I. Course synopsis

This graduate seminar is a general survey of French political thought from the Enlightenment to the end of the nineteenth century. The central hypothesis of this course is that the experience of the Revolution and the need for economic and social equality to secure solidarity shaped the French theorization of the Republic as a unique model, distinct from the Ancient and the American models of the Republic. As a result, French thinkers developed a social and situated form of political theory. The course examines the distinctiveness of French political thought, exploring notably its relation to the birth of sociology and to history. We will also be interested in the diversity of responses to the quest for founding a free society of equals, through reading republican, liberal, conservative and socialist texts. Readings will include books and discourses by Rousseau, Robespierre, Condorcet, Constant, Tocqueville, Durkheim as well as contemporary scholarship on republicanism, democratic theory and social justice.

II. Requirements

There are two options to fulfill the requirements for this class. You can either write a final paper (8,500 words) or three short papers (2,000 words each).

If you choose the first option, you need to meet with me mid-semester to discuss your ideas and bibliography. The objective is to write a paper that could be presented at a conference and could eventually be published. The final paper is due by December 15th.

If you choose the second option, you need to write at least one short paper by October 30th.

III. Books


Additional texts will be given in pdfs.

IV. Syllabus

09/08 Introduction.


10/13 Robespierre, *Speeches* (TBD)


10/27 De Stael, *Considerations on the Principal Events of the Revolution*


11/17 Tocqueville, *Memoir on Pauperism*; selected letters and speeches OR excerpts from *Democracy in America*

11/24 Blanc, *The Organization of Labor*

12/1 Durkheim, *The Organization of Labor in Society* (TBD)


12/15 Conclusion