

History 190
Citizenship, Democracy, and the French Revolution
Fall 2007
MW 3:00-4:15

Prof. Barry Shapiro
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Office Hours: MW 2:00-3:00; 4:15-5:15; TTh 9:00-10:00

One of the most important effects of the French Revolution was that “subjects” of the King of France were legally transformed into “citizens” of the Nation. Perhaps even more importantly, however, the French Revolution was a moment in time in which those who were actively involved in it learned what it meant, in the very fullest and most far-reaching sense, to be a citizen in a newly-emerging democratic society. For the Revolution was an event in which people who had been eternally accustomed to having no input whatsoever in public affairs suddenly found that their voices counted and that they had the opportunity to literally “make history.”

In this experimental course, students will be encouraged to reflect on the meaning of citizenship and civic engagement through a role-playing format in which they will act out the responses of revolutionary participants to various revolutionary situations. In particular, students will be assigned roles as members of specific revolutionary political factions and then asked to respond to two key revolutionary situations: 1) Louis XVI’s attempt to escape from Paris in June 1791; and 2) the trial of the king a year and a half later. Will the members of this class decide, as the National Assembly did in July 1791, to exonerate the king after his failed effort to escape the capital? Will they subsequently decide, as a newly-elected assembly known as the Convention did in January 1793, that Louis was guilty of treason and that he should be sent to the guillotine. Students in this course will not necessarily have to act or vote in exactly the same way as the people they are portraying actually acted and voted, but they will have to try to justify their decisions by making credible and persuasive arguments that **might** have been made by the people whose shoes they are filling.

Required texts:

Jeremy Popkin, *A Short History of the French Revolution*
Timothy Tackett, *When the King Took Flight*
David Jordan, *The King’s Trial: Louis XVI vs. the French Revolution*

COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1: Course Introduction
Assignment of Roles for the Crisis of 1791
Reading: David Ricci, “Good Citizenship in America” (handout)
Popkin, pp. 1-59

Weeks 2-3: Historical Background: From the Estates-General to the Crisis of 1791
Reading: Tackett, chapters 1-5
Preliminary Research on Your Crisis of 1791 Role

Week 4: Role-Playing: Factional Caucusing/Discussion Between Factions
Reading: Tackett, chapters 6-8 and Conclusion
Continued Research on Your 1791 Role

Monday, Oct. 1: In-Class Exam # 1

Weeks 5-7: Role-Playing: The National Assembly Deals With the Crisis of 1791
Further Research on Your 1791 Role

Mid-term Paper on the Crisis of 1791 (4-5 pages): Due Wednesday, Oct. 24

Weeks 8-9: Historical Background: The Fall of the Monarchy and the King's Trial
Assignment of Role for the King's Trial
Reading: Popkin, pp. 59-92
Jordan, pp. 1-140
Preliminary Research on Your Role in the King's Trial

Week 10: Role-Playing: Factional Caucusing/Discussion Between Factions
Reading: Jordan, pp. 141-221
Continued Research on Your Role in the King's Trial

Monday, Nov. 12: In-Class Exam # 2

Weeks 11-13: Role-Playing: The Convention Conducts the Trial of Louis XVI
Further Research on Your Role in the King's Trial

Week 14: Wrap-up Sessions: Conclusions, Reflections, Suggestions
Exit Interviews

Final Paper on the King's Trial (4-5 pages): Due Saturday, Dec. 15

ROLE-PLAYING GUIDELINES

Students will be assigned separate roles for the enactment of the Crisis of 1791 and of the Trial of Louis XVI. To the degree that it is possible, I will try to insure variety in the assignment of roles. Thus, for example, students who are assigned to a radical position in the 1791 crisis will be assigned a conservative position in the king's trial, and vice versa. Similarly, students who are assigned to portray a well-known person in 1791 will be

assigned to portray a less-known person in the king's trial, and vice versa. For each role that is assigned, you will receive a detailed "role statement" which will give you some basic information on your character and suggest sources for researching that character.

Each student is responsible for researching the roles he or she is assigned. The quantity and quality of research that you do will impact your grade in this class in 2 ways. First, the two papers that will you write in the course will each focus on your role-playing experience in the class. Thus, the more deeply you know and understand the characters you will be portraying, the better positioned you will be to write interesting and insightful papers on your role-playing experience. Second, your role-playing performances will be evaluated and will constitute a significant portion of your final grade. Thus, the better-researched your characters are, the better-equipped you will obviously be to credibly and convincingly portray them in the actual class sessions.

Through your research, you will learn about the actual choices that the characters you will be portraying made in history. As already indicated, you do not necessarily have to make the same choices in your portrayal that your character actually made, but you do have to make choices that the character **might** have made. Thus, for example, in the crisis of 1791, when conservative members of the National Assembly were faced with a choice between voting in favor of moderate proposals to exonerate the king and abstaining from voting, most chose to abstain, though it is at least conceivable that they could have chosen to side with the moderates. Hence, if you are portraying such a conservative, you might choose to side with the moderates, and if you decide to do so, it is your responsibility to come up with a persuasive explanation for why you made this choice. On the other hand, it is much less conceivable that any of these conservatives would have embraced radical proposals to remove the king from the throne and put him on trial. Hence, in your role-playing, you should avoid making such a choice.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

As outlined above, there will be 2 in-class exams and 2 required papers in this course. Details on my expectations for these papers and exams will, of course, be provided as the semester unfolds. In addition to these standard academic requirements, active and thoughtful class participation will clearly be especially important in this course, as its effectiveness depends on students coming to class prepared to be "in character" for each role-playing session.

Grading for the course will be determined as follows:

In-class exams:	30% (15% each)
Mid-term and final papers:	40% (20% each)
Class participation:	30% (15% for each role-playing component)

Course objectives (added 1/19/08):

1. To enable history, and in particular the French Revolution, to “come alive” to students through role-playing.
2. To convey a sense of the possibilities that exist for individuals to “make history” (or at least to “make a difference”) through civic engagement and political activism.