

HIST 202 - ROYALTIES AND REVOLUTIONS: PRE-MODERN TO MODERN WORLDS

Discussion Readings and Focus Questions for:

Unit One- Louis XIV's Monarchy: Theory and Practice in the 17th Century

Throne and Altar: - Church & Politics United

READ:

Document Reading – on Blackboard (.pdf)

Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet, *Politics drawn from the Very Words of Holy Scripture* (.pdf)

Questions:

1. What does Bossuet propose as the essential characteristics of royal authority?
2. How does Bossuet define the “sacred” character of royal authority? In his view, do kings have corresponding duties in the use of their authority?
3. How does he define the “paternal” character of royal authority? How does the King exercise his paternal authority?
4. What does Bossuet mean by saying that “royal authority is absolute?” (is it the same as “arbitrary”)? How are kings bound by the law?
5. What does he mean when he says that “royal authority is subject to reason?” how does he define “majesty?”
6. In his view, how can/should subjects make their wishes known to the prince?

Louis XIV: In His Own Words/Versailles

READ:

Document Reading (.pdf on Blackboard)

Louis XIV, *Memoires for the Instruction of the Dauphin* (.pdf)

Madame, “To Electress Wilhelmine-Ernestine, Versailles, 6 December 1682”

Questions:

1. What did Louis XIV command and request upon taking on full responsibility as a ruler in 1661?
2. How did Louis view the possibility of taking a prime minister?

3. As you see it, how did Louis concentrate power in his own hands?
4. In Louis' view, how does a king choose good ministers?
5. According to Louis' sister-in-law, Madame, how is Louis using Versailles even before it is fully finished?
6. List what happens at these "jours d'appartement" in the different rooms. Who is attending this weekly event?
7. In your view, how does this serve Louis' purposes regarding the nobility at Court? Do you think he has he learned the lessons of his childhood and youth?

Louis XIV: A View from Versailles

Document Reading (.pdf on Blackboard)

Saint-Simon's Description of Louis XIV and His Court (.pdf)

Questions:

1. According to the Duc de Saint-Simon, why did Louis XIV abandon Paris and settle the Court and Government at Versailles?
2. List the ways Louis tried to keep nobles "assiduous and attentive in pleasing him" (hint: look up assiduous!).
3. Did Louis expect a continual presence of important people around him? Why? How did he maintain this?
4. Did the King know what was going on around him? How?
5. How did Louis XIV make "everything precious by discernment and stateliness?"
6. Was Louis polite? How did he relate to women? How did he treat his personal servants?
7. Did Louis impress people? How did they react in his presence?
8. What did Louis prefer for recreation?
9. Did this author like Versailles? What did he think of it, and of Louis' buildings in general?

