This course examines Europe from the later sixteenth century to the French Revolution of 1789. We'll be concerned partly with the dramatic events and colorful personalities of the period: these years included destructive wars, overseas conquests, and the technicolor doings of Louis XIV, Catherine the Great, William Shakespeare, René Descartes, and others. But the course also attempts to understand the basic processes of Europe's modernization over these centuries. In 1550, European society was still organized on essentially medieval lines. By 1789, Europe's industrial revolution was well underway, and elements of a democratic political culture were visible. The course explores how Europeans arrived at this point. What changes in Europeans' personal lives accompanied economic and political development? How much changed in the ways they understood the world and themselves? How did Europeans arrive at the edge of modernity?

The course will require about 100 pages of reading each week, some of it drawn from primary sources written during the period, most of it from studies by recent historians. In other words, this course is as much concerned with how historians think and use evidence as it is with the facts of the period. A good deal of class time will be spent discussing these books, and students will be expected to keep up with the assignments. There will be no textbook supplying an overall picture of the period; that material will be supplied in lectures. About 5 percent of students' final grades will be based on attendance and participation in class discussions. A take-home mid-term, take-home final, and short (about seven pages) essay will also be required; each will count for a little over 30 percent of the final grade.

**Topics and assignments**

January 16: "Early modern Europe:" a concept and its implications

**Part 1: Traditional Europe**

January 18-25: Social organization

January 30-February 1: Mentalities
assigned: Ginsburg, *The Cheese and the Worms*, pp. 27-128

February 6: No class meeting

**Part 2: Forces for change**
February 8-15: Religious revolution and its fall-out: the impact of the Reformation
assigned: Blaise Pascal, Pensées, pp. 88-95 (no. 198-202), 38-72 (no. 44-139),
149-165 (nos. 418-435)

February 20-27: War and societal change
assigned: Geoffrey Parker, The Military Revolution, pp. 1-81

March 1-8: Europeans and the world
assigned: Parker, The Military Revolution, pp. 82-154; Mokyr, The Lever of
Riches, 209-238
Mid-Term Examination due

March 13-15: Spring break

March 20-22: Politics and personalities in seventeenth-century life
assigned: J. H. Elliott, Richelieu and Olivares, chapters 1-3, 6

Part 3: The great divergence: England and the continent

March 27-29: The English revolutions of the seventeenth century
assigned: Steven Pincus, England's Glorious Revolution, pp. 1-33, 55-82, 102-
123, 147-167

April 3-April 5: Louis XIV and the French state
assigned: William Beikue, vii-viii, 1-29, 50-78, 82-96, 108-125, 136-144,
166-173, 199-222

Part 4: Eighteenth-century modernizations

April 10-12: The new technologies
assigned: Mokyr, The Lever of Riches, 57-112, 239-269, 301-304
Essay assignment due

April 17-19: The new attitudes
assigned: Robert Darnton, Mesmerism and the End of the Enlightenment in
France, 1-125, 161-167

April 24-26: Conclusions: how does a society modernize?

May 4: Final examination due