

## HISTORY 362

France and the Atlantic World to 1804  
Brigham Young University  
Summer 2009

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Course Description: In our era of “Freedom Fries,” France gets a bad rap. From global politics (General Norman Schwartzkopf once said “Going to war without France is like going deer hunting without an accordion”) to popular culture (Groundskeeper Willie’s quip about “cheese-eating surrender monkeys” leaps to mind), Americans tend to dismiss France’s relevance in the present and deride its impact on the past. This course, however, recovers and explores the remarkable history of French interaction with the peoples of Africa and the Americas from the late fifteenth century through Haitian independence in 1804. Our goal, however, is not simply to rehabilitate France and the French as important actors in the colonial arena. Rather, the course attempts to use the French experience to rethink the nature of New World imperialism and the boundaries of intercultural exchange throughout the early modern Atlantic world.

Course Aims: Consistent with the “Learning Objectives for History Majors” (these can be found at <http://history.byu.edu/undergrad/learning.htm>), this course seeks to develop students’ ability to understand the significance and quality of historians’ work, to probe the limits of existing historiography, and to create original scholarship using both primary and secondary sources.

Required Reading: The following books are available at the BYU Bookstore. They are also on reserve at the library.

Laurent Dubois and John Garrigus, eds., *Slave Revolution in the Caribbean, 1789-1804*  
Allan Greer, *Mohawk Saint: Catherine Tekakwitha and the Jesuits*  
Robert Harms, *The Diligent: A Voyage Through the Worlds of the Slave Trade*  
Voltaire, *Candide, or Optimism*

Readings on Blackboard

Teaching Method:

Lecture and in-class discussion of assigned reading

Assignments/Examinations:

\*Short Papers: Students will write two two-page papers based on weekly readings.

\*Primary Source Paper: In consultation with Prof. Hodson, students will select a primary source or sources related to the early modern French Atlantic. They will then write a two-page paper on that source, detailing its creation, the people it describes, some of its relevance for the topic of this course, and the possible conclusions it might lead to in a final paper. Students will meet with Prof. Hodson during the first two weeks of the semester to discuss possible sources.

\*Term Paper: In an eight- to ten-page paper, students will use the primary source or sources they have selected to build a proper argument, concentrating on a rich, well-contextualized discussion of what these documents reveal about the broader history of French colonization. Students should take as suggestive models microhistories like Carlo Ginsburg's *The Cheese and the Worms*, the case studies in Craig Harline's *Miracles at the Jesus Oak*, or Guido Ruggiero, "The Strange Death of Margerita Marcellini: *Male*, Signs, and the Everyday World of Pre-Modern Medicine," *American Historical Review*, vol. 106, no. 4 (October 2001), 1141-1158.

\*Final Exam: Scheduled for August 12, 3:00-4:50, 348 MARB. This exam will consist of a few short answer/identification questions and three essay questions; students will respond to one of the essay questions. This exam covers material from the entire term.

\*Participation: Students are expected to attend class, contribute to conversations in class, and participate in organized debates.

#### Grade Breakdown:

Short Papers: 50 points each (100 points total)

Primary Source Paper: 100 points

Term Paper: 200 points

Final Exam: 100 points

Participation: 25 points

Total: 525 points

#### Grading:

93-100% = A

92-90% = A-

89-87% = B+

86-83% = B

82-80% = B-

79-77% = C+

76-73% = C

72-70% = C-

69-67% = D+

66-63% = D

62-60% = D-

60-0% = F

#### Honor Code:

BYU's Honor Code demands that students be honest in their academic work. This means that you may not, under any circumstances, pass someone else's research or writing off as your own. I take this prohibition very seriously. Plagiarism on your part will result in a failing grade for this course and possible disciplinary action at the University level. For more information on the Honor Code, see [http://campuslife.byu.edu/honorcode/honor\\_code.html](http://campuslife.byu.edu/honorcode/honor_code.html) or call 422-2847.

Sexual discrimination or harassment (including student-to-student sexual harassment) is prohibited both by the law and by Brigham Young University policy. If you feel you are being subjected to sexual discrimination or harassment, please bring your concerns to me. Alternatively, you may lodge a complaint with the Equal Employment Office (D-240C ASB, 422-5895, 367-5689) or with the Honor Code Office (4440 WSC).

If you have a disability that may affect your performance in this course, please do not hesitate to speak with me. In addition, you are strongly encouraged to get in touch with the University Accessibility Center (1520 WSC) as soon as possible. This office will evaluate your disability and assist in arranging for reasonable accommodations for eligible students.

**Schedule:**

**Week I (June 22-26) – France and the Atlantic World: An Introduction**

Reading: Jean de Léry, *History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil, otherwise called America*, 3-14, 25-50, 56-68, 112-177; Samuel de Champlain, *Savages*, 63-111 (Blackboard).

\*Short Paper Due 6/26: In a two-page paper, respond to the following question: Based on the accounts of Jean de Léry in Brazil and Samuel de Champlain in North America, what were the differences between Native Americans and Europeans? To what did sixteenth-century Frenchmen attribute those differences?

**Week II (June 29-July 3) – Conversions and Compromises: Religion in New France**

Reading: Allan Greer, *Mohawk Saint: Catherine Tekakwitha and the Jesuits*, entire

**Week III (July 6-10) – The French Empire and the Atlantic Slave Trade**

Reading: Harms, *The Diligent*, 1-221

\*Film Showing: In class, 7/6, *Black Robe* (1991)

**Week IV (July 13-17) – The French Empire and the Atlantic Slave Trade, cont.**

Reading: Harms, *The Diligent*, 223-410.

\*Short Paper Due 7/17: In a two-page paper, respond to the following question: Why did Africans in Whydah (and in other west African locations) participate in the Atlantic slave trade? How were their motives similar to or different from those of Guillaume and François Billy in Vannes?

**Week V (July 20-24) – Enlightenment and Empire**

Reading: Voltaire, *Candide*, entire; Diderot, *Supplement to Bougainville's Voyage* (Blackboard).

**Week VI (July 27-31) – War and Aftermath**

Reading: Emma Rothschild, "A Horrible Tragedy in the French Atlantic," *Past and Present*, no 192 (February 2006), 67-108; Christopher Hodson, "Colonizing the Patrie: An Experiment Gone Wrong in Old Regime France," *French Historical Studies*, vol. 32, no. 2 (April 2009), 193-222. (Blackboard).

\*Primary Source Paper Due 8/1

**Week VII (August 3-7) – Revolutions**

Reading: Dubois and Garrigus, *Slave Revolution in the Caribbean, 1789-1804*, entire.

**Week VIII (August 10) - Pot Luck à la française**

Reading: None

Term Paper Due 8/10 - NO EXCEPTIONS!

Final Examination: August 12, 3:00-4:50 PM, 348 MARB