

HI31J-30 The French Revolution, 1774-1799

21/22

Department

History

Level

Undergraduate Level 3

Module leader

Charles Walton

Credit value

30

Module duration

22 weeks

Assessment

100% coursework

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

This 30 CATS final-year undergraduate advanced option deals with one of the most significant episodes in world history: the French Revolution. Promethean and tragic, it has inspired and haunted imaginations throughout the modern era. 'It was the best of times, it was the worst of times', wrote Charles Dickens in *A Tale of Two Cities*, and, indeed, historians still argue over its paradoxical legacies. For while it inaugurated human rights, universal manhood suffrage and civil equality, it also unleashed terror, authoritarianism and empire. The French Revolution is especially challenging to study since it bequeathed the very terms we use to analyse it. Debates about liberal and social forms of democracy, the viability or dangers of Enlightenment ideals, and the necessity or gratuitousness of violence to bring about democracy all grew out of the French Revolution itself. To study the French Revolution is to put our own conceptual categories and values into question.

[Module web page](#)

Module aims

This module treats the origins, course and legacies of the French Revolution. It draws on a wide range of sources: primary, scholarly, literary and cinematic. Themes include ideas, emotions,

inequality, freedom, capitalism, gender, race, colonialism, religion, terror and war. It is inspired by the belief that studying the French Revolution can help us better understand the challenges of modern democratic and capitalist societies. By making modernity more legible, it can make our future more navigable.

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

Term 1

1. Introduction
2. Origins: Class or State?
3. Cultural Origins
4. Global and Economic Origins
5. Inventing Human Rights
6. Reading Week (no seminar)
7. Freedom and Discontents
8. A Revolution of Emotions
9. War and Counterrevolutions
10. A Cinematic Perspective: La Marseillaise

Term 2

1. King's Trial and Sans-culottes
2. Political Economy and Economic Justice
3. Terror
4. Robespierre: Monster or Scapegoat?
5. New Hearts and Minds
6. Reading Week (no seminar)
7. Women, Gender and Family
8. Ending Revolution
9. Colonial Revolution and Slave Abolition
10. Legacies

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate a systematic knowledge and understanding of the history of the French Revolution
- Critically analyse and evaluate a broad range of both textual and visual primary sources (and the variety of viewpoints they represent) relating to the cultural history of the French Revolution
- Effectively communicate ideas, and make informed, coherent and persuasive arguments, about the history of the French Revolution
- Critically review and consolidate theoretical, methodological, and historiographical ideas

relating to the history of 18th century France and the French Revolution, and draw upon approaches to French Revolution in other disciplinary fields, including literary, philosophy and history of science

Indicative reading list

- C. Jones, *The Great Nation: France 1715-99* (2002)
- A. Cobban, *A History of Modern France, 1715-99* (1961)
- W. Doyle (ed.), *Old Régime France, 1648-1788* (2001)
- E. Le Roy Ladurie, *The Ancien Régime, 1610-1774* (1996)
- J. Collins, *The State in Early Modern France* (1995)
- P. McPhee, *Liberty or Death: The French Revolution* (2016)
- T. Tackett, *The Coming of the Terror* (2014)
- P. McPhee, *A Companion to the French Revolution* (2014)
- D. Andress (ed), *The Oxford Handbook of the French Revolution* (2015)
- S. Desan, L. Hunt, W. Nelson, *The French Revolution in Global Perspective* (2013)
- C. Walton, ed. *Into Print: Limits and Legacies of the Enlightenment* (State College: Penn State University Press, 2011), see essays on the French Revolution.
- A. Forrest, *The French Revolution* (1995)
- D. Andress, *The Terror: The Merciless War for Freedom in Revolutionary France* (2005)
- D. Sutherland, *France 1789-1815* (1985)
- C. Jones, *The Longman Companion to the French Revolution* (1989)
- S. Schama, *Citizens: A Chronicle of the French Revolution* (1989)
- P. Hanson, *Contesting the French Revolution* (2009)
- J.R. Censer & L. Hunt, *Exploring the French Revolution* (2001)
- J. Popkin, *A Short History of the French Revolution* (5th edition, 2009)
- A. Mayer, *The Furies: Violence and Terror in the French and Russian Revolutions* (2000)
- F. Furet, *Revolutionary France, 1770-1880* (1992)
- F. Furet and M. Ozouf, *Critical Dictionary of the French Revolution* (1989)
- K. M. Baker, ed. *The French Revolution and the Creation of Modern Political Culture*. 4 vols. Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1987-1994.
- W. Doyle. *The Oxford History of the French Revolution*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- P. McPhee, *The French Revolution, 1789-1799*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- P. McPhee, *Liberty or Death: The French Revolution*, 2014.
- D. Andress, *The Terror: The Merciless War for Freedom in Revolutionary France*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005.
- G. Kates, ed. *The French Revolution: Recent Debates and New Controversies*. London: Routledge, 1998.
- G. Lewis. *The French Revolution: rethinking the debate*. London: Routledge, 1993.
- T. C. W. Blanning, ed. *The Rise and Fall of the French Revolution*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.
- P. R. Hanson, *Contesting the French Revolution* (Malden, Maine: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009).
- J. Popkin. *A Short History of the French Revolution*. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2002 (3rd edition).
- J. Censer and L. Hunt, eds. *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity: Exploring the French Revolution*.

University Park: Penn State University Press, 2001.

- R. Schechter, ed. The French Revolution. Oxford: Blackwell, 2001.
- F. Fehér, ed. The French Revolution and the Birth of Modernity. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.
- D. Andress, ed. Experiencing the French Revolution. Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2013.
- I. Woloch, The New Regime: Transformations of the French Civic Order, 1789-1820s (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1994)
- Temple, N., The Road to 1789: from Reform to Revolution in France (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1992).
- Forest, Alan, The French Revolution, 1789-1799 (Oxford, Blackwell, 1995).
- C. Jones, The Longman Companion to the French Revolution (1988)
- S. Schama, Citizens: A Chronicle of the French Revolution (1989)
- A. Mathiez, The French Revolution (London, 1928).
- G. Lefebvre, The French Revolution, 2 vols. (1964)
- J. Jaurès, A Socialist History of the French Revolution (2015, abridged; orig. early 20th)

[View reading list on Talis Aspire](#)

Subject specific skills

See learning outcomes.

Transferable skills

See learning outcomes.

Study

Study time

| Type | Required |
|----------------|------------------------------|
| Seminars | 18 sessions of 2 hours (12%) |
| Tutorials | 4 sessions of 1 hour (1%) |
| Other activity | 4 hours (1%) |
| Private study | 256 hours (85%) |
| Total | 300 hours |

Private study description

History modules require students to undertake extensive independent research and reading to prepare for seminars and assessments. As a rough guide, students will be expected to read and prepare to comment on three substantial texts (articles or book chapters) for each seminar taking approximately 3 hours. Each assessment requires independent research, reading around 6-10

texts and writing and presenting the outcomes of this preparation in an essay, review, presentation or other related task.

Other activity description

Revision sessions.

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You must pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group A1

| | Weighting | Study time |
|------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Seminar contribution | 10% | |
| 1500 word book review | 10% | |
| 3000 word source based essay | 40% | |
| 3000 word essay | 40% | |

Feedback on assessment

Written feedback provided via Tabula; optional oral feedback in office hours.

Availability

Courses

This module is Optional for:

- Year 3 of UENA-VQ32 Undergraduate English and History
- UENA-VQ33 Undergraduate English and History (with Intercalated year)
 - Year 4 of VQ33 English and History (with Intercalated year)
 - Year 4 of VQ33 English and History (with Intercalated year)
- UHIA-V1V8 Undergraduate History and Philosophy (with Year Abroad and a term in Venice)
 - Year 3 of V1V8 History and Philosophy (with Year Abroad and a term in Venice)
 - Year 4 of V1V8 History and Philosophy (with Year Abroad and a term in Venice)
- Year 3 of UHIA-V1V7 Undergraduate History and Philosophy (with a term in Venice)
- UHIA-VM14 Undergraduate History and Politics (with Year Abroad and a term in Venice)

- Year 3 of VM14 History and Politics (with Year Abroad and a term in Venice)
- Year 4 of VM14 History and Politics (with Year Abroad and a term in Venice)
- Year 3 of UHIA-VM13 Undergraduate History and Politics (with a term in Venice)
- UHIA-VL16 Undergraduate History and Sociology (with Year Abroad and a term in Venice)
 - Year 3 of VL16 History and Sociology (with Year Abroad and a term in Venice)
 - Year 4 of VL16 History and Sociology (with Year Abroad and a term in Venice)
- Year 3 of UHIA-VL15 Undergraduate History and Sociology (with a term in Venice)

This module is Core option list A for:

- Year 3 of UHIA-V102 Undergraduate History (Renaissance and Modern History Stream)

This module is Option list A for:

- UHIA-V100 Undergraduate History
 - Year 3 of V100 History
 - Year 3 of V100 History
- Year 4 of UHIA-V101 Undergraduate History (with Year Abroad)

This module is Option list B for:

- UHIA-V100 Undergraduate History
 - Year 3 of V100 History
 - Year 3 of V100 History
- Year 4 of UHIA-V101 Undergraduate History (with Year Abroad)
- Year 3 of UHIA-V1V5 Undergraduate History and Philosophy
- Year 4 of UHIA-V1V6 Undergraduate History and Philosophy (with Year Abroad)
- UHIA-VM11 Undergraduate History and Politics
 - Year 3 of VM11 History and Politics
 - Year 3 of VM11 History and Politics
 - Year 3 of VM11 History and Politics
- Year 4 of UHIA-VM12 Undergraduate History and Politics (with Year Abroad)
- Year 3 of UHIA-VL13 Undergraduate History and Sociology
- Year 4 of UHIA-VL14 Undergraduate History and Sociology (with Year Abroad)