

Study Questions for 9/17: "Eighteenth-Century French Political Culture and Twenty-First Century Digital Humanities."

My goal in putting together this session is two-fold. First, I want to expose you to issues in the study of Enlightenment and Revolutionary France, a field that has produced influential historical analysis since Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* in 1790. We will focus on the approaches of recent cultural historians of this period. Second, I want you to explore some web sites that allow users to access archival material from the period online. These materials should therefore allow us to discuss significant works from an important branch of historiography and consider the possibilities and limitations for historians of so-called "digital humanities" approaches.

The materials I'd like you to prepare are grouped into three categories, as follows:

I. The Circulation of Ideas in Eighteenth-Century France: The *Société typographique de Neuchâtel*

- Robert Darnton, "Readers Respond to Rousseau: The Fabrication of Romantic Sensibility," in *The Great Cat Massacre, and Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (New York, 1984), 215-56. [A classic effort to understand how the French read works by a major Enlightenment thinker.]
- The French Book Trade in Enlightenment Europe: <http://fbtee.uws.edu.au/main/>
- Robert Darnton: A Literary *Tour de France*: <http://www.robertdarnton.org/literarytour> [To what extent do these two sites, based on the largest single source for eighteenth-century French language publishing, allow us to conduct historical research online?]

II. Beyond the Text: Politics and Oral Culture in Mid-Eighteenth-Century Paris

- Robert Darnton, *Poetry and the Police: Communication Networks in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (Harvard UP, 2010) [In this work, how do questions about eighteenth-century political culture move beyond the printed text?]
- Recordings of Eighteenth-Century Cabaret Songs Discussed by Darnton in *Poetry and the Police*: <http://www.hup.harvard.edu/features/poetry-and-the-police/>

III. Politics and Theater in Eighteenth-Century Paris and the Provinces

- Lauren Clay, "Consumers of Culture," in *Stagestruck: The Business of the Theater in Eighteenth-Century France and Its Colonies* (Cornell UP, 2013), pp. 163-194, 295-304. [Does a focus on a cultural practice such as theater actually take us back to political economy?]
- The Comédie-Française Registers Project: <http://cfregisters.org/>. [The goal of this project is to create an online, fully searchable database containing detailed information on the daily box office receipts of the most important theater troupe in Paris in the eighteenth century. This is a beta version of the database and tools; have a peek, and I will say more about it when we meet on Wednesday.]

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