RL163/EN291 Boston’s French Connection
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Time of class: Tuesday 6:15-9:15
Office Hours: Before and after each class meeting and by arrangement by contacting the staff in Lyons 304 at 617 552 3820

Boston College Mission Statement

Strengthened by more than a century and a half of dedication to academic excellence, Boston College commits itself to the highest standards of teaching and research in undergraduate, graduate and professional programs and to the pursuit of a just society through its own accomplishments, the work of its faculty and staff, and the achievements of its graduates. It seeks both to advance its place among the nation’s finest universities and to bring to the company of its distinguished peers and to contemporary society the richness of the Catholic intellectual ideal of a mutually illuminating relationship between religious faith and free intellectual inquiry.

Boston College draws inspiration for its academic societal mission from its distinctive religious tradition. As a Catholic and Jesuit university, it is rooted in a world view that encounters God in all creation and through all human activity, especially in the search for truth in every discipline, in the desire to learn, and in the call to live justly together. In this spirit, the University regards the contribution of different religious traditions and value systems as essential to the fullness of its intellectual life and to the continuous development of its distinctive intellectual heritage.

Course Description

A crossroads where Americans and French have met since the seventeenth century, Boston has served as common ground, battlefield and laboratory. In today's Boston, street designs, works of art, and cultural and commercial institutions bear witness to the continuing relationship between Boston and France. We will explore the development of Boston's French connections through an examination of newspaper articles, diaries, letters, essays, paintings, musical compositions, architectural works and historic sites.

Boston's French Connection is designed for students who wish to deepen their knowledge of France's and Boston's history by examining texts which illustrate those junctures where both cultures converge and by considering issues of cultural difference and commonality.

We will discuss the following topics: early French explorers and the Acadian experience, Boston’s Puritans and French Huguenots, the Acadian experience, the American and French Revolutions, French influences on Boston’s Catholics and Unitarian Transcendentalists, French influences on Boston’s musicians, painters, sculptors, architects politicians and writers, and contributions of the different Francophone peoples in Boston.
We will also read passages from Alexis de Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America* and Simone de Beauvoir’s *America Day by Day*. Both French writers visited America, Tocqueville in 1831-32 and Beauvoir in 1947. We will compare their observations on the New England character and race relations in the United States and analyze their writing styles.

**Important Policies**
[http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/schools/advstudies/guide/academicinteg.html](http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/schools/advstudies/guide/academicinteg.html)

**Written Work**
Graduate and undergraduate students are expected to prepare professional, polished written work. Written materials must be typed in the format required by your instructor. Strive for a thorough, yet concise style. Cite literature appropriately, using APA, MLA, CLA format per instructor’s decision. Develop your thoughts fully, clearly, logically and specifically. Proofread all materials to ensure the use of proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling. You are encouraged to make use of campus resources for refining writing skills as needed [http://www.bc.edu/libraries/help/tutoring.html].

**Scholarship and Academic Integrity**
It is expected that students will produce original work and cite references appropriately. Failure to reference properly is plagiarism. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not necessarily limited to, plagiarism, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, cheating on examinations or assignments, and submitting the same paper or substantially similar papers to meet the requirements of more than one course without seeking permission of all instructors concerned. Scholastic misconduct may also involve, but is not necessarily limited to, acts that violate the rights of other students, such as depriving another student of course materials or interfering with another student’s work.

**Disability Statement**
Classroom accommodations will be provided for qualified students with documented disabilities. Students are invited to contact the Connors Family Learning Center office about accommodations for this course. Telephone appointments are available to students as needed. Appointments can be made by calling, 617-552-8903. You may also make an appointment in person. For further information, you can locate the disability resources on the web at [http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/libraries/help/tutoring/specialservices.html](http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/libraries/help/tutoring/specialservices.html).

**Attendance**
Class attendance is an important component of learning. Students are expected to attend all classes and to arrive by the beginning of and remain for the entire class period. When an occasion occurs that prevents a student from attending class, it is the student’s obligation to inform the instructor of the conflict before the class meets. The student is still expected to meet all assignment deadlines. If a student knows that he or she will be absent on a particular day, the student is responsible for seeing the instructor beforehand to obtain the assignments for that day. If a student misses a class, he or she is responsible for making up the work by obtaining a classmate’s notes and handouts and turning in any assignments due. Furthermore, many instructors give points for participation in class. If
you miss class, you cannot make up participation points associated with that class. Types of absences that are not typically excused include weddings, showers, vacations, birthday parties, graduations, etc. Additional assignments, penalties and correctives are at the discretion of the instructor. If circumstances necessitate excessive absence from class, the student should consider withdrawing from the class. In all cases, students are expected to accept the decision of the instructor regarding attendance policies specific to the class.

Consistent with our commitment of creating an academic community that is respectful of and welcoming to persons of differing backgrounds, we believe that every reasonable effort should be made to allow members of the university community to observe their religious holidays without jeopardizing the fulfillment of their academic obligations. It is the responsibility of students to review course syllabi as soon as they are distributed and to consult the faculty member promptly regarding any possible conflicts with observed religious holidays. If asked, the student should provide accurate information about the obligations entailed in the observance of that particular holiday. However, it is the responsibility of the student to complete any and all class requirements for days that are missed due to conflicts due to religious holidays.

There may be circumstances that necessitate a departure from this policy. Feel free to contact the WCAS at 617-552-3900 for consultation.

Course Assignments

1. Tuesday, June 25

   Introduction and Overview
   • The Foreign Observer
   • Alexis de Tocqueville and Simone de Beauvoir
   • Early French explorers
   • Black Robe

2. Thursday, June 27

   Beginnings
   • Tocqueville, Democracy in America, Introduction, pp.3-16
   • Beauvoir, America Day by Day
     Preface, pp.xvii-xviii
     "January," pp. 3-25
     "April,” pp. 279-290, 301-307
   • Early French explorers and the Acadian experience
   • Analysis of documents distributed in class
   • Discussion of Black Robe
3. Tuesday, July 2

**Boston’s Puritans and French Huguenots**
- The New England character
- Tocqueville, Chapter II, pp. 26-45
- Beauvoir, *America Day by Day*
  - Preface, pp.xvii-xviii
  - "January," pp. 3-25
  - "April," pp. 279-290, 301-307
- Champlain, *The Voyages and Explorations of Samuel de Champlain*, discussion
- Introduction to the Huguenot experience
- Introduction to *Narrative of a French Protestant Refugee in Boston* [This text will be distributed in class.]
  - *Queen Margot*

We will not meet this Thursday, July 4.

4. Tuesday, July 9

**Boston’s Puritans and French Huguenots**
- Discussion of *Narrative of a French Protestant Refugee in Boston*
- The American Revolution and the French Revolution
  - Jouve, *Paris: Birthplace of the U.S.A.*
  - Atwood, *Boston’s French Secrets*
  - Abbé Robin, *New Travels Through North America*, selected passages to be distributed in class
  - *John Adams*
  - *Jefferson in Paris*

5. Thursday, July 11

**The Civil War and French Reactions to Race Relations in the United States**
- Discussion of readings
  - Tocqueville, Volume I, Chapter XVIII, pp. 331-336, pp. 356-381
- Materials on the life and work of Saint Gaudens to be presented in class
  - *Glory*

6. Tuesday, July 16

**Walking Tour**
Subject to weather conditions, the tour may be postponed or cancelled. Please check with McGuinn 100 before 4 p.m. on the day of the tour. If the tour is postponed or cancelled, the class will meet as usual on campus

7. Thursday, July 18

French Influences on Boston’s Catholics and Unitarian Transcendentalists I
Margaret Flagg, Guest Presenter
• Transcendentalism
The following texts will be distributed examined in class.
“The Naturals”
Whitehill, *A Memorial to Bishop Cheverus*
Baudelaire, “Correspondences”
O’Connor, *Bibles, Brahmins and Bosses*, selected passages
Hawthorne, *The Blithedale Romance*, selected passages
Critical introduction due

8. Tuesday, July 23

French Influences on Boston’s Catholics and Unitarian Transcendentalists II
Margaret Flagg, Guest Presenter
• Transcendentalism
The following texts will be distributed examined in class.
“The Naturals”
Whitehill, *A Memorial to Bishop Cheverus*
Baudelaire, “Correspondences”
O’Connor, *Bibles, Brahmins and Bosses*, selected passages
Hawthorne, *The Blithedale Romance*, selected passages
Critical introduction due

9. Thursday, July 25

Research
Presentations

10. Tuesday, August 30

Boston’s French Musical Connections
Cynthia Bravo, Guest Presenter

11. Thursday, August 1

Final Examination
Imagine a conversation in which Alexis de Tocqueville, Simone de Beauvoir and you will discuss relationships between France and the French-speaking world and the United States in general and Boston in particular.

Tocqueville in his own distinctive style will discuss his visit in 1831-1832 and he will make references to other French people who had travelled to the United States before his voyage.

Simone de Beauvoir will in her own distinctive style discuss her visit in 1947 and she will make references to French people who had travelled to the United States after Tocqueville's visit and before hers.

You will share insights with them on other of Boston's French connections.

Tocqueville and Beauvoir will discuss a number of different topics; they will devote some time to expressing their reactions to race relations in the United States and to what they observed in New England.

All material concerning the thoughts of Alexis de Tocqueville and Simone de Beauvoir must be selected only from the passages discussed in class.

The examination will be written in class on August 1.

No books, notes or electronic devices may be used.

Texts: Tocqueville, *Democracy in America, I*
          Beauvoir, *America Day by Day*
          Jouve, *Paris: Birthplace of the U.S.A.*
          Atwood, *Boston’s French Secrets*
          Selected texts distributed in class

Films: *Black Robe*
       *Queen Margot*
       *John Adams*
       *Jefferson in Paris*
       *Glory*

[Selections from these films will be shown in class. All the films are available on closed reserve at the O'Neill Media Center.]

*WCAS Grading System*
The undergraduate grading system consists of twelve categories: A (4.00), A- (3.67), excellent; B+ (3.33), B (3.00), B- (2.67), good; C+ (2.33), C (2.00), C- (1.67), satisfactory; D+ (1.33), D (1.00), D- (.67), passing but unsatisfactory; F (.00), failure; I (.00), incomplete; F (.00), course dropped without notifying office; W (.00), official withdrawal from course. The graduate grading system is A (4.00), A- (3.67), Excellent; B+ (3.33), B (3.00), good; B- (2.67), C (2.00), passing but not for degree credit; F (.00), failure.

Grade Reports. All students are required to log into the web through Agora to access their semester grades. Students must utilize their BC username and password to log on. If your username or password is not known, the Student Learning and Support Center in the O’Neill Library Computer Center will issue a new one. The SLSC requires a valid picture ID (a BC ID, driver’s license or passport) to obtain your password.