RLRL1163.01 Boston’s French Connection

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Time of class: Tuesday and Thursday 6:00-9:15
Classroom: Devlin 221
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
Students will explore the following topics: early French explorers and the Acadian experience, Boston’s Puritans and French Huguenots, 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.

Students will develop skill in analyzing historical and literary texts and will examine closely passages in Alexis de Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America* and Simone de Beauvoir’s *America Day by Day*.

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.

There are three main interests to be addressed throughout our class meetings.
(1) We will build a timeline or chronological historical approach in examining relationships between the French and other Francophone peoples and New England from the sixteenth century to the present.
(2) We will read closely and discussion of passages in 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.
(3) We will examine French and Francophone connections to Boston College.

Course Objectives
* Gaining a broader understanding and appreciation of intellectual/cultural activity in literature, film, painting, sculpture, architecture and photography
* Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view
* Developing skill in oral and written expression
*The student will demonstrate knowledge across cultural settings and will learn the impact of culture, gender, and age in literary, historical, and artistic works such as the writings of Samuel de Champlain, Alexis de Tocqueville and Simone de Beauvoir, the painting of Jean-François Millet, the sculpture of Augustus Saint Gaudens.

*The student will demonstrate ethical knowledge by discussing the interactions of the French, the English and Native Americans and the racial issues leading up to and following the Civil War.

**Grading**

25% Class participation
25% Research project

[Each student will present results of research on one of Boston’s French or Francophone connections. The topic must be identified no later than the fourth class meeting. A brief outline indicating plans for the presentation must be submitted at the fifth class meeting. The oral presentations are scheduled for July 23.]

25% Critical introduction to an historical document

[Students will write a critical introduction to the document *Narrative of a French Protestant Refugee in Boston*]

25% 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 final examination will be written in class on July 30.

No books, notes or electronic devices may be used.]

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**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 withdraw from course.

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

**Recommended readings:**
William M. Fowler, *Empires at War: the French and Indian War and the struggle for North America, 1754-1763*
John Mack Faragher, *A great and noble scheme: the tragic expulsion of the French Acadians from their American Homeland*
John Demos, *The unredeemed captive; a family story from early America*
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, *Evangeline*
Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Blithedale Romance*
David McCullough, *John Adams*
David McCullough, *The Greater Journey*

**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.]

**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.

**Request for Accommodations**
If you have a disability and will be requesting accommodations for this course, please register with either Dr. Kathy Duggan (dugganka@bc.edu), Associate Director, Connors Family Learning Center (learning disabilities or AHD) or Dean Paulette Durrett, (paulette.durrett@bc.edu), Assistant Dean for students with disabilities, (all other disabilities). Advance notice and appropriate documentation are required for accommodations. 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 23
   Introduction and Overview
   • The Foreign Observer
   • Alexis de Tocqueville and Simone de Beauvoir
   • Early French explorers
   • Selected scenes from the film Black Robe
   • Consideration of French and Francophone connections to Boston College

2. Thursday, June 25
   Beginnings
   • Tocqueville, Democracy in America, Introduction, pp.3-16
   • Beauvoir, America Day by Day
     Preface, pp.xvii-xviii
     "January," pp. 3-25
   • Introduction to Samuel de Champlain
   • Champlain, Voyages and Explorations of Samuel de Champlain
     [The text will be distributed and discussed in class.]
   • Consideration of French and Francophone connections to Boston College
3. Tuesday, June 30

**Boston’s Puritans and French Huguenots**

- The New England character
- Tocqueville, Chapter II, pp. 26-45
- Beauvoir, *America Day by Day*
  - "April," pp. 279-290, 301-307
- Introduction to the Huguenot experience
- *Narrative of a French Protestant Refugee in Boston* [This text will be distributed and discussed in class.]
- Selected scenes from the film *Queen Margot*
- Consideration of French and Francophone connections to Boston College

4. Thursday, July 2

**The Acadian Experience**

- Selected passages from the following texts will be distributed and discussed.
  - John Mack Faragher, *A great and noble scheme: the tragic expulsion of the French Acadians from their American Homeland*
  - John Demos, *The unredeemed captive; a family story from early America*
  - Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, *Evangeline*
- Consideration of French and Francophone connections to Boston College
- Research project: indication of topic

5. Tuesday, July 7

**The American Revolution and the French**

- Jouve, *Paris: Birthplace of the U.S.A.*
- Abbé Robin, *New Travels Through North America*, [Selected passages from this text will be distributed and discussed in class.]
- David M. McCullough, *John Adams* [Selected passages from this text will be distributed and discussed in class.]
- Selected scenes from the film *John Adams*
- Selected scenes from the film *Jefferson in Paris*
- Consideration of French and Francophone connections to Boston College
- Research project: submission of outline

6. Thursday, July 9

**The Civil War and French Reactions to Race Relations in the United States**

- Tocqueville, Volume I, Chapter XVIII, pp. 331-336, pp. 356-381
- Materials on the life and work of Saint Gaudens to be distributed and discussed in class
7. Tuesday, July 14

Walking Tour
Subject to weather conditions, the tour may be postponed or cancelled. Please check with WCAS 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.

8. Thursday, July 16

French Influences on Boston’s Catholics
Margaret Flagg, Guest Presenter
Historical documents will be presented and discussed in class.
• Critical introduction to Narrative of a French Protestant Refugee in Boston should be submitted.

9. Tuesday, July 21

French Influences on Unitarian Transcendentalists
Margaret Flagg, Guest Presenter
Selections from the following texts will be distributed and examined in class.
Sara Terry “The Naturals”
Whitehill, A Memorial to Bishop Cheverus
Charles Baudelaire, “Correspondences”
Thomas H. O’Connor, Bibles, Brahmins and Bosses,
Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Blithedale Romance

10. Thursday, July 23

Research on Boston’s French Connections
Oral presentations and reactions
Submission of written account with notes and bibliography

11. Tuesday, July 28

Boston’s French Musical Connections
Cynthia Bravo, Guest Presenter

12. Thursday, July 30

Final Examination