



**Boston University** Study Abroad  
Paris

## Defining Freedom in the French Revolution

WR151: Writing, Research, and Inquiry (Summer 2024)

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**Professor:** Marie Satya McDonough

**Schedule:** 13 sessions: Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays from 10am-1pm (except for Monday June 24) + 1 conference hour on Thursday June 20 in lieu of our regular class schedule

**Email:** [msmcd@bu.edu](mailto:msmcd@bu.edu)

**Office Hours:** by appointment (in person or on Zoom)

**Zoom Room:** <https://bostonu.zoom.us/my/mcdonough>

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## Course Description

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Although we are often encouraged to write what we know, the best research writing is motivated by our interest in the unknown: What do we want to discover, how can we discover it, and what are the most effective ways to communicate our discoveries? These questions will drive our work in WR 151.

Building on WR 120 or its equivalent, this class will help you cultivate your writing and research skills through a range of assignments, including a scholarly research essay in which you will be responsible for identifying and refining a topic, devising research questions, and answering those questions by finding and using a range of scholarly and non-scholarly sources. As a course with an emphasis on Oral/Signed Expression, this class will also give you an opportunity to analyze and practice oral/signed expression in order to communicate your research to academic and non-academic audiences. You will learn to infuse your writing with the urgency of oral exchange and to develop an oral style that reflects the rigor and

precision of your writing. Through these experiences, you will gain practice in and a better understanding of the ways that different forms of information are produced, disseminated, and used today.

This specific section examines Paris's pivotal role in a watershed moment in the history of France and of the Western world more generally: the French Revolution. From the dismantling of the monarchy and the abolition of feudalism to the reinvention of the calendar, the Revolution promised nothing less than a wholesale reimagining of social and political relations along Enlightenment principles: *liberté, égalité, fraternité*. In the first half of the course, we will explore the French Revolution through site visits, readings, and a historical role-playing game about the National Assembly of 1791. Then, you will weigh in on scholarly debates about the French Revolution and its legacies in a research project of your own design.

Course Credits: 4 credits + 3 BU Hub Units (Writing; Oral/Signed Expression; Research and Information Literacy)

## Course Objectives

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Although they differ in their subject content, all WR seminars share common goals and lead you through a sequence of assignments that emphasize a process of planning, drafting, and revising informed by feedback from your classmates and instructor. In WR 151, you will undertake an extended research project related to our course topic. You will conduct individual and/or group research, exploring new ways to find, evaluate, and engage with information from different sources and in different formats, written and oral. You will become better able to select and use information sources strategically to formulate and respond to research questions and to participate in the scholarly conversation about your topic. Reflecting on your approach to writing, speaking, and research will prepare you to adapt it to future occasions.

Specifically, you will develop your abilities to:

- strategically search for and select both scholarly and non-scholarly sources and engage them with understanding, appreciation, and critical judgment;
- express yourself orally and converse thoughtfully about complex ideas, recognizing and cultivating the vital connections between oral and written communication;
- engage a range of sources in order to address research questions and to communicate findings in the form of responsible, considered, and well-structured written and oral arguments;
- communicate clearly and coherently in a range of genres and styles, using different media and modes of expression as appropriate;
- plan, draft, rehearse, and revise efficiently and effectively, and help your peers do the same by responding productively to their work;
- reflect on how research, reading, oral/signed, writing, and editing practices differ for varied audiences, genres, and purposes.

## Pedagogical Goals Specific to Oral/Signed Expression

The focus of this section of WR 151 on oral/signed expression aims explicitly at making the resources of writing available to speech/signing and vice versa: you will learn to infuse your writing with the liveliness and urgency of oral exchange and to develop an oral style commensurate with the thoughtfulness of their reading and writing. You will receive instruction in and demonstrate proficiency in each the following five areas:

- *Elocution*: Students will demonstrate the skills needed to communicate effectively in a range of contexts. These skills include pacing, volume, enunciation, eye contact, and a varied vocal and gestural delivery.
- *Extemporaneity*: Students will be able to speak or sign well in unscripted situations. An ability to improvise is essential in situations where one cannot anticipate a question or topic, such as job interviews and oral defenses. Similarly, students must be able to engage in sound debate, ask follow-up questions, and entertain opposing views without the advantage of lengthy reflection or editing.
- *Leadership/Authority*: Students will share the expertise they have gained from their research projects in a variety of ways throughout the semester, including an assignment wherein each student must lead a portion of class time on their own.
- *Retrieval*: Students will accurately summarize or quote material without notes. This might mean answering a teacher's questions, performing a recitation, or delivering a declamation.
- *Metacognition*: Students will regularly reflect on and evaluate their peers' and their own performance on oral and signed tasks.

## Course Materials

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You will need to purchase two books:

- Popiel, Jennifer, Mark C. Carnes, and Gary Kates. *Rousseau, Burke, and Revolution in France, 1791* (University of North Carolina Press, 2022)
- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *The Social Contract*, ed. Christopher Bertram (Penguin, 2012 [1762])

Our class has a **Blackboard site** that contains the syllabus, assignments, and other course materials. You can log in at <http://learn.bu.edu/>. We will also be using a **Slack workspace**, especially during the game, in order to share materials and work together outside of class time.

## Assignments

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- Assigned reading and viewing

- Frequent low-stakes writing exercises, including homework, in-class writing, and reflective writing
- Frequent and varied activities and assignments in oral/signed genres
- *Reacting to the Past* game
- A semester-long research project culminating in a formal academic research paper of 8-10 pages
- A mini-conference presentation on your research project
- Contribution to and completion of WR cumulative portfolio
- Regular peer review and instructor conferences
- Consistent class attendance and active participation

## Participation and Attendance

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Since this course is a seminar, your regular attendance and active participation are essential both to your own learning and to your classmates' learning. Participation isn't just calculated by the number of words you say in class; it also includes paying attention to what others are saying, responding to their statements in your contributions, asking questions and identifying and clarifying murky aspects of the discussion. Furthermore, our discussions will be possible, interesting, and enriching only insofar as you do the assigned reading on time, bring your texts to class with you, and come prepared with your questions and observations.

Because we will meet only thirteen times to complete a full semester's learning, every session is essential; you should plan to attend every single class. Of course, severe illness and other extraordinary circumstances may arise that force you to miss class. If this is the case, please communicate with me immediately so we can discuss how to best handle the situation. Students who miss more than two classes will be at risk of failing; note that these absences need not be consecutive. Arriving late or leaving class early three times will also count as an absence.

Please also consult **BU Paris's official attendance policy** which is appended at the end of this syllabus.

## Approach to Grading

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Because anxiety over grades can often keep students from taking risks in their research and writing, this course will use a method of evaluation known as contract grading. This method allows you to focus on what you really want to say or how you want to say it – to focus on learning and improving your writing – rather than on worrying about pleasing me or trying to “game the system.” It keeps students accountable for completing assignments on time; I hope that it will also provide an atmosphere conducive to growing as writers and citizens.

**You are guaranteed a grade of B+ for this class** if you meet all of the following conditions:

1. **You attend class** and do not miss more than one session. It sounds obvious, but much of the work that we will do as a class cannot be made up.
2. **You actively participate** in class discussions, group work activities, and writing and peer review exercises. This also requires **being prepared** by completing the homework exercises and assigned reading that form the basis of our class activities, and having drafts and assigned readings available to refer to during class discussion.
3. **All assignments are on time.** You are allotted a time bank of 24 hours over the course of the semester that you may withdraw from and apply to the final submission of any of your major assignments beyond the due dates indicated on the schedule. This eliminates the need to request extensions and allows you some flexibility in managing your workflow. After you empty your time bank, lateness will result in a lower grade. Note that the time bank cannot be used for exercises due in class: not having a draft completed will deprive you of the chance to get valuable feedback, and it will deprive your fellow students a chance to practice giving such feedback. Hence, not having such work available in class means that you are not meeting condition 2.
4. **All assignments are complete.** You are encouraged to be innovative and experiment, but sloppy or incomplete work (including less than 80% of the target word count for drafts) is a problem. If you are unsure whether you are addressing the assignment fully, please ask me. *Note that making substantive rather than merely cosmetic revisions on papers in response to draft feedback is a requirement for meeting the contract.*

I will provide feedback in the form of comments and questions that aim to help you improve your writing. If your assignment meets all of the requirements, you will receive a check ("1" on the Blackboard gradebook) that confirms that you have not violated the contract. If your work falls short of the requirements, you will receive a check minus ("0" on the Blackboard gradebook) that notes that you are at risk of lowering your grade. Work that earns a check-minus/0 can often be revised to achieve the check grade. I will also note work that clearly demonstrates extra effort and exceptional insight (see below). I fully believe that if you meet all of the above requirements, you will have improved significantly as a writer, and you will deserve a B+ or higher in our class.

**You will not be eligible for a grade of B+ or higher for this class** if you do not meet the conditions outlined above. The quickest way to slide to a B or B-, or even a C or D, is to miss class or to fall behind on assigned reading and writing homework. If you earn more than one check-minus/0, we will need to meet to strategize about how to get you back on track.

**You may earn a grade of A- or A for this class** if you consistently produce high-quality work. Grades up to B+ reward behaviors (time and effort); grades higher than B+ depend on my judgment about the quality of your writing, oral/signed expression, and classroom citizenship. We will discuss what counts as high-quality work throughout this class, but for example, in scholarly argumentation, high-quality writing

usually represents systematic, evidence-based, nuanced inquiry in response to real questions. To earn an A- or an A, your writing and oral/signed expression must demonstrate a mind at work: presenting non-trivial, compelling concepts, images, and/or logic; engaging thoughtfully with the conventions of the genre you're using to communicate; deploying high-quality prose that is precise as to meaning and virtually free of mechanical errors.

In general, you will earn an A- if you achieve a check plus (acknowledging exceptional work) on two of the three major class components in which that grade is available: (1) the reacting game; (2) the research paper; (3) class citizenship. You will earn an A if you achieve a check plus on all of those components. Other avenues to an A-/A grade can be determined in consultation with me.

**My commitment to you:** I agree to abide by the contract and enforce it fairly and equitably. I also commit to treat you with respect and to do my best to support you in your learning. My goal is to create a culture of support, where we function as allies rather than adversaries and where you cooperate with classmates rather than compete with them.

## Academic Integrity

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In this class, we will discuss conventions for using and citing sources in academic papers and in other genres we study. We will cover how to avoid accidentally plagiarizing, but you know how to avoid doing it intentionally: do not have someone else write your assignment; do not take someone else's ideas or language and claim them as your own; do not assume that you will not get caught. Cases of plagiarism will be handled in accordance with the disciplinary procedures described in Boston University's Academic Conduct Code. All WR students are subject to the CAS code, which can be read here:

<http://www.bu.edu/academics/resources/academic-conduct-code/>

### Writing Program AI Use Guidelines

At orientation, you learned that it is only allowable to use generative AI tools (such as ChatGPT) to “generate ideas, words, designs, or any other type of work product” when the use of AI has been authorized. Please note that the following AI uses are authorized across all WR classes:

- Using AI tools to learn about or translate terms or vocabulary words (not entire papers)
- Using AI tools to offer you feedback on whether your grammar and usage conform with standard academic English. (Note: There may be times when the choice not to use standard academic English in your writing is appropriate and/or effective.)

It is not necessary to cite the AI tool for these two Writing Program-authorized uses. If I authorize additional uses of AI tools for particular assignments, I will do so in writing, and ask you to cite it using

[MLA documentation style](#). Remember that ultimately you are responsible for any work you submit, including any language, ideas, or information that is introduced through your use of AI tools.

## Accessibility and Inclusion

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I assume that all of us learn in different ways. If there are circumstances that may affect your performance in this class, please talk to me as soon as possible so that we can work together to develop strategies for accommodations that will satisfy both your learning needs and the requirements of the course.

In this class, we are committed to treating each other equitably and inclusively. We respect one another's dignity and privacy; treat one another fairly; and honor one another's experiences, beliefs, perspectives, abilities, and backgrounds, regardless of race, religion, language, immigration status, sexual orientation, gender identification, ability status, socio-economic status, national identity, or any other identity markers. We will use the pronouns and names that people choose for themselves. We appreciate the language variation within our community, and as we develop strategies to communicate effectively in college and beyond, we recognize that the norms of academic writing, and of writing in general, are constantly evolving. We value open-minded inquiry, and we critically engage with ideas in diverse texts to learn about perspectives diverging from our own. We seek to challenge ourselves and help one another learn. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

## Course Schedule

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This schedule is intended as a blueprint and is subject to change based on the needs of the class. Any changes will be announced in class and posted on Blackboard. All homework is due by the time class begins unless indicated as end of day (EOD).

| <i>Schedule</i>                                    |                           | <i>In Class Activities</i>  | <i>Homework Due</i>   |
|--|---------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Week 1: Understanding the French Revolution</b> |                           |   |   |
| <b>Session 1</b>                                   | <b>Monday<br/>May 27</b>  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Introductions: to the class, to each other, to the French Revolution</li><li>2. Rousseau's First Discourse</li><li>3. Research Questions</li><li>4. Elocution Skills</li></ol> | <b>Reading:</b> Game book (GB): pp. 19–33, 87–108<br><b>Writing:</b> Self-assessment and portfolio check-in   |
| <b>Session 2</b>                                   | <b>Tuesday<br/>May 28</b> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Visit: Musée Carnavalet, Place de la Bastille</li><li>2. Recitations</li><li>3. Discussion of readings</li></ol>   | <b>Reading:</b> GB, pp. 33–47; 108-120<br><b>Speaking:</b> Elocution skills video series; prepare recitations |

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|--|---------------------|---|--|
| Session 3                              | Thursday<br>May 30  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discussion of Rousseau and Burke</li> <li>2. Allocation of Roles</li> <li>3. Faction Meetings</li> <li>4. Election of President of the National Assembly</li> </ol> | <b>Reading:</b> Rousseau's <i>Social Contract</i> , Books 1 and 2; GB: 120-125, 145-167.<br><b>Other homework:</b> Quiz (EOD)                                |
| <b>Week 2: The Game</b>                |                     |   |  |
| Session 4                              | Monday<br>June 3    | Game Sessions 1-2   | <b>Reading:</b> GB, pp. 49-57, 125-145<br><b>Writing:</b> Volume 1 of newspapers   |
| Session 5                              | Wednesday<br>June 4 | Game Sessions 3-4<br>Visit: Café Procope  | <b>Writing:</b> Volume 2 of newspapers   |
| Session 6                              | Thursday<br>June 6  | Game Sessions 5-6   | <b>Writing:</b> Volume 3 of newspapers   |
| <b>Week 3: Research</b>                |                     |   |  |
| Session 7                              | Monday<br>June 10   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Game postmortem</li> <li>2. Evaluating research questions</li> <li>3. BEAM/BEAT</li> <li>4. "Exploring the Scholarly Territory" FLM</li> </ol>                      | <b>Reading:</b> "What Really Happened" handout; Turabian on research questions<br><b>Viewing:</b> <a href="#">Danton</a> (dir. Wajda, 1983)                  |
| Session 8                              | Tuesday<br>June 11  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. French Revolution Walking Tour</li> <li>2. Elevator pitches</li> <li>3. Annotated Bibliographies</li> </ol>   | <b>Writing:</b> Proposal and working bibliography (EOD)<br><b>Reading:</b> <i>They Say/I Say</i> , pp. 3-28  |
| Session 9                              | Thursday<br>June 13 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Individual meetings with professor</li> <li>2. Work on revised proposal and introduction</li> </ol>   | <b>Writing:</b> Annotated bibliography and literature review (EOD)<br><b>Other homework:</b> "Exploring Scholarly Conversations & Mining Bibliographies" FLM |
| <b>Week 4: Drafting</b>                |                     |   |  |
| Session 10                             | Monday<br>June 17   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduction peer review</li> <li>2. Storyboard construction</li> <li>3. Storyboard walk-around</li> </ol>  | <b>Reading:</b> <i>Style</i> , "Motivation"<br><b>Writing:</b> Devastation; draft introduction; source analysis  |
| Session 11                             | Tuesday<br>June 18  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Integrating and citing sources</li> <li>2. Argumentative paragraph peer review</li> <li>3. Draft work and individual consultations</li> </ol>                       | <b>Reading:</b> <i>Style</i> , "Characters" and "Actions"<br><b>Writing:</b> Two draft paragraphs+ by class time; everything but the conclusion EOD          |
| +                                      | Thursday<br>June 20 | Group draft conferences with professor  | Peer review memos  |
| <b>Week 5: Revising and Revisiting</b> |                     |   |  |
| Session 12                             | Tuesday<br>June 25  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Draft revision activities</li> <li>2. Preparation work for conference presentations</li> <li>3. Preparation work for Final Reflective essay</li> </ol>              | <b>Writing:</b> Final research essay (EOD)   |
| Session 13                             | Thursday<br>June 27 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conference presentations</li> <li>2. Course conclusion: evaluations and wrap-up</li> </ol>  | <b>Speaking:</b> Prepare conference presentation<br><b>Writing:</b> Final reflective essay   |



## BU PARIS ATTENDANCE POLICY

Our program is subject to French student visa laws where an active student status is mandatory. As the sponsor of your visa, Boston University has the legal obligation to ensure that you comply with visa requirements. If you do not attend classes or your internship as required, you will be considered to be in breach of your visa and can be deported. Any student who does not comply with this policy may be sent home from the program at the discretion of the program director, and may, as a result, forfeit credit and program costs for part or all of the semester.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 absence (courses* or internship**)  | = -1 point on your final grade                |
| More than 3 unexcused absences  | = F for the course                            |
| Unsubmitted written work,<br>Absence for a presentation or exam<br>Plagiarism | = F (0 points) for the assignment in question |

\*Courses: class sessions, exposé preparation, in-class presentation

\*\*Internship: EUSA meetings, BU Paris workshops, work placement schedule

### Excused Absences

- Absence for illness excused by the **certificate of a French doctor**
- Internship interview
- OFII medical visit (must have **convocation**)
- Professional imperative that conflicts with academic workshop

Documentation must be submitted to [buparis@bu.edu](mailto:buparis@bu.edu) the day following the absence

### Tardiness

- The professor reserves the right to *not admit* a tardy student to class or to count a tardy arrival as either a **half or a whole unexcused absence**.
- Late arrivals or early departures will impact the class **participation grade**.
- **Leaving class** before it ends is considered as tardiness.
- **Late submission** of written work will entail a penalty on the assignment grade.
- Written work submitted **more than a week late** or **after final exams** will not receive credit (grade = 0).