

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 Campus

English Seminar

Host Institution Faculty

Host Institution Degree

Host Institution Department

History

[Print](#)