

THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN  
Department of History

SEMESTER Fall YEAR '74

<u>COURSE NO.</u>	<u>COURSE TITLE</u>	<u>INSTRUCTOR</u>
350	Seventeenth-Century France	Anglim

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course covers French history from the end of the Civil Wars to the death of Louis XIV--roughly 1580 to 1715. Traditionally, historians have argued that during this period there emerged a "modern" and "orderly" state, characterized by centralized authority, more efficient local administration, more sophisticated commercial activities, and a secular outlook on the world. More recently, historians have pointed to the long-term stagnation in the economy, in methods of production, and in life-styles, mentalities, and social relationships among the mass of the population. It is also becoming clear that the power of France's "absolute" monarchs was limited not only by poor communications and local loyalties but also by certain "constitutional" rights of individuals and groups within the society. Therefore, the course will concentrate on exploring the tensions and contradictions of the period: traditional vs. secular ideas; regionalism vs. centralization; economic and social stagnation vs. political and intellectual innovation; disorder vs. order (and the meaning of these terms for Frenchmen of the period). I hope that the students will learn to distinguish between day-to-day political events and their context, the long-term, stable institutions and ideas which determine the meaning of the choices available to individuals. Moreover, since the elementary fact about seventeenth-century France is that a huge, generally poor, traditional-minded peasant base supported a small but bitterly divided elite, we will concentrate heavily on the relationship between social conflict and political and ideological structures.

LECTURES

3 per week, rather informal and allowing for frequent open class discussion. I hope to substitute movies for a few of the lectures.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS and EXAMS There will certainly be a brief map-quiz and a take-home, essay-type final. I am undecided now about other assignments. Possibilities include: 1) a very short weekly report; 2) traditional 6- and 12-week exams; 3) a short paper on an individualized topic. I will discuss these options with students at the beginning of the course.

GRADING SYSTEM

Students will be graded on their demonstrated ability to ask historical questions and to suggest answers by using the readings and lecture materials.

REQUIRED READINGS

A brief general text: W.E. Brown, The First Bourbon Century. Three books dealing largely with social structure and social conflict: Woloch, Peasantry in the Old Regime; Kanum's Paris in the Age of Absolutism; Goubert's Louis XIV and 20 Million Frenchmen; a collection of documents on French political thought; Church's Impact of Absolutism on France; four readings on French moral, ethical, and social ideas; Pascal's Provincial Letters, Seventeenth century French Drama, Montesquieu's Persian Letters, and Penichou's Man and Ethics. Also, probably, a few articles (on reserve), and some optional reserve reading.