Revolutionary Paris

Queens College Study Abroad Course in Paris, France
History 200
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Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité! Join us to study the French Revolution in Paris in this exciting Queens College Study Abroad Course!

During our stay in Paris, we will study the background and history of the French Revolution, including the Enlightenment, the period that preceded it, and Napoleon’s reign that came after it. “Revolutionary Paris” will plunge students into the intellectual, political, and ideological currents that surged through Paris in 1789 and inspired change throughout the world.

Field trips will include walking tours and visits to museums and revolutionary sites in Paris, including The Louvre, Les Invalides, the Bastille, the Palais-Royal, the Catacombs, the Conciergerie, and the “revolutionary 6th” arrondissement, and a day trip to Versailles.

At the heart of the class is discussion and debating. Participation is important, and writing assignments will include journal notes, short essays, and a final research project. The central primary texts will include: Rousseau’s Social Contract, Burke’s Reflections on the Revolution in France, and various other French Revolution primary documents such as the Tennis Court Oath and the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen.

As a feature of the course, students will study the French Revolution with the award-winning pedagogy “Reacting to the Past,” debating the same questions that were debated in the French National Assembly in the early 1790’s. In the debate, students will become leaders of opposing factions within the National Assembly (and in the streets outside) as it struggles to create a new constitution amidst internal chaos and threats of foreign invasion. You will tackle questions such
as: Will King Louis XVI retain power? Will the priests of the Catholic Church obey the “general will” of the National Assembly or the dictates of the pope in Rome? Do traditional institutions and values constitute restraints on freedom and individual dignity or are they its greatest defenders? Are slaves, women, and Jews entitled to the “rights of man”? And, perhaps most central of all: Is violence ever a legitimate means of changing society or of purging it of dangerous enemies?

Together, we will study the texts, visit all of the sites in and around Paris associated with the French Revolution, and debate the issues involved along the way!

**Required Reading: please purchase before we leave for France to bring along with you**


A great website for images, songs, texts, and more.


**Course Requirements:**

**Participation:** (30%) The heart and soul of this course is participation; it is a crucial component. During the debate, in your assigned role, you will seek to achieve your “objectives” by expressing your views in the classroom as a member of a particular team (faction) or alone as an indeterminate.

**Journal/Notebook/Scrapbook:** (20%) The journal will consist of hand-written notes, thoughts, comments, strategies, arguments, postcards, museum receipts, etc. Think of it as a written record of all that you do, see, and learn about the French Revolution in Paris. The journal should also include your class notes and outlines of arguments and counter arguments to each of the major questions concerning France in 1791 that will come up in the debates. You can and should refer to your outlines and arguments during the debates.

**Two Essays:** (10% each) Two 2-3 page “newspaper articles” written during the debate.

**Research Project:** (30%) The 10-page typed research project about the French Revolution will be due a few weeks after we get back home from France.