"Liberty, equality, and fraternity" was the slogan of the French Revolution and features three concepts of ongoing interest. In this course we will explore the French Revolution and its antecedents – and what these can mean for us today. Students will be introduced to a number of ways of thinking and modes of representation: historical thinking, of course, but also a sense of the origins of sociology and political science, the power of scientific thinking, and differences between literary and visual (paintings, prints, films) representation.

While most classes will begin with some words from me, sometimes mini-lectures, the majority of class time will be devoted to discussion. The emphasis throughout will be upon student expression – oral and written – and especially upon revision of writing. Week 1 is different, as is the class on Sept. 28 which is basically a talk by me about my own writing project. In seven of the classes two students working together will choose a clip from a particular film (assigned by lottery) and describe in class how those scenes are related to the reading and the course. For each of ten weeks students are required to complete a one page (400 words) writing assignment; the assignment due Dec. 4 will be a collaborative effort with the student with whom you are paired for the mystery book exercise on Nov. 28 in Special Collections. An expansion (to 3-5 pages) of one of those assignments will be due the week after Fall Break; an expansion (5-7 pages) of a different one-pager set in the context of the course as a whole is due Dec. 11. Students will experiment with a number of different rhetorical modes: argument (objective, evidence-based), personal narrative, persuasive (like an op-ed), and creative (fiction or poem). Each of the writing assignments is due on a Sunday at noon; students will share drafts in class Monday and a revised version will be due Wednesday morning by 10am.

This class can be considered a writing workshop which uses understandings and representations of the Old regime and the French Revolution as fodder. Throughout students will be asked to note sentences and passages they admire and analyze why. The course will be graded on a pass/no pass basis, and students must achieve a minimum cumulative grade of C+ (78.5) in order to pass the course. All assignments must be completed, and students must come to office hours at least once during the semester. In lieu of a final grade, students will receive written comments available also to her/his adviser. The expectation is that the comments will serve as the basis for a conversation about intellectual growth and curiosity, objectives, and skills and their assessment.

Texts:
- Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre*
- Peter Weiss, *Marat-Sade*

All other readings can be found on Moodle.
**Syllabus**

**September 5:** Introduction and Voices of the Revolution I (participatory play)

**September 7:** Voices of the Revolution II
Readings:

**Sunday, September 11, noon, Writing Assignment due (1 page):** Discuss your hopes for your Wesleyan experience with respect to liberty, equality, and/or fraternity.

**September 12:** Who are the French Peasants?
Reading:
- Natalie Zeman Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre, pp1-81*

**September 14:** History, Fiction and Film
Reading:
- Natalie Zeman Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre. pp 82-125*
Salas film presentation: *The Return of Martin Guerre*

**Sunday, September 18, noon, Writing Assignment (1 page):** Bertrande: hero(ine)?

**September 19:** Status Quo
Readings:
- Loyseau, *A Treatise on Orders*
- Bossuet, *Politics Derived from the Words of Holy Scripture*
- Montaigne, *On Friendship*

**September 21:** Appealing to Antiquity
Reading:
- Montesquieu, *Considerations on the Greatness of the Romans and their Decline* (selections)
Student film presentation: *The Taking of Power by Louis XIV*

**Sunday, September 25, noon, Writing Assignment (1 page):** Compare or contrast an aspect of bureaucracy or social relations in the Old Regime to a corresponding aspect in the USA today.

**September 26:** Liberty?
Reading:
Student film presentation: Cyrano de Bergerac

**September 28:** American Carthages
Readings:
- Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, selections
- Putnam, “Bowling Alone”
Sunday, October 2, noon, Writing Assignment (1 page): Is your hometown more like Montesquieu’s ancient Carthage or his ancient Rome?

October 3: Unhappy French
Readings:
- Tocqueville, “Why Feudalism had come to be Detested in France more than any other Country”
- Robert Darnton, “Workers Revolt: The Great Cat Massacre of the Rue Saint-Serverin”
Student film presentation: Marie Antoinette (Sophia Coppola)

October 5: Destabilizing Forces in the Old Regime
Readings:
- Tocqueville, “The Limitations of the Enlightenment”
- Darnton, “The High Enlightenment and the Low Life of Literature”
Student film presentation: Ridicule

Sunday, October 9, noon, Writing Assignment (1 page): Compare critics on Darnton’s Grub Street to current pundits on television or internet trolls.

October 10: Voltaire: Destabilizing Force in the Old Regime?
Reading:
- Voltaire, Candide (selections)

October 12: Destabilizing Forces: Science and Pseudo-science
Reading:
- Franklin, Lavoisier et al, “Testing the Claims of Mesmerism” (Salas translation of report commissioned by Louis XVI)
Student film presentation: Jefferson in Paris

Sunday, October 16, noon, Writing Assignment (1 page): Write a description of Candide arriving at Wesleyan.

October 17: Another Vision
Reading:
- Rousseau, (selections)
Student Film presentation: Rousseau, On Education

October 19: Ending Feudalism
Readings:
- Sieyes, What is the Third Estate?
- “Letter of the Inhabitants on Montjoye-Vaufrey to Necker” (May 1789)
- William Wordsworth, The French Revolution as it appeared to Enthusiasts at its Commencement"

Fall Break October 22-25
October 26: Set Piece? Fall of the Bastille
Readings:
- Simon Schama, *Citizens*, pp 369-425
- Carlyle, *The French Revolution*, 1.5.V – 1.5.VII

Sunday, October 30, noon, Writing Assignment (1 page): Pick a passage (1-5 sentences) from Schama or Carlyle that you find especially powerful and say why.

October 31: Inventing Human Rights
Reading:
- “Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen”
- Decrees of National Assembly August 10 and August 11
- Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (selection)
- Thomas Paine, *The Rights of Man*, (selection)

November 2: Women on the March
Readings:
- Amaury de Riencourt, *Sex and Power in History*, pp 264-280
- Gouges, *Declaration of the Rights of Women*
- Jennifer Jones, *Sexing La Mode* (selection)

Sunday, November 6, noon, writing assignment (3-5 pages): expand on earlier essay

November 7: Fictional Protectors of the Revolution
Readings:
- Schama, *Citizens*, pp 597-618
- Hilary Mantel, *A Place of Greater Safety* (selection)

November 9: The Terror
Readings:
- Saint-Just, *Report to the Convention on Behalf of the Committee of Public Safety* (Oct 10, 1793)
- Robespierre, *Report on the Principles of Political Morality* (Feb 5, 1794)
- Balzac, *An Episode of the Reign of Terror*
- Palmer, *Twelve Who Ruled*, pp 361-387
Student Film Presentation: *Danton*

Sunday, November 13, noon, Writing Assignment (1 page): Danton or Robespierre?

November 14: Acting the Revolution
Reading:
- Peter Weiss, *Marat-Sade*

November 16: Painting the Revolution: J.L. David, Art, History and Biography
Reading:
- Wikipedia entry on David
Sunday, November 20, noon, Writing Assignment (1 page): Describe a work of David and discuss in relation to this class.

November 21: Reflections
Readings:
- Condorcet: “Progress of the Human Mind”
- Maistre, Considerations on France (selection)
- Constant, Reflections on the French revolution (selection)
Assignment: Pick one to argue against in class (Condorcet, Maistre or Constant)

Thanksgiving break November 23-27

Meet in Special Collections of Olin library. Bring pencil and paper. Class led by Suzy Taraba, Director of Special Collections and Archives. Mystery Book exercise.

November 30: Righting the French revolution
Reading:
- H.G. Wells, Outline of History, (selection)
Student film presentation: Abel Gance, Napoleon

Sunday, December 4, noon, Writing Assignment (1 page): Writing in pairs. Describe in physical detail the mystery book you examined on Nov. 28, and place in the context of this course and/or book history.

December 5: Voices of the Revolution III
Student presentation of favorite passages

December 7: Voices of the Revolution IV
Presentation of Salas’s favorite selections from student writings

Sunday, December 11, noon, Writing Assignment (5-7 pages): take a one page paper (not the one chosen for the earlier expansion) and set it in the context of the course as a whole.