

## Rebels, Revolutionaries, and Cultural Change in Europe, 1300-1800

Instructor: Jim Coons

Change, whether through state policy or popular action, rarely comes without resistance. In cases of major historical changes during the early modern era, resistance frequently erupted into violence. This course will examine five instances of conflict among neighbors and compatriots, in order to reveal the impact these movements have had on history.

In Florence, we will see how the celebrated culture of the Renaissance emerged from Bruni's civic pride during civil war, Medicean electoral machinations, and Machiavellian politics. In Germany and France, Luther's Reformation took on dimensions and implications well beyond theology, which demands an investigation into the meanings and limits of religious revolt itself. The first half of France's "Splendid Century" was marked by revolt, from all strata of society – peasant revolts like that of Jean Nu-Pied, and palace intrigues against Richelieu and Mazarin – and culminated in the Fronde, the complex rebellion of peasants, Parlementaires, and Princes. From these incidents, we will see how revolt functioned at different levels of France's rigid socio-economic hierarchy. Simultaneously, England experienced a civil war brought about in large part by starkly contrasting visions of governmental form and power. The battles between Kings and Parliament, and the radical politics to which they opened the door, will serve as a case study for the power of political ideas to spur dissent. Finally, the causes and course of the French Revolution will show how efforts to wholly remake a nation were undertaken, and what obstacles the Revolutionaries faced. Each of these cases reveals an important facet of revolutions: cultural impact, religious motives, social origins and meanings, political consequences, and the fallout of "the personal becoming political."

Some central questions throughout our studies will be: Who can claim to speak for "the People?" What is "the good of the State," and how can it be effectively invoked? What ideas or crises are strong enough to spur active opposition? How do states respond to revolt, and what reactions are effective in the short- and long-term? Moreover, we must ask how the answers to these questions change over time, and how they differ with their place of origin.

Revolts and rebellions may vary widely in their particulars, but they are always acts heavily laden with meaning, intent, and consequences. This course will shed light on the causes for which everyday people killed and died, and the impact their battles have had on the state of our world.

## Course Requirements

All students will write three 1-page papers (2 “reaction,” 1 “question”- explanations given in class), and one 1500-2000 word essay (about 6-8 pages), in addition to the midterm and final exam. This course has no general textbook, and no separate discussion sections; accordingly, all background information will come through lecture, and we will often analyze assigned readings together in class. For these reasons, attendance and engagement in lecture are required, and will make up part of your final grade. Unless otherwise noted, readings should be completed for class meetings on Friday.

The use of laptops for taking notes in lecture is permitted, conditional on their not creating a distraction for yourself or others. I reserve the option to bar laptops from the classroom if off-topic uses are a persistent issue. The best way to handle this is simply to turn off you WiFi at the start of lecture, since there’s nothing you’ll need the internet for during those 50 minutes.

Books available for purchase: Course Reader (at Humanities Print Shop); Lauro Martinez, *April Blood: Florence and the Plot Against the Medici*; Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*; R.J. Knecht, *The French Wars of Religion, 1559-1598* (2010); Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution*; Timothy Tackett, *When the King Took Flight*. (All textbooks available for purchase are marked with an asterisk in the weekly schedule, below.)

## Grading

- Participation: 20% (including reaction papers); Midterm: 20%; Final: 30%; Research paper: 30% (including research proposal).
- A 100-93; AB 92-88; B 87-83; BC 82-78; C 77-70; D 69-60; F below 59.

## A Word on Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the substantial use of another’s words or ideas without attribution, and will not be tolerated in this class. Students found to have borrowed from other sources without citation, intentionally or otherwise, will receive a 0 for that assignment – even, and especially, the final paper, which is 30% of your grade. The UW Writing Center has an excellent [primer on documentation](#), and especially [quotation and paraphrasing](#) – please consult this page, a Writing Fellow, or myself if you have questions. Again: I have a strict zero-tolerance policy on plagiarism, whatever the excuse, so if you aren’t sure about how to cite, what to cite, or any related issue, ask!

## Schedule of Topics:

### Week 1: Intro

Mon, 1/23 - Syllabus, administrative issues

Wed, 1/25 - Introduction to Late Medieval/Early Modern Europe: Structures

Fri, 1/27 - Introduction to Late Medieval/Early Modern Europe: Mentalities

## Unit 1: Civil War & Cultural Revival in Renaissance Florence

### Week 2: Proto-Renaissance Florence

Mon, 1/30 - The Ciompi: Workers and Civic Conflict

Wed, 2/1 - John Hawkwood, Leonardo Bruni: Creating Florentine Identity through Intra-Italian Conflict

Fri, 2/3 - The Albizzi Regime and War with Milan

Readings: Hans Baron, "In Defense of Civic Humanism"; Albert Rabil, Jr, "The Significance of Civic Humanism"; Salutati's Invective against Loschi; Barbaro Defines Marriage; Bruni's Funeral Oration (all in Major Problems in the History of the Italian Renaissance, Kohl and Andrews Smith, eds: pp.253-267, 275-282)

\*Reaction Paper Due

### Week 3: Medicean Florence - Manipulation, Magnificence, Malcontents

Mon, 2/6 - The Rise of Cosimo de' Medici: Tyranny or Power Politics?

Wed, 2/8 - Lorenzo il Magnifico and the Pazzi Conspiracy

Fri, 2/10 - Assessing the Medici

Readings: \*Lauro Martines, April Blood, Prologue, Ch.2-7, 9-10, 12-14 [This is a lot of reading, I know - the two weeks before are light, so take advantage!]

### Week 4: Savonarola and Machiavelli

Mon, 2/13 - Savonarola and the Fall of the Medici

Wed, 2/15 - Machiavelli and the Repression of Republicanism

Fri, 2/17 - Machiavelli's Revolutionary Politics

Readings: Machiavelli, \*The Prince

\*Question Paper due

## Unit 2: Religious Violence in the Age of Reformations

### Week 5: Reform and Revolt in Germany

Mon, 2/20 - Martin Luther and the German Peasantry: the Contested Meanings of the Reformation

Wed, 2/22 - Thomas Müntzer: Radicals and Anabaptists, or The Limits of Belief

Fri, 2/24 - Reformation Violence: Social Movement or Religious Fervor?

Readings: Tom Scott and Bob Scribner, *The German Peasants' War* Ch.2; "Twelve Articles of the German Peasantry"; Martin Luther, "Against the Robbing and Murdering Hordes of Peasants"

### - Week 6: The French Wars of Religion

Mon, 2/27 - The Day of Placards and the Wars of Religion

Wed, 2/29 - Crown and Nobility: the French Monarchy during Civil War

Fri, 3/2 - Catherine de' Medici: Queen, Regent, Usurper?

Reading: \*Knecht, *French Wars of Religion* selections

### Week 7: Witchcraft, Review, Exam

Mon, 3/5 - Witches: Gender, Spirits, and Society

Wed, 3/7 - Review/Catch-up/"How to Write a Blue Book"

Fri, 3/9 - EXAM

## Unit 3: Nobles and Commoners in the French Age of Absolutism

### Week 8: Internal Strife in the Age of Louis XIII

Mon, 3/12 - La Rochelle: Huguenots and French Society after Henri IV

Wed, 3/14 - Croquants and Nu-Pieds: Provincial Unrest and Political Centralization

Fri, 3/16 - Theorizing Popular Revolt: Structures and Approaches

Reading: Beik, *Urban Protest in Seventeenth-Century France*, Ch.2

\*Reaction Paper Due

### Week 9: Aristocratic Dissent Under Richelieu and Mazarin

Mon, 3/19 - The Day of Dupes & Cinq-Mars: Palace Intrigues and Court Factions

Wed, 3/21 - Dueling: Nobles vs. Nobles, Nobles vs. King

Fri, 3/23 - Noble Violence and the Identity of an Order

Reading: Schneider, "Swordplay and Statemaking"; Lewis Carrol, Blood and Violence in Early Modern France, Ch.? 49-59.

Week 10: The Frondes

Mon, 3/26 – "Sodomizing the State": Jules Mazarin and the Parisian Fronde

Wed, 3/28 – The Prince vs. the King: The Grand Condé and the Princely Fronde

Fri, 3/30 – The Ormée: Bourgeois of Bordeaux and the Radical Fronde

Reading: Beik, Urban Protest Ch.10; Mazarinades

\*Paper Topics Due

3/31-4/8: Spring Break

**Unit 4: The English Revolution and the Clash of Political Ideologies**

Week 11: Preconditions of the English Civil War

Mon, 4/9 – James I: the Attempt at Absolutism

Wed, 4/11 – Charles I and Parliament: The Road to Civil War?

Fri, 4/13 – The Importance of Political Theory in Civil War

Reading: James VI & I, Trew Law of Free Monarchies; Mark Kishlansky, A Monarchy Transformed Ch.5-6

Week 12: The Civil War & Glorious Revolution

Mon, 4/16 – The Civil War and Execution of Charles I

Wed, 4/18 – Cromwell: "Republic" and Radical Politics

Fri, 4/20 – James II and the Glorious Revolution, or How to Lose a Throne

Readings: \*Christopher Hill, The World Turned Upside Down selections; Diggers' Manifesto

**Unit 5: The French Revolution and the (re)Making of a Nation**

Week 13: Enlightenment and the Revolutionary Century

Mon, 4/23 – Diderot, Rousseau: Philosophes, Proto-Revolutionaries?

Wed, 4/25 – Enlightenment Economy: Socio-Economic Structures and the Politics of Debt

Fri, 4/27 – Marie Antoinette and Desacralization, or the Importance of Being Regal

Reading: Sarah Maza, "The Diamond Necklace Affair"

Week 14: The French Revolution

Mon, 4/30 – 1789: Anger, Hope, and the Struggle for the Republic

\*Papers Due\*

Wed, 5/2 – Robespierre and Radical Revolution

Fri, 5/4 – Violence and Revolution: Unfortunate Occurrence or Endemic Element?

Reading: Abbé Sieyès, "What is the Third Estate?"; \*Timothy Tackett, When the King Took Flight (Intro, skim Ch.1-3, read Ch.4-8, + conclusion)

Week 15: Revolutionary Repercussions and Legacies

Mon, 5/7 – Napoleon Bonaparte and the End of the Revolution?

Wed, 5/9 – Toussaint Louverture: Revolutionary Ideas in the Atlantic World

Fri, 5/11 – Catch-up/Review

Reading: Laurent Dubois, Avengers of the New World Intro, Ch.3