

CAS 101H – Reacting to the Past (CRN 31205)
Rousseau, Burke, and Revolution in France, 1791
473 MCK
Spring 2017
Tues/Thurs, 12-13:50

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Office hours: Thurs.: 10:15-11:30 and 2:00-3:30; or by appointment

Course Description

This course is centered on a role-playing game developed by the Reacting to the Past (RTTP) program at Barnard College. The game we will be playing this quarter is *Rousseau, Burke, and Revolution in France, 1791*. It offers the opportunity to learn in a novel and exciting way about the French Revolution: what the revolution was “about,” the ideas that inspired the revolution, and the conflicts that arose as a result of efforts to implement those ideas.

We will open the quarter by looking at some of those ideas. At the end of the second week each of you will be assigned a “role” to play in Paris in the summer of 1791 as the National Assembly tries to implement a new constitution. Most of the remainder of the course will be devoted to playing the game. Each role has certain defined objectives. You will achieve those objectives by trying to persuade your fellow game-players to pursue the policies that you believe are right. You will make speeches, write articles, negotiate, make backroom deals, riot, stretch the truth on occasion, and betray erstwhile friends and allies. Along the way you will hopefully gain a greater appreciation of what was at stake in the revolution and why the passions it unleashed proved so very difficult to control.

We will conclude the quarter by taking a step back and returning the “historical” French Revolution and what really happened in the summer of 1791.

Learning objectives: the following is what you can expect to get out of this course

- 1) Gain an understanding of the early history of the French Revolution.
- 2) Develop a sense of the dynamics of revolution and the creation of new political institutions.
- 3) Practice the arts of political rhetoric and experience the possibilities and limits of political speech in the face of fixed objectives.
- 4) Work on persuasive writing skills.

Grades and assignments

Class attendance is required: the game simply will not function in your absence. You will not be able to properly play your role without attending the earlier sessions. Missing two sessions of the game (weeks 4-8) without a valid excuse will result in failure for the course.

Grades will be based on a combination of class participation and written work (see below). Shy about participation? Don't worry, it is unavoidable once the game begins – you'll find yourself pulled in.

Class participation includes both the game and class discussion. Winning the game is immaterial to your grade. It is about how you play your role (Are you true to your role? How well do you know the issues? And how well do you present that agenda in the game in light of the structural impediments you will inevitably encounter?). That said, most of you will also find yourselves desperately trying to "win."

A note on participation: each of you will receive a role sheet describing your role and game objectives. Your participation grade will be determined in large part by how well your play conforms to your role. In simple terms: if you are cast as a conservative, you may not act like a radical and vice versa. You must play the role you are assigned.

There are six graded written assignments. The first two are short analyses of class readings. The next three are the newspapers that you will write and edit together with your fellow faction members. A final paper (topic posted in fourth week) will be due on Wed. June 11 (our assigned final exam time), in my office, between 10 and 12 in the morning.

The writing assignments will be worth (as a percentage of total grade): 7.5% for each of the first two (= 15%); 10% for each for the newspaper articles (= 30%); and 15% for the final paper. Class participation will be worth a total of 40 points, the most important component of which will be the game.

Due dates:

April 11: First paper (on Rousseau: see below for topic)

April 18: Second paper (on Burke: see below for topic)

May 2: First newspaper article, posted by 9 pm.

May 9: Second newspaper article, posted by 9 pm.

May 16: Third newspaper article, posted by 9 pm.

June 14: Final paper: 10 am, either my office or posted to Canvas

Coursebooks

Available for purchase in the bookstore:

Mark C. Carnes and Gary Kates, Rousseau, Burke, and Revolution in France, 1791. 2nd ed. Norton, 2015. (Referred to below as “coursebook.”)

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, The Social Contract. (Any edition will work and widely available on-line)

All other course materials will be available via the course Canvas site.

Class schedule (for more details see the coursebook, pages 47-48: keep in mind, however, that our schedule does not match exactly the schedule in the book)

Week 1

April 4: Introduction to class: What is RTTP and how does it work? Why the French Revolution?

Read syllabus, scan Rousseau, Burke, and Revolution in France but **read** pages 1-9 and **skim** 49-66); also **read** William Doyle, “The Principles of the French Revolution.”

April 6: The Enlightenment and Rousseau

Read: The documents from Montesquieu to Rousseau in coursebook, pages 87-107); and Social Contract, Books I and II – pay especially close attention to Book I, chs. 6, 7, and 8; and Book II, chs. 3, 4, 7, 10, and 11.

Week 2

April 11: Rousseau

Read: Rousseau, Social Contract, Books III (esp. chapters 1, 4, 5, 6, 13, and 15) and IV (esp. chapters 2 and 8). **Also**: peruse the section on "Roles and Factions" (69-84). If you see a role or faction that you'd like to play, you should let me know. I'll be assigning roles on Thursday.

Assignment due in class or on canvas: Explain the distinction Rousseau makes between difference between the "nature" of a government and its "form" (for instance, you might explain what he means by a "republic" and why any form of government is compatible with a republic) or compare Montesquieu's analysis of government and liberty with that of Rousseau (similarities and differences).

April 13: Old Regime France and the Revolution

Read: "Historical Background" in coursebook, 15-30; and documents in coursebook from Sieyès to the August Decrees (108-120)

Roles will be assigned today. Each of you will receive a role sheet. Read it carefully before next week. Starting next week I want to meet individually with Louis XVI, Lafayette, Danton, and the indeterminates. I also want to meet with the each faction as a group (I can also meet individually with faction members).

Week 3

April 18: Burke and counter-revolution

Read: Documents in coursebook from Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen to Burke (pages 120-167)

Assignment: choose a passage from Burke (this can be a single sentence or as long as a paragraph) that you think best illustrates the underlying political philosophy of Burke's critique of the French Revolution **and** identify a document that you think supports or illustrates Burke's basic point.

Reproduce the passage at the top, explain its significance, and show its connection to one of the documents in a paper of no more than two pages.

April 20: The Revolution, cont.; and talk about how the game will work

Read: "Historical Background" in coursebook, 30-47; look again over the sections on "The Game."

Week 4

April 25: Movie: *The Night of Varennes*

Read: you should be reading for your role (see role bibliography)

April 27: The game begins: Set up and faction meetings (choose editors, articles for first issue of paper; election of National Assembly President)

Read: prep for the game: see "Bibliography for researching roles" (in the "Readings for roles" content area of Canvas). For a quick outline of the game see coursebook 53-4.

Week 5

May 2: Public Session #1

Assignment: volume #1 of newspapers (all factions) due on Monday night, 9 pm. **Faction editors: post your newspaper to our Canvas website by 9 pm.** Editors must make arrangements with their contributors to get their articles in time to put the newspaper together by 9 pm.. If contributors are late, editors should post what they have by 9 pm.

Individual authors: upload your individual articles to Canvas in "Assignments." That is where I will post comments and grades.

Everyone should take a look at all the newspapers *before* class - they will give you an idea of where the various factions and indeterminates stand and will help to inform your play. We will start our session with faction meetings since you may want to alter your plans in light of what you read.

May 4: Public Session #2

Week 6:

May 9: Public Session #3

Assignment: volume #2 of newspapers posted by 9 pm Monday night

May 11: Public Session #4

Week 7

May 16: Public Session #5

Assignment: volume #3 of newspapers posted by 9 pm Monday night

May 18: Public Session #6

Week 8

May 23: Final meeting of the National Assembly

May 25: Post-mortem: why the game played the way it did; how it might have been different.

Week 9

May 30: Peace and reconciliation dinner: details to be worked out

June 1: The French Revolution: what really happened

Week 10

June 6: Historiography and the French Revolution as an experiment in democracy

Read: Gary Kates, "Introduction to *The French Revolution: Recent Debates and New Controversies*" in coursebook 170-182.

June 8: What the game can tell us about the revolution or revolutions in general

Come up with at least one "lesson" of the game to share with the class.

Final paper due: Wednesday, June 14, 8:00 am (our final exam time), my office or on the Canvas course site. Feel free to drop it by earlier: if I'm not there, slip it under the door.