Eastern Illinois University  
New Course Proposal  
France and the Wider World in the Age of Absolutism

1. Catalog Description

   a. HIS 3405  
   b. Absolutist France and the Wider World  
   c. 30 class sessions of 75 minutes each (3-0-3)  
   d. F, Sp.  
   e. 17th-C France.  
   f. An investigation of the development of French politics, warfare, culture, and society in the context of France’s expanding role in the wider world. Topics discussed will include war and the rise of the central state, colonialism, and baroque culture.  
   g. No prerequisite.  

2. Objectives of the course

   a. Introduce students to the central historical and historiographical issues associated with the political, social, economic, and cultural history of seventeenth-century France.  
   b. Set the “national” narrative of French history within the broader framework of world history by investigating the links between the national narrative and France’s involvement in European, colonial, and global contexts (including the influence of these contexts on the development of France).  
   c. Develop students’ skills of critical analysis by interpreting primary source documents and by debating historical interpretation.  
   d. Develop students’ written and oral communication skills.  
   e. Course will be designated as writing-intensive.  

3. Outline of the Course

   a. Evaluation of Student Achievement  
      Students will be evaluated based upon mid-term and final examinations (all written), research paper (which will be submitted in draft form and then final form), short response papers, class participation and attendance:  
      Mid-Term Examination: 15%  
      Final Examination: 20%  
      Research Paper (draft) 15%  
      Research Paper (final) 30%  
      Short Response Papers 15%  
      Class Participation 5%
b. Weekly Content

Week 1  What is France?  
        Nation, State, and Provinces in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century

Week 2  France at the Beginning of the Seventeenth Century  
        How to Understand the Social Organization; the Legacy of the Religious Wars; France and the World

Weeks 3-5  The Early Bourbon State  
        Political Narrative; the Dilemma of Absolutism; Facing the Habsburg Menace.

Weeks 6-7  Early French Colonialism in the Americas  
        Jesuits and the State; The “French Way.”

Week 8  The Competition for Colonies in Asia  
        France in Asia and Southeast Asia

Weeks 9-10  Louis XIV and Absolutism(?)  
        The French State and Absolutism; the Versailles System; the Problem of the Provinces.

Weeks 11-13  The French Economy: Land, Protoindustrialization, and Colonization  
        The Breaking of the Malthusian Scissors; Re-Shaping the Political Landscape of the Countryside; The Problem(s) of the Guild; The Price Revolution; the Great Inflation.

Week 14  The Colonial Explosion  
        Sugar, the Caribbean, and Slaves

Week 15  Baroque Culture  
        Piety, Science, and the Early Enlightenment

4. Implementation

a. David Kammerling Smith  
b. No additional costs to student.  
c. William Beik, Louis XIV and Absolutism (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2000).  
d. Spring 2003
5. Rationale

a. This course will expand the departmental offerings for upper-division courses in early modern Europe. Currently, there is only one upper-division course on French history in the catalogue. This course, however, also seeks to go beyond a national narrative to understand the development of French history within the broader frameworks of world history. This approach better meets the needs of our teacher certification students than more specific national narratives yet retains the advantage of depth of treatment by focusing on a narrow topic.

b. This course is designed as an upper-division course in history, with appropriate reading and writing assignments for such a course. It has no prerequisites.

c. This course is not similar to any existing courses.

d. This course will serve as an elective within the History Major, the History Major with Teacher Certification in the Social Sciences, and the Social Science Major, able to fulfill the requirement of a non-American history upper-division elective.

6. Community College Transfer:
   A Community College course will not be judged equivalent to this course.

7. Date Approved by the Department

__________________________ 2/27/2002
Chair, Departmental Curriculum Committee Date

8. Date Approved by the College Curriculum Committee

__________________________ 1 May 2002
Chair, College Curriculum Committee Date

9. Date approved by CAA

__________________________ 14 November 2002
Chair, CAA Date

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