1. Long-term causes:
   both material and cultural
   [“hardware” and “software”]
1685 Revocation of the Edict of Nantes [Louis XIV][aka “Edict of Fontainebleau”]

1687: Newton: *Principia Mathematica*

1688 The “Glorious Revolution” in England
[James II overthrown; replaced by (Dutch) William/Mary]

1689: English *Bill of Rights*

1689: John Locke: *Second Treatise on Govt*

*We form a social contract to leave the state of nature which cannot protect private property.*

*State = monopoly of violence*

1703-07: J.B. Bach: *Toccata and Fugue in d minor*

1715: Death of Louis XIV: crumbling of Absolutist 17th c.

- Louis XIV: 1643-1715
- **Louis XV: 1715-1774**
- Louis XVI: 1774-1792
  - guillotined 1793

Introduces the 18th-century

“Age of Enlightenment”
Death of old order: 
not only political but also economic/social: 
The “third estate” now includes the merchantile class / newly-rich 
AND THEY WANT REPRESENTATION  [“no taxation w/o representation”] 
Hence: “What is the Third Estate?”

1715: Death of Louis XIV

Beginning of “Enlightenment philosophes”

1721: Montesquieu: Persian Letters
1727: Newton --- dies
1733: Voltaire: English Letters
1741: Handel: Messiah [“All we like sheep”]
Lemmonier, *Salon of Madame Geoffrin* (1755)

(Peinture de G. Lemonnier, XVIIIe siècle, Rouen)

Voici le salon de Madame Geoffrin (4). Elle y reçoit des artistes de son époque, comme Montesquieu (1), Diderot (3), Rousseau (2) autour d’un buste de Voltaire (5).
“Geography of ideas”

Public:
Absolutist Versailles
[First Estate]

Private:
Bourgeois Home
[Third Estate]

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1780)

Mozart performing “Don Giovanni” (1787)
“Geography of Arts”

Chapel Organ,
Absolutist Versailles

Piano/Harpsichord, Bourgeois Salon

1755: “The Great Lisbon Earthquake”
Lisbon, Portugal, November 1st, 1755
i.e., All Saints’ Day --- think: “All Hallow’s Eve”
Thirty minutes later: tsunami drags people out to sea
From Leibnitz learn we not by what unseen Bonds, in this best of all imagined worlds,
Endless disorder, chaos of distress,
Must mix our little pleasures thus with pain;
Nor why the guiltless suffer all this woe
In common with the most abhorrent guilt.
'Tis mockery to tell me all is well.

1759: Voltaire, Poem on the Lisbon Disaster, or An Examination of the Axiom “All Is Well”

http://www.aestheticrealism.net/poetry/Lisbon-Voltaire.htm
Roger Rosenblatt essay, Christmas 2001:
“If there is a God, he doesn’t seem to be thinking about us.”

Infinite gap / distance between God and human --- trauma: crisis in meaning-system

Baroque: Leibniz/Newton/ Bach --- mathematical certainty

Enlightenment: Voltaire --- epistemological modesty

*Candide, or Optimism*: “This is the best of all possible worlds...?”
"Neither need you tell me," said Candide, "that we must take care of our garden."

"You are in the right," said Pangloss; "for when man was put into the garden of Eden, it was with an intent to dress it; and this proves that man was not born to be idle."

"Work then without disputing," said Martin; "it is the only way to render life supportable."

"Excellently observed," answered Candide; "but let us cultivate our garden."

Read the meaning of “tolerance” from perspective of V’s skepticism: an “epistemological modesty” → a recognition that human reason is limited/fallible.

We do not have absolute [mathematical] certainty about religious truths → hence, it is in accordance with natural law that we should be tolerant of what we do not know. And human law should follow natural law.
1750: J.S. Bach --- dies --- *End of the Baroque*

1755: Nov. 1st (All Saints’ Day): Great Earthquake and Tsunami of Lisbon --- ca. 9:30 a.m.

1756: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart --- born

1758: Voltaire: *Candide* [“best of all possible worlds”]

1759: Handel --- dies

1763: Voltaire: *Treatise on Toleration*

1754-1763: Seven Years’ War

1763: Treaty of Paris

France cedes Canada and all territories west of Mississippi to England.

Spain cedes Florida to England.

Aftereffects:

England is broke and taxes colonists to pay for war

Colonists revolt in 1776

France supports American colonists in revolt against England
2. Short-term triggers

• 1783:
  – American Revolution ends:
  – USA free; France broke!!!

• 1787:
  – Monarchy on verge of bankruptcy: needs support from moneyed classes
    • Calls “Assembly of Notables”
    • Backfires: monarchy in more debt than imagined; they demand calling of “Estates General”

• 1788 July:
  – Louis XVI agrees to convolve Estates General next year (1789)
Problem: Last meeting of Estates General had been 175 years earlier!!! (1614)

Louis XIV
- abolished it
- Absolutist monarchy: eliminate possibility of being “checked” by nobility
  - *L’état, c’est moi*

Dunn:
- this is why the French had no “experience” of governing
- no “checks” or balance against monarch

Think chess: insure that neither “bishops” nor “knights” and “castles” --- i.e., clergy nor nobility --- can “check” the king!

• Problems: “Estates General” not met since 1614
  - a) No records: how did they used to do it?
  - b) How to meet?
    • “Traditional” society = Three Estates
    • Clergy + Nobility + “Everyone else” [The “Third Estate”]
      - Cf. Abbé Sieyès: *What is the Third Estate?*
    • If vote by order, Third Order [95% of population] out-voted 2-1 by the other 5% of population
    • NOTE: problem of REPRESENTATION, i.e., “representative govt”
1. Mathematical view of society: atoms equidistant from center [“law”]
   --- “I imagine the law as being at the center of a large globe; we the citizens, without exception, stand equidistant from it and occupy equal places.”

2. What should we do with “privileged orders” [nobility and clergy] who do not want to be stripped of privileges and become citizens like everyone else?
   --- “This is the equivalent of asking what place one wishes to assign to a malignant tumor that torments and undermines the strength of the body of a sick person. It must be neutralized.”

--- NB analogy:
   EXCOMMUNICATION of dissenters

• Abbé Sieyès writes a “revolutionary script”:
  – transforms Rousseau’s analytical ideal into a revolutionary plan
  – Question: “What is the Third Estate?”
  – Answer: “I answer: Everything”
  – In other words: it is everyone equally --- not divided according to 95/5% (“estates”) but rather mathematically 1:1 ratios
  – Every man gets equal representation:
    • One man one vote [Women not citizens]
Rousseau: “Social Compact”:

the foundation of society is not given “in nature” --- rather, we create society by mutual agreement

--NB: atomistic individuals come together to form society

3. 1789

“Sacralizing” the Revolutionary Moment
Why “sacralize”?  

- “Sacralize”:  
  - “to make sacred”  
  - same root: “sacrifice”  
- Why sacralize???
  - We need to invest **contingent** events [e.g., luck or *fortuna*] with meaning / significance  
  - We need to **make them** not so arbitrary.

“Sacred significance”:  
  cosmic, world-historical, or even “religious” proportions

Alternative? = trauma  
A sense of living in a random / arbitrary / chaotic
Rousseau: The social order --- even though based on an agreement / handshake (contingent “conventions”) --- is a “sacred” right…

A NEED TO “SACRALIZE” [make necessary]

what is contingent [and perhaps even arbitrary]

Sacred Moment: 20 June 1789
“The Tennis Court Oath”
How to make something radically new seem necessary / natural / given?

Note inherent problem in legitimating a “Revolution”: it admits that it is something new.

Not Eternal Divine Order [endless revolving like planets], but rather Provisional Human Agreement [revolt!]: a social contract between subjective individuals

Contrast rhetoric of “revolution” with rhetoric of “renaissance” (15th c.): a “rebirth” of the ancient or “reformation” (16th c.): a “reform” that goes back to something ancient

They do not have same problem: they do not admit that they are something new. Revolution does.

Painter: Jacques-Louis David

Note: “Enlightenment” [secular] = “Nimbus” [sacred halo]
Cosmic Forces: Light vs. Dark
Massive winds
Crowds looking on

Kneeling in prayer at this “Epiphany”
Social Contract as *sacred revelation*
Sacred Moment:
The Tennis Court Oath [20 June 1789]
In these dangerous times...
You’ve been a fool and so have I, / But come and be my wife,
And let us try before we die / To make some sense of life.

I thought the world was sugarcake, / For so our master said;
But now I’ll teach my hands to bake / Our loaf of daily bread
We’re neither pure nor wise nor good; We’ll do the best we know.
We’ll build our house, and chop our wood,/ And make our garden grow.

Let dreamers dream what worlds they please;
Those Edens can’t be found.
The sweetest flowers, the fairest trees / Are grown in solid ground.

We’re neither pure nor wise nor good; / We’ll do the best we know.

We’ll build our house, and chop our wood, / And make our garden grow.