

21H.181

Libertarianism in History

Reading Response 1: The American and French Revolutions

During Sessions 5 and 6, we are reading some classic texts about and from the period of the American and French revolutions. Do you notice any significant differences in how these writings treat the concept of liberty? If not, what makes them fundamentally the same?

Please comment in a reading response of 200-300 words. Note that this prompt permits you to compare along either of two axes, i.e., you can set the American and French revolutionary readings against each other, or you can compare the two readings listed under either revolution (as in, the Declaration of Independence versus Bailyn's account of American revolutionary liberty, or the French Declaration of 1789 versus Constant).

Your response should reflect that you have read the texts in question carefully and given them some thought. Beyond that, a good response is provocative: it will invite and/or draw a riposte from someone who does not share your views on the matter at hand. So, in that spirit, I invite you to engage with the revolutionary tradition. One last note: if you find that the assigned texts do not tell you something that you need to know in order to answer this prompt, tell us what that something is, how you would find out about it, and why it matters.

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