Absolutism and Revolution: Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Europe

Western Michigan University
Spring Semester 2013

HIST 6160
Marion (Buddy) Gray

Scope and Focus of the Course:
The chronology of the course is broad, with a focus on what in German history is called the “saddle era,” ca. 1750-1850. A goal of the course is to introduce some important new scholarship and contemporary modes of inquiry, as applied to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe. Emphases will be on gender history and environmental history as modes of inquiry.

Reading List (to be purchased)

Other readings will be made available electronically.

Attendance:
Attendance is mandatory, and absences must be documented. Except in emergency situations, please notify me in advance of an absence. Absences can result in a lower course grade.

Participation:
Active participation in class discussions is necessary. Each member of the class will have the responsibility of contributing to weekly discussions and of leading specified class discussions (determined in advance). Additionally, each class member will have the responsibility of offering constructive criticism on one colleague’s final project.

Weekly Papers:
There is a written assignment for each class period in which a reading will be discussed, usually a 750-word review of the book. These assignments can vary, and when they do, changes will be announced. If not otherwise directed, for the weekly papers, use the guidelines for January 10. Be sure to give appropriate attention to style of writing as well as to content. Budget time for revisions. Papers should not be first drafts!
Assignment for January 17, 2012:
Bring to class a written review of T.C.W. Blanning, The Eighteenth Century and be prepared to discuss it. Your review has a limit of 750 words. Write it as if you were introducing the book to readers who do not know it. It is important to observe the word limit, plus or minus 50 words. Please print the number of words at the end of your review. Your review should include:

• The primary thesis or the main argument of the work. In the case of edited books, this will require some statement about an overall thesis (if one is discernible) and some specific examples of individual chapters. Space limitations may not allow you to discuss every chapter; concentrate on the overall thrust of the book.
• The ways in which the author substantiates his or her thesis—or in edited works, authors substantiate their theses—including specific enough evidence that your reader will gain a sense of the essence of the work.
• The value of the book (to you – or to others).
• Reservations, criticisms or limitations you may have about the work. (You are not required to state criticisms, but it is important to think critically about the work. Be professional about this.)
• Anything else that you would like to add.

Final Course Project:
Select a project that will be of intellectual interest and professional worth for you. This should be developed during the course of the semester, not something revised from a previous assignment. The project should be 8-12 pages in length, equivalent to a conference paper. It should be properly annotated, using the Chicago Manual of Style.

The project will be a historical or historiographical essay on a theme related to the course and within the chronological parameters, 1650-1900. This could be a research-based paper based on primary sources. In most cases, it will be an inquiry paper, rather than a research project.

If you choose to pursue a theme related to gender or environment (or both), your topic will possibly deal with a relatively focused question. However, other themes are possible, for example: migration, empire, religion, science, technology, politics, or diplomacy.

Academic Integrity
A fundamental principle of university life is academic integrity. A university is “a purposeful community a place where faculty and students share academic goals and work together to strengthen teaching and learning on the campus.” (WMU Student Code) This requires that every individual does his or her own work and that graded work is based on one’s own knowledge and skills. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. The following constitute academic dishonesty: cheating, fabrication, falsification, forgery, plagiarism, complicity, and computer misuse. Please be familiar with the definitions of these terms as used in the WMU Student Code. See http://www.wmich.edu/conduct/academichonesty/index.html.

Grading Scale
- 94-100% = A (exceptional)
- 88-93% = BA (excellent)
- 84-87% = B (very good)
- 77-83% = CB (good)
- 74-76% = C (satisfactory)
- 67-73% = DC (acceptable)
- 64-66% = D (poor)
- below 64% = E (failing)
Grade Components:
Weekly written papers: 50%
Class Participation: 20%
Final Project: 30%

E-Mail:
Please use your WMU e-mail address for all communications regarding this course.

Calendar of Assignments:

January 10: Introduction (Life and Culture in Eighteenth-Century Leipzig)

January 17: Blanning *The Eighteenth Century*

January 24: Sperber, *Revolutionary Europe*.

January 31: Merchant, *Death of Nature*

February 7: Gray, *Productive Men, Reproductive Women*

February 14: Electronically available materials on environmental history. Richard W. Unger; Richard C. Hoffmann; Paul Warde. Instructions will be given.

February 21: Outram, *Enlightenment*

February 28: Metzler and Rabine, *Rebel Daughters*

[March 7: Spring Break]

March 12: Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*

March 19: Electronically available Readings from John F. Richards, *The Unending Frontier*

March 28: Readings on rural history, gender and environment: Jane Humphries, Rita Guderman Tamara Whited.

April 4: Readings from David Blackbourn, *The Conquest of Nature*

April 11: No reading assignment. Time to work on your papers. Class will be held!

April 18: Student Reports (course projects) due to class noon Monday Apr. 15

April 25: Student Reports (course projects) due to class noon Monday Apr. 22

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