1848: Literature and History
At the outset of his 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, Marx famously writes of the 1848 Revolution: “Hegel remarks somewhere that all facts and personages of great importance in world history occur, as it were, twice. He forgot to add: the first time as tragedy, the second as farce.” This perception of the 1848 Revolution as, if not exactly a “farce,” at least a degraded “copy” or “translation” of the great model of 1789, is shared by any number of 19th-century representations of the Second Republic (e.g. Tocqueville’s or Flaubert’s).

This course, jointly taught by a historian and a literary scholar, proposes to explore, among other things, just what it might mean to call a revolution either a form of repetition or a mode of radical inception. To answer this question, we will look at the role various contemporaries’ histories of the 1789 Revolution (notably those by Blanc, Lamartine, and Michelet) might have played in preparing the “text” enacted by 1848. We will also consider the extent to which it makes sense to refer to a revolution as a “text.” In addition we will look at various writings of the 1830s and 1840s on “le peuple” (Lamennais and Michelet) or on broader issues involving socialism and feminism (Tristan, Fourier, Sand) or colonialism and abolitionism (Tocqueville, Lamartine, Schoelcher) in order to see how they informed the political and ideological climate of 1848. We will then move on to a closer examination of the brief life of the Second Republic and of its violent mutation into Empire, as viewed from the perspectives of both modern historians (Agulhon, Duveau, Amann) and contemporary witnesses (Tocqueville, Flaubert, Baudelaire, Marx, and Hugo).

The course will be conducted in English, but the readings will be in French. Most of the readings will be available in xeroxed form or on reserve, but the GF editions of Flaubert’s L’Education sentimentale and Zola’s La Fortune des Rougon will be required purchases.

Part I. Why 1848?

Week 1. Revolution and the Revolutionary tradition in France
Tocqueville, L’Ancien Régime et La Révolution

Week 2. The French Revolution: History and Memory, I
Jules Michelet, Histoire de la Révolution française (selections to be chosen from each text)
Louis Blanc, Histoire de la Révolution française
Alphonse Lamartine, Histoire de la révolution française, 89.
Philippe Buchez, Histoire parlementaire de la Révolution française

Week 3. The French Revolution: History and Memory, II
Readings: Ibid.

Michelet, Le peuple, (selections chosen)
Lamennais, Paroles d’un croyant,
Sewell, Work and Revolution in France,
Jacques Rancière, La nuit des prolétaires
Corbin, Village des Cannibales, part 1.

Week V. Socialism and Feminism
Flora Tristan, Le tour de France : état actuel de la classe ouvrière sous l'aspect moral, intellectuel et matériel
Fourier, on passionate attraction;
Scott, Only Paradoxes to Offer on Jeanne Deroin,
George Sand,
Michelle Riot-Sarcey, La démocratie à l'épreuve des femmes

Part II. The Revolution of 1848

Week 6. Springtime of the People
George Duveau, 1848, the Making of a Revolution
Peter Amann, Revolution and Mass Democracy: The Paris Club Movement in 1848

Week 7. Impressions of 1848
Tocqueville, Souvenirs, Parts I and II

Week 8. The Republic and the Colonies
Lamartine, “Toussaint Louverture”
Tocqueville, De la colonie en Algerie
Schoelcher, Des Colonies françaises : abolition immédiate de l'esclavage ; Vie de Toussaint Louverture

**Week 9. History and the Novel, I**
Flaubert, Education Sentimentale

**Week 10. History and the Novel, II**
Flaubert, Education Sentimentale

**Week 11. Art and Revolution**
Baudelaire, “Le vin.”
Wagner, Art and Revolution??,
T.J. Clark, The Absolute Bourgeois

**Part III. Historiography of 1848.**

**Week 12. A New Bonaparte? I**
Marx, The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte
Seigel, Marx’s Fate

**Week 13. A New Bonaparte? II**
Hugo, Napoleon, Le petit; Histoire d'un crime

**Week 14. From Revolution to Empire**
Zola, La Fortune des Rougon