COURSE DETAIL

NAPOLEON AND THE EMPIRE OF WORDS
Country France
Host Institution Institut d'Etudes Politiques (Sciences Po)
Program(s) Sciences Po Paris
UCEAP Course Level Upper Division
UCEAP Subject Area(s) History
UCEAP Course Number 112
UCEAP Course Suffix
UCEAP Official Title NAPOLEON AND THE EMPIRE OF WORDS
UCEAP Transcript Title NAPOLEON & WORDS
UCEAP Quarter Units 4.50
UCEAP Semester Units 3.00

Course Description
This course covers political tools used by Napoleon to control public opinion as he enacted his vision of the French nation after the Revolution. Posing as the incarnation of Enlightenment values and acknowledging public opinion as a source of his political legitimacy, Napoleon reinvented state propaganda by monitoring, controlling, and using words. This state propaganda focused on seizing information, understanding it, and reshaping it. The course traces back some of his major philosophical Enlightenment influences in order to consider the legitimacy of his claim of being an heir of the Revolution. It first examines in detail his intellectual formation (personal libraries, readings) and deduces how it shaped his vision of governance and his construction of the French state. The course then considers a few examples in major French literature that acknowledge or refute this intellectual heritage. Following this, two levels through which Napoleon controlled public opinion are examined. On the national level, Napoleon eliminated the diversity of press organs and merged them into a few state-controlled newspapers (for example, the Moniteur universel). However, the suppression of a free public press forced Napoleon to find new ways to measure public opinion. A network of literary espionage in salons and intellectual circles in Paris served this purpose. Finally, the failure of Napoleon's system of propaganda on the European level is examined using the German states as a study case.

Language(s) of Instruction
English

Host Institution Course Number
DHIS 25A02

Host Institution Course Title
NAPOLEON AND THE EMPIRE OF WORDS

Host Institution Course Details

Host Institution Campus
English Seminar

Host Institution Faculty
Host Institution Degree
Host Institution Department History
Course Last Reviewed

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