfer” article to be provided

Helena Rosenblatt, “On the Need for a Protestant Reformation” article to be provided

**Nov. 10 Nationalism**

**REQUIRED:**


**RECOMMENDED:**


**Nov 17 Fascism**

**REQUIRED**


see *NYTimes Review of Books* article by Isaiah Berlin, three parts September 27,1990

**RECOMMENDED:**
Carolina Armenteros, *The French Idea of History: Joseph de Maistre and his Heirs*

Isaiah Berlin’s Counter Enlightenment, ed. Joseph Mali and Robert Wokler there is an essay by Graeme G...on


**Nov 24.**

Totalitarianism

**REQUIRED**

Jacob Talmon, *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy*, pages TBA

Isaiah Berlin, “Two Concepts of Liberty”

**Dec. 1 Revisionism**

**REQUIRED:**

François Furet, “The French Revolution Revisited,” article to be provided


**RECOMMENDED:**


**Dec. 8** Discussion of papers