

# Seminar on Women, Political Culture, and the French Revolution, 1789-1794

(Syllabus)

Instructor: Jeremy L. Caradonna

This seminar will investigate the role played by women in the political culture of the French Revolution. The course is organized around a series of five interrelated questions: How did women impact the course of the Revolution--and how did the Revolution impact the lives of women? What did elected politicians and the culture at large think about women's changing social and political identity? What rights and recognitions did women gain--or lose? How did the Revolution represent femininity in artistic representations and political iconography? And, finally, how did the Revolution influence the course of modern feminism? The reading material will bring together an interdisciplinary mixture of primary and secondary sources. The syllabus is designed to introduce students to current historiographical debates and stimulate future research. Assignments include weekly one-page analyses of the reading material and a research paper of 10-15 pages. Class participation is a crucial aspect of the seminar. Recommended: one previous course in European history.

## Week 1

**Discussion:** Introduction to the class, followed by a film: *The French Revolution*

### **Reading for next Week**

- Joan Scott "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis" (pp.1053-1075)
  - Campbell "Introduction: The Origins of the French Revolution in Focus" in *The Origins of the French Revolution* (pp.1-34)
  - William Scott "From Social to Cultural History" in *The Origins of the French Revolution* (pp.112-138)
  - Maza "Politics, culture and the origins of the French Revolution" in *The French Revolution in Social and Political Perspective* (pp.100-117)
  - Doyle *The Oxford History of the French Revolution* (pp.1-111)
- (Total reading: 220 pages)

## Week 2

**Discussion:** What is gender? Why study women's history? What is historiography? The historiographical traditions of the French Revolution

### **Reading for next week:**

- Furet: portions of *Interpreting the French Revolution* (pp.1-79)
  - Baker: portions of *Inventing the French Revolution* (pp.1-27, 167-199, 203-223)
  - Hunt *Politics, Culture and Class in the French Revolution* (pp.1-119)
- (Total reading: 278 pages)

### Week 3

**Discussion:** What is political culture? What were the short-term causes of the French Revolution?

**Reading for next week:**

- Hunt "Introduction" to *The French Revolution and Human Rights* (pp.1-33)
  - National Assembly: "Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen" in *The French Revolution and Human Rights* (pp.77-79)
  - Olympe de Gouges: "Declaration of the Rights of Women" in *Women in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1795* (pp.87-96)
  - Caradonna "The Death of Duty : The Transformation of Political Identity from the Old Regime to the French Revolution" (pp.273-307)
  - Condorcet "On the Admission of Women to the Rights of Citizenship" in *The French Revolution and Human Rights* (pp.119-121)
  - Baker: "Fixing the French Constitution" in *Inventing the French Revolution* (pp.252-305)
- (Total reading: 144 pages)

### Week 4

**Discussion:** The Rights of Woman?

**Reading for next week:**

- Hufton *Women and the Limits of Citizenship in the French Revolution* (pp.xvi-88)
  - Melzer and Rabine "Introduction" to *Rebel Daughters : Women and the French Revolution* (pp.3-11)
  - Mary L. Jacobus "Incorruptible Milk: Breast-Feeding and the French Revolution" in *Rebel Daughters : Women and the French Revolution* (pp.54-75)
  - Darline Gay Levy and Harriet B. Applewhite "Women and Militant Citizenship in Revolutionary Paris" in *Rebel Daughters : Women and the French Revolution* (pp.79-101)
  - Joan Wallach Scott "'A Woman Who Has Only Paradoxes to Offer' : Olympe de Gouges Claims Rights for Women" in *Rebel Daughters : Women and the French Revolution* (pp.102-120)
  - Levy, Applewhite, Johnson "General Introduction" in *Women in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1795* (pp.3-12)
  - "A woman recounts her role in the conquest of the Bastille" in *Women in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1795* (pp.29-30)
  - "Stanislas Maillard Describes the Women's March to Versailles, October 5, 1789" in *Women in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1795* (pp.36-42)
  - "Etta Palm d'Aelders' Plea to the Legislative Assembly, April 1, 1792" in *Women in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1795* (p.123)
- (Total reading: 190)

### Week 5

**Discussion:** Women, action, and political bodies

**Reading for next week:**

--Doyle *The Oxford History of the French Revolution* (pp.112-196)

--Joan Landes *Women and the Public Sphere in the Age of the French Revolution*  
(Introduction and pp.93-151)

(Total reading: 154 pages)

Week 6

**Discussion:** Women and the public sphere

**Reading for next week:**

--Joan Scott *Only Paradoxes to Offer* (pp.1-56)

(Total reading: 56 pages)

**Assignment:** Begin to formulate topic for research paper

Week 7

**Discussion:** The paradox of universalism

**Reading for next week:**

-- Peter Jones "Presentation: Gender in the Public Sphere" in *The French Revolution in Social and Political Perspective* (pp.232-235)

-- Jane Abray "Feminism in the French Revolution" in *The French Revolution in Social and Political Perspective* (pp.236-252)

-- Barrie Rose "Feminism and the French Revolution" in *The French Revolution in Social and Political Perspective* (pp.253-267)

--Etta Palm d'Aelders "Discourse on the Injustice of the Laws in Favor of Men, at the Expense of Women, December 30, 1790" in *The French Revolution and Human Rights* (pp.122-123)

--Prudhomme "On the influence of the Revolution on Women," September 1791 in *The French Revolution and Human Rights* (pp.129-131)

--Discussion of Citizenship under the Proposed New Constitution, April 29, 1793 *The French Revolution and Human Rights* (pp.132-134)

--Discussion of Women's Political Clubs and Their Suppression, October 29-30, 1793 *The French Revolution and Human Rights* (pp.135-137)

--Chaumette "Speech at the General Council of the City Government of Paris Denouncing Women's Political Clubs" *The French Revolution and Human Rights* (pp.138-139)

--Godineau, Women of Paris, pp.??

(Total reading: 47 pages)

Week 8

**Discussion:** Feminism and the French Revolution

**Reading for next week:**

--Suzanne Desan *The Family on Trial in Revolutionary France* (pp.1-46, 93-140, 141-177, 311-318)

(Total reading: 136 pages)

**Assignment:** Meet with me to discuss research paper

Week 9

**Discussion:** Family law and the advancement of women

**Reading for next week:**

--Hesse *The Other Enlightenment* (Introduction and pp.31-78)

--Doyle *The Oxford History of the French Revolution* (pp.197-271)

(Total reading: 131 pages)

Week 10

**Discussion:** Women, publishing, and authorship

**Reading for next week:**

--Hunt "Introduction" to *Eroticism and the Body Politic* (pp.1-13)

--Hunt "The Many Bodies of Marie-Antoinette: political pornography and the problem of the feminine in the French Revolution in *Eroticism and the Body Politic* (pp.108-130)

--Maza "The Diamond Necklace Affair Revisited (1785-6) : The Case of the Missing Queen" in *Eroticism and the Body Politic* (pp. 63-89)

--Vivian Cameron "Political Exposures : Sexuality and Caricature in the French Revolution" in *Eroticism and the Body Politic* (pp.90-107)

(Total reading: 78 pages)

--Gutwirth, *Twilights of the Goddesses*, pp.??

**Assignment:** formulate paper topics and meet with me individually

Week 11

**Discussion:** The politics of the erotic

**Reading for next week:**

--Joan Landes *Visualizing the Nation* (pp.1-174)

--Madelyn Gutwirth "The Engulfed Beloved: Representations of Dead and Dying Women in the Art and Literature of the Revolutionary Era" in *Rebel Daughters : Women and the French Revolution* (pp.198-227)

(Total reading: 203 pages)

Week 12

**Discussion:** The representation of women in revolutionary iconography

**Reading for next week:**

--Doyle *The Oxford History of the French Revolution* (pp.272-390)

-- Olwen Hufton "In Search of Counter-Revolutionary Women" in *Women and the Limits of Citizenship in the French Revolution* (pp.91-130)

--Levy, Applewhite, and Johnson "Organized Feminine Political Power: Spring though October, 1793" in *Women in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1795* (pp.143-148)

- "Petition from the Revolutionary Republican Women to the National Convention on the Leadership of the Armies and the Law of Suspects" in *Women in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1795* (pp.172-174)
  - "The Jacobins Denounce the Society of Revolutionary Republican Women" in *Women in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1795* (pp.182-185)
  - "Claire Lacombe's Associates in the Société des Citoyennes Républicaines Révolutionnaires Testify Against Her" in *Women in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1795* (pp.178-181)
  - "The National Convention Outlaws Clubs and Popular Societies of Women in *Women in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1795* (pp.213-217)
  - Claire Goldberg Moses "'Equality' and 'Difference' in Historical Perspective: A Comparative Examination of the Feminisms of French Revolutionaries and Utopian Socialists" in *Rebel Daughters : Women and the French Revolution* (pp.231-254)
- (Total reading: 199 pages)

### Week 13

**Discussion:** Women and the politics of the Terror. How did the French Revolution affect the lives of women? How did the Revolution impact the development of modern feminism?

**Assignment:** Final Paper due in class

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### Class Assignments (and percentage of total grade):

- Weekly one-page critical analysis of the readings: 25%
- Research paper of 10-15 pages at the end of the semester. 50%
- Active class participation: 25%

### Suggested Paper topics (incorporating both primary and secondary sources):

- Analyze the life, writings, and trial of Olympe de Gouges
- Examine the debates over the possibility of extending equal rights to French women
- Investigate the iconographic representations of women in the French Revolution
- Analyze the erotic literature on Marie-Antoinette
- Discuss the "paradoxes" of universal rights
- Analyze the writings of Mary Wollstonecraft (a contemporary English woman inspired by the events of the French Revolution)
- Analyze the politics of the body in Revolutionary France

Articles and books used in this class:

- William Doyle *The Oxford History of the French Revolution* (**For Purchase and on reserve**)
- Peter Jones *The French Revolution in Social and Political Perspective* (**For Purchase and on reserve**)
- François Furet *Interpreting the French Revolution* (**For Purchase and on reserve**)
- Keith M. Baker *Inventing the French Revolution* (**For Purchase and on reserve**)
- Lynn Hunt *Politics, Culture and Class in the French Revolution* (**For Purchase and on reserve**)
- Lynn Hunt *The French Revolution and Human Rights* (**For Purchase and on reserve**)
- Joan Landes *Women and the Public Sphere in the Age of the French Revolution* (**For Purchase and on reserve**)
- Joan Landes *Visualizing the Nation* (**For Purchase and on reserve**)
- Suzanne Desan *The Family on Trial in Revolutionary France* (**For Purchase and on reserve**)
- Hesse *The Other Enlightenment* (**For Purchase and on reserve**)
- Melzer & Rabine *Rebel Daughters : Women and the French Revolution* (**E-Reserve or reserve**)
- Dominique Godineau, *The Women of Paris and Their French Revolution*
- Madelyn Gutwirth, *Twilight of the Goddesses: Women and Representation in the French Revolutionary Era*
- Hufton *Women and the Limits of Citizenship in the French Revolution* (**E-Reserve**)
- Lynn Hunt *Eroticism and the Body Politic* (**E-Reserve or reserve**)
- Joan Scott *Only Paradoxes to Offer* (**E-Reserve or reserve**)
- Peter R. Campbell *The Origins of the French Revolution* (**E-Reserve or reserve**)
- Applewhite, Levy & Johnson *Women in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1795* (**E-Reserve or reserve**)
- Jeremy Caradonna "The Death of Duty" (**E-Reserve**)
- Joan Scott "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *AHR*, vol.91, n.5, 1053-1075 (December, 1986) (**J-Stor**)

Some suggested readings:

- Mary Wollstonecraft, *The Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (Cambridge, 1995; originally published in the 1790s). She argued for equal rights for men and women.
- Olwen Hufton, "Women in Revolution, 1789-1796," *Past and Present*, 53 (1971)
- Olwen Hufton, "Women and the Family Economy in Eighteenth-Century France," *French Historical Studies*, Spring 1975
- Olwen Hufton *Women and the Limits of Citizenship in the French Revolution* (Toronto, 1992)
- Jennifer Heuer *The Family and the Nation: gender and citizenship in Revolutionary France, 1789-1830*

- Dorinda Outram *The Body and the French Revolution : Sex, Class, and Political Culture* (New Haven, 1989)
- Antoine de Baecque *The Body Politics : Corporeal Metaphor in Revolutionary France, 1770-1800* (Stanford, 1997)
- The rest of the essays in *Rebel Daughters: Women and the French Revolution*, eds. Melzer and Rabine, (New York, 1992)
- Applewhite and Levy, *Women and Politics in the Age of Democratic Revolution* (Michigan, 1993)
- The rest of the documents in Levy, Applewhite, and Johnson, *Women in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1795*
- The Rest of the documents in Hunt, *The French Revolution and Human Rights*
- Documents in John Hardman, *The French Revolution (Documents of Modern History)* (New York, 1982)
- David Andress *The Terror : The Merciless War for Freedom in Revolutionary France* (New York, 2005)
- Gary Kates *The Cercle Social, the Girondins, and the French Revolution* (especially pages 118-127)
- Vivien Jones, ed. *Women in the 18C* (a collection of primary source snippets, mostly from England).