In this course we shall look at the myriad manifestations of the past that have shaped today’s France and its national identity. Fundamental events and notions that form the basis of France’s cultural development will be examined and discussed: historical figures and key political events; intellectual and cultural movements; attitude-shaping philosophical trends; and, significant artistic and literary landmarks. The focus of our study will be France, from its prehistoric beginnings (as evidenced in the cave paintings at Lascaux) to the end of the Ancien Régime. Videos, films, slides, and Internet links will be used to illustrate the rich tapestry which defines French society.

The course provides not only the necessary array of facts and details about France but also examines the “how and why” of specific events, or movements, that have contributed to the luxuriant fabric of France’s cultural heritage.

**THE CLASS IS CONDUCTED IN FRENCH.**

**Goals for this course:**

To introduce you to notable French artistic, literary, philosophical, and historical works from the French medieval times to the French Revolution so that you will:

-- Acquire an understanding of significant French historical events ("sciences humaines"), as well as the rich and creative expression within the French culture of that period.
-- Recognize, know, and understand cultural icons or stereotypes of the French.
-- Think critically and effectively as you compare and evaluate the depth and complexity of cultural differences between French culture and your own.

**Learning outcomes:**

1. During class discussions, blog postings, and as a result of your own oral presentation, you will demonstrate that you are able to understand and discuss cogently, in French, culturally authentic texts.

2. Quizzes will test your ability to identify accurately:
   -- Important periods of French cultural development; and,
   -- Distinctive features of historical events and great works.

3. In a research paper, with a multimedia component, you will demonstrate your ability to:
   -- Gather evidence from critical sources (such as books, journals, and electronic resources);
   -- Present and support your ideas in French, and in a critical scholarly manner; and,
   -- Present your ideas in multiple formats, and thus achieve a strong competitive edge as you embark on your future career.