This survey of French history since the Middle Ages provides an introduction to classic texts of French political and social philosophy. It is deliberately structured around the French “canon,” the birthright of any person schooled in the French educational system. One constant throughout French history has been a profound preoccupation with the “ideal society” – which did not by definition mean a “democratic” one. But opinions varied as to whether a perfect world could be attained through the creation of institutions or whether this depended upon shaping the appropriate human being by some other means. As the war of ideas was often fought not in ivory towers but in the streets of Paris, we will consider the historical influences upon and historical impact of French thinkers. Through close reading and analysis of selected passages from primary sources (in English translation) -- and those few seminal non-French works that inspired new directions in French thought -- the course is designed to familiarize the student with the intellectual framework and historical references that inform French debates on politics and society to the present day.

Formal Requirements:
* Class participation comprises a substantial part of the final grade. Don’t be shy!
* The class is devised as a seminar: all students are expected to to be prepared to participate in an in-depth discussion of each text by having carefully read the primary source material (1-6pp. per work in the READER) as well as the additional background reading for each unit (HORNE and ONLINE DOCUMENTS).
* Each student will make one presentation outlining the life and ideas of one of our thinkers.
* Instead of the usual midterm/paper/final, there will be three tests. In each one, a passage from Aristotle (Politics, The Nicomachean Ethics) or Plato (The Republic) will serve as the springboard for your discussion of how the concepts of liberty, equality, justice or even the happiness of the individual were experienced and interpreted in different eras.

**Week 1 (Feb 3 & 4):**
Wed: Introduction
Th: The power of knowledge: the Sorbonne
   Readings from: Peter Abelard, Sic et non; St. Bernard of Clairvaux, Letters; St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica (“On the Existence of God”); François Rabelais, Gargantua et Pantagruel (“Gargantua’s education and social life under the direction of his preceptors at the Sorbonne”).
   Horne: introduction and “Age One”
Week 2 (Feb 10 & 11):
Wed & Th: Political Strategy and the Uses of Religion: the Civil Wars of the Sixteenth Century
Horne: “Age Two”

Week 3 (Feb 17 & 18):
Wed & Th: Louis XIV and the virtues of Absolutism
Readings from: J-B Bossuet, Treatise on Politics drawn from the very words of the Holy Scriptures; the Duke of Saint-Simon, Memoirs; Jean-Baptiste Colbert, Memoranda; the “Letter” of the Duchess of Orleans; Jean de La Fontaine, Fables (“The Frogs who asked for a King,” “The Frog who Wanted to be as Big as the Ox,”) Louis XIV, “Revocation of the Edict of Nantes.” Excerpts from Louis XIV’s Memoirs for the Instruction of the Dauphin.
Horne: “Age Three” (chapters 7, 8)

Week 4 (Feb 24 & 25):
Wed: The Enlightenment (part 1): The Perfectibility of Man
Readings from: René Descartes, The Discourse on Method; Immanuel Kant, What is Enlightenment?; Grimm and Marmontel on the salon held by Julie de Lespinasse; the Baron d’Holbach, Good Sense; Tom Paine, The Age of Reason; Voltaire, from Candide, The Treatise on Tolerance, and The Philosophical Dictionary; Diderot & Alembert, The Encyclopedia.

Th: TEST # 1 (up to and including Louis XIV)

Week 5 (March 3 & 4):
Th: The Enlightenment (part 2): Challenging the System

Week 6 (March 10 & 11):
Wed: Enlightenment (part 2), cont.
Th: The Revolution of Ideas (1789)
Readings from: The Abbé Sieyès, What is the Third Estate?; statistics on mortality rates; a Parisian newspaper account from July 14, 1789; trades of the Bastille insurgents (table); The National Assembly, The Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen; Louis XVI, “Declaration June 1791.”
Horne, “Age Three” (Chapter 9)
Week 7 (March 17 & 18):
Wed: **The Revolution of Ideas (1789)**, continued.

Th: **For the Greater Good: Ends and Means**
   Readings from: Maximilien de Robespierre, selected speeches from 1792-94; the Law of Suspects.

Week 8 (March 24 & 25):
Wed: **What was Napoleon?**
   Readings from: Napoleon Bonaparte, selected texts (Speeches to his army, sections of his diary, and “The Imperial Catechism of 1806”); the Count de las Cases, **Recollections**; Madame de Staël, **On Politics, Literature, and National Character**; Madame de Remusat, **Memoirs**.
   Horne, “Age Four”

Th: **The Nineteenth Century: Utopia in Sight**
   Readings from: August Comte, **The Positivistic Catechism**; Jules Michelet, **The People**; Louis Blanc, **The Organization of Labor**; Pierre-Joseph Prudhon, **What is Property?**; Alexis de Tocqueville, “The June Days” in his **Recollections**.
   Horne, “Age Five” (Chapter 13)

Week 9 (March 31 & April 1):
Wed: TEST #2 (up to and including Napoleon)

Th: **1830, 1848, and the Commune: Liberty and Equality as Paradox**
   Readings from: Karl Marx, **The Communist Manifesto** and **Civil War in France**: The Paris Commune; Edmond de Goncourt, **Journal**; Pope Leo XIII, from **De Rerum Novarum** (1891).
   Horne, “Age Five” (chapters 13, 14, 15)

Week 10 (April 7 & 9):
Wed: 1830...(cont.)

Th: **The Third Republic and its Contradictions**
   Readings from: Emile Zola, J’Accuse; “A Plea for the Jews” (Le Figaro, May 16, 1896) and “Letter to France” (L’Aurore, January 7, 1898), and “Letter to M. Félix Faure, President of the Republic” (L’Aurore, January 13, 1898).
   Horne, “Age Six” (Chapter 16)
Week 11 (April 14 & 15):
Wed: Colonialism and the “mission civilisatrice”
Readings from: Pope Urban II, “Speech at Clérmont” (1095);
Jules Ferry, Speech in French Parliament (1883), “Preface” to Tonkin and the Motherland;
Franz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth; Jacques Ellul, The Betrayal of the West.

Th: The Loss of Hope: World War I and the Great Depression
Readings from: The Program of the Unified Socialist Party (1905); Clemenceau, “Speech on Strikes” (1906);
Roland Doregelès, “That Fabulous Day;” Erich Maria Remarque, All Quiet on the Western Front;
Georges Clemenceau, “French Demands;” Paul Valéry, “Disillusionment;” obituary of Lazare Poncielli, the last “poilu.”
The Program of the Popular Front (January 10, 1936);
Horne, “Age Six” (Chapters 17 & 18)

April 17-May 2 SPRING BREAK!

Week 12 (May 5 & 6):
Wed & Th: Confronting Dystopia: World War II and after
Readings from: Robert O. Paxton, “Inside the Panic;
Jean-Paul Sartre, excerpts from Existentialism, Being and Nothingness, plus his short story “The Wall;”
Albert Camus, The Rebel; Simone de Beauvoir, The Second Sex.
Horne, “Age Seven.”

Week 13 (May 12 & 13):
Wed: Conclusion & Review

Th: TEST #3