Women & The French Revolution
Course Outline
Spring 2017

*All questions throughout the course plan are for in class discussion and to provide objectives for each class
*This course plan is subject to change

Week 1 (50 min)
I. Topic: Introduction
   A. Introductions (10 min)
      1. Introduce myself
      2. Icebreaker: Each student goes around and states two true facts about themselves and one false fact about themselves. The class has to figure out which fact is false.
   B. Syllabus (10 min)
      1. Go through the syllabus with students
      2. Stress key points on syllabus (especially the part about discussion posts and final exam)
      3. Make sure to mention that the classroom is a safe space and everyone should be open-minded about everything proposed (no ideas are discarded)
      4. Course overview - go over the topics that will be covered in class
   C. Introduction to “Women and the French Revolution” (30 min)
      1. Group discussion (15 min)
         a) Put them into small groups and have them answer the following questions on the powerpoint (activity is meant to help them be comfortable with each other for future discussions)
            (1) When you hear the words “French Revolution”, what do you immediately think of? And, when you hear the word “women”, what does that make you think of?
            (2) What is your knowledge of the French Revolution? What do you know about the role of women in the French Revolution?
(3) What are some famous women of the French Revolution you have heard of?

(4) Why study women’s history?

b) Have them present the answers they’ve discussed with each other and write them on the board so that they have a visual of their ideas.

c) After discussion and class participation, give students the a few different interpretations of the definitions of the French Revolution as discussed and defined by different French Revolutionary historians via powerpoint.

d) How accurate were your thoughts and ideas in comparison to the exact definition of the French Revolution?

2. Spend the last 15 minutes of class discussing the famous motto of the French Revolution: Liberte, Egalite, Fraternite (15 min)

a) Notice how the motto states “Fraternity” and “Sorority” is completely excluded. To an extent, “fraternite” suggests males only - why are women excluded in the motto particularly? What does this suggest about French society and the exclusion of women?

D. **Reading**: Excerpt of *Gender and Nation* by Nira Yuval-Davis; *Liberty for All? An Exploration of the Status of Women in Revolutionary France* by Sonali Gupta

**Week 2 (50 min)**

I. **Topic**: Origins of the idea of women in the private sphere

A. Finish discussion on motto of the French Revolution (10 min)

B. Analysis and discussion on the readings assigned: *Gender and Nation & Liberty for All?* (30 min)

1. What does the reading tell us about the origins of women as “bearers of collective honour”? What typical images are women often associated with?

2. Despite the power in their symbolic role, why are women constantly placed into the private sphere in society?

   a) Although they are placed there, it is not always the case. But we must learn the origins of their place in society in order to
understand the actions and achievements (or lack thereof) of the women of the French Revolution.

3. Why are women used as symbols to represent a nation?
   a) Analyse painting on the front of my syllabus via powerpoint (La Liberté guidant le peuple)
      (1) How is she portrayed? Why is she leaning forward and what is the purpose of having her larger than the figures in the background? Why is she partially nude? What is she, symbolically, for France? In general? Why is it important to note that the symbol for the French Revolution is a woman?

C. Reading: Excerpt on Women and the Public Sphere in the Age of the French Revolution by Joan B. Landes
   **Rousseau stance towards women is part of the reading**

II. Discussion Post #1: DUE Monday by 6pm on EEE discussion board

Week 3 (50 min)

I. Topic: The Ancien Regime and Women
   A. Quick overview of last week’s discussion (5 min)
   B. Small group discussion of this week’s reading; answer questions provided by me via powerpoint (5 min)
      1. How does Landes discuss women’s roles in the pre-revolutionary period in this excerpt? What are the ways in which women in the Ancien Regime attempted to break out of the private sphere? Knowing their designated roles, why do you think women would want to fight for rights and liberties in the public sphere during the revolution and what things do you think they would fight for?
      2. What is Rousseau’s perspective on women and their engagement in fighting for rights?
   C. Class discussion of these questions (15 min)
   D. CLOSE ANALYSIS: Marie Antoinette (25 min)
      1. Provides students an example of an anti-revolutionary woman and provides them with a representation of the roles and portrayals of women prior to the revolution.
         a) Powerpoint presentation that gives a brief overview/context on Marie Antoinette → her life, her political involvement, her
actions during the French Revolution, and public regard towards her

b) Film (2006) → show scenes of Marie’s excess and luxury, scenes in which Marie and Louis interact with each other, and scenes in which it is made clear the public’s feelings toward her

c) Discussion of where Marie Antoinette fits in the public and private sphere.

(1) She is not only a public figure, but is also a woman who is thrust into the public sphere due to her position as queen. However, in the scenes displaying the interactions between her and her husband, it is quite clear that she despite her role in the public sphere, she is still very much stuck within the private sphere.

(2) How would you analyse this portrayal of her in this film? Does it help or hamper the image women? To what extent does she influence the French government? Is it a stretch to say that the revolution came about because of her and because she was a woman? Or was she merely another victim? What do you think it says about the representation of pro-monarchy women?

II. Discussion Post #2: DUE Monday by 6pm on EEE discussion board

III. Homework: Prepare questions on Marie Antoinette in order for us to finish the discussion in class next week.

Week 4 (50 min)

I. Topic: The Beginnings of Feminism

   A. Go through the questions on Marie Antoinette as prepared by the students (10 min)
      1. Facilitate a discussion to make sure everything has been covered

   B. Powerpoint presentation on the October Days & March on Versailles (15 min)
      1. Overview of what it was about
         a) Interesting to note: Women were not fully in the public sphere (working class women), but were still part of the private sphere (mothers, daughters, wives, sisters). However, they took matters into their own hands to demand fairness in bread prices.

         2. What motivated the event
3. The significance of the October Days and March on Versailles
4. Provide short quotations from excerpt of *Women of Paris & Their French Revolution* by Dominique Godineau (she provides a very good analysis on the emergence of women in the beginning of the French Revolution)
5. Throughout the powerpoint, I will ask these questions in order to involve and engage the students instead of just lecturing them
   a) What were the objectives of these women and why do you think these objectives were chosen? Is there any particular significance to them? What were their motives and actions to achieve their objectives? To what extent do you think they succeeded or failed? What is the significance of their achievements or failures for the possible future of women’s rights in the revolution?

C. Given the knowledge from the powerpoint lecture just given, we will have a small debate in class (25 min)
   1. The class will be split into two groups: the royalist women (i.e. Marie Antoinette, Ancien Regime, etc.) and the working class women of the October Days
      a) Each side is expected to defend the legitimacy of their faction - Royalists will have to defend their roles in the Ancien Regime and the privileges and benefits of having a monarchy in place; working class women will have to defend their right to having their voices heard by the monarchy and to being able to exercise the rights they somewhat had (women of the market had certain rights - they were not necessarily in the private sphere since they were working women, but that’s not to say that they were granted full rights and equality either).
      b) Each side will be given 10 minutes to write down and discuss their arguments
      c) Everyone is required to talk and contribute in the debate

D. **Reading**: Introduction of *Rebel Daughters: Women and their French Revolution* by Sara Melzer & Leslie Rabine; briefly look over the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen AND Declaration of the Rights of Women*

Week 5 (50 min)
I. Topic: The Rights of Women
   A. Powerpoint presentation on the origins of feminism in the French Revolution (10 min)
      1. Influence from philosophers during the Enlightenment (Montesquieu & Voltaire), American women & slave women, and Manon Roland
      2. The struggle for women of the working class versus the aristocracy and middle classes (compare and contrast: differences and/or similarities)
         a) Restructuring of these classes
      3. 1792 - the birth of the “radical feminist” → becomes the image of women fighting for their rights during the revolution
   B. Continuation of powerpoint onto political feminism (15 min)
      1. Very prominent in Paris
      2. Pro-feminist figures
         a) Olympe de Gouges (writer of the Declaration of the Rights of Women)
         b) Manon Roland (used her husband’s status in politics to further women’s rights and revolutionary ideals)
            (1) Important to note: her influence in the government, although it is through her husband, as a woman
         c) Marquis de Condorcet - also few men who believed in the plight of women during the French Revolution (male feminists)
            (1) Supported equal rights for women and people of all races
      3. Important events in which they achieved (did not achieve) rights
         a) National Assembly
   C. CLOSE ANALYSIS: Analyse and examine both declarations (15 min)
      1. The purpose of having a “Declaration of the Rights of Women” written is due to the fact that women were almost entirely excluded from the “Declaration of the Rights of Man”. Additionally, it is important to note that while the “Dec of the Rights of Man” was implemented and became an official document, the “Dec of the Rights of Women” was not.
      2. What are the similarities between the two? Are there any gender issues that arise with having two separate declarations written to address the female and male gender? What are the shortcomings of the “Dec of the Rights of Man”? Consequently, what are the shortcomings of the “Dec of the Rights of Women?”
a) Dec of Rights of Men: failure to acknowledge women and their human rights as well as their contributions to the revolution

b) Dec of Rights of Women: STATED THAT WOMEN WERE ALLOWED TO LIVE INDEPENDENTLY FROM THEIR HUSBANDS SHOULD THEY CHOOSE + STEPPING STONE FOR WOMEN IN POLITICAL SPHERE (political participation)*

D. Tie the close analysis of the comparison of the two declarations into the nonviolent or violent acts perpetrated by women of the revolution (10 min)

1. Students need to be able to pull examples and interesting facts they read from the reading on Rebel Women in order for us to have a class discussion of the reading
   a) This discussion is meant to introduce the students to the violent discourse of revolutionary women
   b) Also to discuss what is considered violent and what is considered nonviolent - what are the justifications for the actions?

E. Reading: The Death of Charlotte Corday by Jules Michelet

II. Discussion Post #3: DUE Monday by 6pm on EEE discussion board

Week 6 (50 min)

I. Topic: Violent Women & their Opponents

A. Small overview and context of Charlotte Corday and her significance in the French Revolution (5 min)

B. CLOSE ANALYSIS: Excerpt on Charlotte Corday (20 min)

1. We will be examining and analysing this reading through a literary perspective
   a) Syntax, lexical field, diction, symbolism, etc. that is used by Michelet to evoke a sense of pity as well as awe towards someone who is about to be executed
   b) Instead of condemning her, we are made to feel a complete adoration for her and we are made to understand her violent act of murder (Jean-Paul Marat)
   c) Analysis of the famous painting: The Death of Marat by Jacques-Louis David (15 min)

   (1) How is Charlotte Corday a feminist? She kills a pro-revolutionary figure, but she herself supports the
revolution. So, are her actions too extreme and therefore detrimental to revolutionary feminism or are they justified?

(2) How is Marat portrayed? What does this show us about masculinity? Masculinity versus femininity? What are the general stereotypes of men? Does this portrayal of him really adhere to any of those? Is there a possibility that he is somewhat feminized? (Portrayed in a position of weakness - open and dead)

d) How does studying Charlotte Corday help us understand female political militancy?

C. Powerpoint presentation on the female opponents of violent women as well as the revolution in general (counter-revolutionary women) (10 min)

1. Use short excerpts and quotes to help students gain a better understanding of the side of counter-revolutionaries *Olwen Hufton chapter

   a) Are their arguments against the revolution valid? By understanding and learning about the actions and opinions of the counter-revolutionaries, does it make it harder to view the revolutionaries as the “good guys”?

D. Briefly discuss the group project on violent women (10 min)

1. Every group (2-3 people) must choose a revolutionary woman who is considered to be a “violent” woman. ***NOTE: in the books that I’ve read, the authors seem to refer to revolutionary women who perpetrated violence as “violent women”, but I also want to clarify that they are not limited to those who participated in the female militant society, Society of Revolutionary and Republican Women. They must do some research on her and present it to the class next week.

   a) List to chose from: Pauline Léon, Théroigne de Méricourt, Olympe de Gouges, Claire Lacombe, Constance Evard, Anne Félicité Colombe, Atta Palm d’Aelders

   b) Make sure to note that they are not labelled as violent, but I have titled them as such because they chose violent methods in attempting to gain their rights and equalities during the revolution. Additionally, mention that in their research, students
should pay attention to not only the violent strategies of these women, but also their previous non-violent strategies as well. What drove them to use violent strategies?

2. The presentation should give us some context about her life, her involvement in the revolution, and why she is considered to be a violent revolutionary woman. Additionally, the presentation should provide an analysis of the reactions (public and private) against the violence perpetrated by these women.

3. Each presentation should be about 5-8 min.

4. Powerpoint presentations are not required, but they are neither discouraged.

II. **Discussion Post #4**: DUE Monday by 6pm on EEE discussion board

III. **Homework**: Research and presentations on violent women.

**Week 7 (50 min)**

I. **Topic: Women’s Contributions to the Revolution**

   A. In class group presentations on violent French revolutionary women (20 min)

      1. Since this is an assignment which I will be assessing part of the students’ grades on, each member will give me a rating (on a scale of 1 to 10) of the amount of effort their peers gave in the group

   B. Powerpoint presentation on the achievements (or lack of achievements) made by the women of the French revolution (15 min)

      1. By this far, it will have been clear that women made a larger impact on the revolution than they are often given credit for

         a) Much of this is due to the fact that the topic of women is often neglected by historians (more importantly, because historians are prone to viewing the overall picture of the event rather than the minute details of women)

         b) Defence of human rights and liberties

         c) A definite change between their confinement in the private sphere versus their growth and emergence into the public sphere (between the periods of the Ancien Regime and the Revolution)

         d) **RIGHT TO VOTE**

         e) Participation in clubs and societies often reserved to men

   C. Questions to discuss throughout the powerpoint (15 min)
1. How does this change our views on women? More importantly, how does that change our views in terms of gender? Is feminism during the French Revolution a bad thing or a good thing? Was the Revolution good or bad for women?
2. Could they have done more? If yes, in what ways and how? If no, why not?

D. **Reading:** Excerpts of compiled letters (5) from different women across Europe and America

II. **Discussion Post #5:** DUE Monday by 6pm on EEE discussion board

**Week 8 (50 min)**

I. **Topic: Influence Abroad**
   A. Students will have a small fishbowl discussion based on the previous lesson on women’s contributions to the revolution (15 minutes)
      1. First group will have 7 minutes to discuss the question: Can we or can we not label these women as feminists? To what extent? Are their contributions valid? What are the similarities between them and modern day feminists?
      2. Second group will have 7 minutes to discuss the question: In what ways could their failures have been successes? Do any of their successes have any pertinence today? How well do you think they would fare in modern day feminism?
   B. Based on the letters that were given to be read, students must be able to assess and analyse the context, significance, and contributions they give to the revolution.
      1. We will discuss each letter at length in terms of analysis (15 min)
         a) Letters from Italy, England, America, Germany, etc.
         b) I will create a chart on the board in which we look at all the letters and find common elements between them as well as differences. We will be able to analyse the extent to which the women of the french revolution influenced women abroad. Additionally, we will be able to examine the impact the French Revolution had around the world, not only in France.
   C. Begin watching film *Ridicule* (1996) by Patrice Leconte (20 min)
      1. Gives a great overview of the different roles of played by women during the Revolution
a) Ties into the different interpretations and roles of women we studied throughout the quarter

2. Not mandatory to finish the film, but is recommended (it’s a great film!) - film will be available through a link provided by the UCI Media Services Center to which I will email to the students

D. **Reading:** Excerpt of *Deviant Women of the French Revolution & Their Rise of Feminism* by Lisa Beckstrand

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**Week 9 (50 min)**

I. **Topic: After the Revolution**

   A. Discussion of the reading in order to clarify any questions and concerns (10 min)

   B. Group activity: students divide up into groups of 3-4 people (10 min)

      1. They create a chart → one column is for the achievements made by AND for women DURING the French Revolution, and the other column is for what happened to these achievements after the revolution

      2. This group activity is meant to allow the students to apply previous knowledge to their current reading. It also allows them to engage and connect two different events to help them better understand the influence of women in the revolution.

      3. Each group is expected to share their findings to the class and we will discuss each point in more detail

         a) Divorce

         b) Right to vote

         c) Private sphere vs public sphere

         d) Independence from husband

         e) Political influence/participation

C. The group activity ties into the discussion of the impact left by revolutionary women on the development of modern feminism (10 min)

   1. What do we know about the advancements for women’s rights in America? (Women’s Suffrage Movement in the 1900s) What can we say about the similarities between the advocation of certain revolutionary ideas such as divorce, voting, political positions/participation?

      a) From a negative perspective, we can say that not much had changed from the French Revolution to the Women’s Suffrage
Movement in 1900s because ultimately, both groups of women were fighting for the same causes but hundreds of years apart.

b) From a positive perspective, we can say these women paved the way and set the precedence for post-revolutionary women to gain the right to vote, to inherit property, to participate in government, and to divorce, etc. Moreover, they inspired women’s rights movements internationally, specifically speaking, in America, where women gained the right to vote in the 1920s, an issue that was first brought up during the French Revolution. By understanding the activism and progress made by the revolutionary women, it influences and becomes the basis for the arguments and equalities that modern feminism is currently struggling for. Most importantly, the sense of entitlement to freedoms that first emerged during the French Revolution are now the same rights that modern women have and are entitled to today.

D. Kahoot! Game to review important facts, themes, and ideas brought up throughout the course for the final exam (20 min)

1. Requires technology in order to participate in the game (one of the exceptions for using technology in class)
2. About 20-25 questions that ultimately encompass the entire course

II. **Homework**: Review for the final exam.

**Week 10 (50 min)**

I. **Topic: Conclusion and Final Exam (50 min)**

A. The exam will be composed of:

1. Short factual questions - these questions will test the student’s knowledge of historical facts and timeline of events of the French Revolution
   a) Students are expected to be precise and accurate
   b) Factual questions may consist of fill in the blanks and multiple choice questions
2. Identifications - short, but very obvious quotes from the readings we studied throughout the quarter
   a) Students will be expected to state which reading the quote is from as well as the author of the text
3. Two short response questions - the response questions will be formulated from any of the 5 discussion boards posted throughout the quarter and will focus solely on the readings that were discussed in those discussion boards
   a) Students are not required to write more than 5 sentences in response to the questions as long as all aspects of the question are answered

B. Students must be able to grasp several concepts by the end of the course
   1. What the French Revolution was and its impact on women and the world
      a) Whether or not the revolution was positive or negative for women
   2. How women were viewed traditionally versus how they want to be viewed (via their arguments and fights for their rights and equalities, among other things)
   3. What the image of women during the French Revolution tells us about feminism
   4. How feminism during the revolution impacts modern feminism