HIST 71200
Madame de Staël and Napoleon
Class 41617
3 Credits, Thursdays 2:00 PM- 4:00 PM, Fully In-Person
Professor Helena Rosenblatt
hrosenblatt@gc.cuny.edu
Office Hours: Skype/Zoom or in person by appointment

Course Description:

NOTE THIS SYLLABUS WILL MOST LIKELY BE SLIGHTLY REVISED DEPENDING on STUDENT ENROLLMENT, THEIR PROGRAMS AND INTERESTS.

In this course, we will study the lives of two giants in the history of Western Civilization, whose riveting personal stories are inextricably entwined. Strangely, however one of them has been largely forgotten. While thousands of books and articles have been devoted to Napoleon a relatively minuscule number concern themselves with the woman who was one of his most powerful and persistent enemies.-We will explore this fierce battle of wills, which one contemporary called the battle between the mind and the sword and which, we will learn, helped to give rise to “liberalism” as we know it.

Learning Objectives:

By the end of the course, students should

- Have a good grasp of the biographies of Mme de Staël and Napoleon and the times in which they lived.
- Understand the nature of Napoleonic rule
- Understand the origins and nature of “liberalism”
- Be able to identify and analyze ideas expressed in both primary and secondary sources in an articulate and persuasive manner, verbally and in writing

Requirements and Breakdown of Final Grade:

Careful reading of the assigned reading(s) is required as well as and informed participation in class discussions 35%.

To spark discussion and debate of the assigned reading, each student will bring to class three interesting things they learned from the assigned readings and three interesting questions for the class (each week). 10%

Each student will also be asked to lead one weekly discussion. 20% A prior consultation with the instructor is recommended
A biographical research-based paper of 20-25 pages in length on a topic of their choice, though the project must be approved by the instructor; a presentation of this work will also be required, if class time permits. All written assignments must be typed, double-spaced, and in 12-point Times or Times New Roman font. 35%

**Schedule of classes**

1. August 31 Introduction to the course
2. September 7 Dual biographies (students will be given a choice of acclaimed dual biographies from a list)
3. September 14 Dual biographies (students will be given a choice of acclaimed dual biographies from a list)
4. September 21 Biography of Napoleon (students will be given a choice from a list)
5. September 28 Biography of Madame de Staël (students will be given a choice from a list)
6. October 5 Napoleon’s Reign
7. October 12 Readings on liberalism
8. October 19 Readings on liberalism
9. October 26 Dual Biography of Benjamin Constant and Madame de Staël
10. November 2 Excerpts from the political writings of Madame de Staël
11. November 9 Readings on Napoleon’s views on women
12. November 16 Madame de Staël’s novel, *Corinne*, with commentary
13. December 7 Madame de Staël’s *Ten years of Exile*
14. Student Presentations/Conclusions