



HI 320: UNDERSTANDING REVOLUTION: FRANCE AND ALGERIA

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Course Time & Location: HI 304
Office Hours: M 1:30-2:30, R 2-4, & by appt

Course Description

Freedom! Liberty, equality, fraternity! National liberation! These slogans have inspired violent revolutions around the world. What do they really mean?

Partly through engaging in role-play, we will investigate a powerful concept—the promise of revolution -- using two case studies: France and Algeria. (In one of history's grand ironies, France colonized Algeria forty years after its own revolution; then, a century later, Algerian revolutionaries deployed similar rhetoric and means to win their independence from France.) How did political rhetoric inspire and delude participants in both events?

For 7 weeks this term, students will play roles of historical figures and debate as if they were actually able to achieve designated goals in 1790s France and 1950s Algeria. Preceding and following the role-playing, we will discuss pertinent inspirational works—both dispassionate and partisan—ranging from texts by Jean Jacques Rousseau to the film *The Battle of Algiers* and studies by modern scholars. Students will thus be honing their skills of argumentation in and out of role, in writing and speeches, through analysis and by exercising their historical imaginations.

THE INSIDE/OUTSIDE CHALLENGE: Note that this course will challenge you to understand historical problems from both the inside and the outside, that is, as a passionate partisan and as a

cold analyst. After playing a historical figure, you will be asked to write a dispassionate critique of his/her goals and tactics. Later, after advocating a designated historical interpretation, you will be challenged to write a coldly analytical critical analysis of that particular interpretation's strengths and shortcomings.

By the end of the course we will be discussing how particular versions of these two events came to be widely accepted and thus why historical debate and interpretation are necessary. We will be perceiving patterns in historical events that pertain across cultures, while also highlighting the importance of historical contingency in determining the course of revolutions and what they really achieve.

Hub Learning Outcomes

1. **Historical consciousness:** to perceive and explain the difference between political rhetoric and political reality in historical events, and by extension in contemporary life
2. **Global Citizenship and intercultural literacy:** to identify patterns in similar historical events occurring in different cultures
3. **Writing-Intensive:** to learn to frame arguments so convincingly that you can win supporters even among your opponents; using both your powers of persuasion and your deep knowledge of our texts, you will write in the following genres: non-partisan historical analysis, political broadsheets, political speeches.

Other Outcomes (re Core and History requirements):

This course will help fulfill requirements for the History major (World History) and the Core minor (a 300-level course).

Pre-requisite: First-year Writing Seminar (CAS WR 120) or Core Curriculum equivalent

Books and Other Course Materials

Three books are required and may be purchased at Barnes and Noble:

- J. Popiel, M.C. Carnes, G. Kates, *Rousseau, Burke, and Revolution in France, 1791*, Reacting to the Past, New York: W.W. Norton, 2015. ISBN: 978-0-393-93888-3
- William Doyle, *The French Revolution, A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford: OUP, 2001. ISBN: 978-0-19-285396-7
- Benjamin Stora, *Algeria 1830-2000, A Short History*, Ithaca: Cornell, 2001. ISBN: 978-0-8014-8916-7

All other required readings listed below are scanned and/or available online through Mugar Library's website.

ASSIGNMENTS, GRADING, GROUND RULES

1. Assignments

Papers (60%): Six papers (numbering in total about 19 pages) must be presented to me in hardcopy and in person. More detailed prompts will be distributed in class two weeks before the assignment is due. Writing workshops may be scheduled from time to time so you can comment constructively on each other's papers.

1. In week 1 you will write a 2-page essay answering the following questions: in what circumstances do you think revolutionary change is justified; what are the potential risks? (UNGRADED)
2. In both weeks 7 and 11, you will write a 3-page essay critiquing/analyzing dispassionately the stand taken by the character you played in, first, the French and, then, the Algerian revolutions. (Writing Intensive Outcome 1) (10% each)
3. In both weeks 6 and 12, you will write a 3-page essay critiquing/analyzing dispassionately the historical interpretation you were responsible for presenting to the class regarding, first, the French and, then, the Algerian revolution. Success in these essays depends in part on the accuracy of your understanding of your assigned source. (Writing Intensive Outcome 2) (10% each)
4. In week 13, you will write a 5-page essay, due the last day of class, indicating what you have learned from the course/how the course has changed the way you think (about political slogans in general and revolution in particular), using paper 1 as an index of your earlier thoughts. (20%)

Group Projects (10%): Students will work in pairs or trios to present clearly to the rest of the class the arguments in the analytical text they have been assigned during weeks 7 and 12. (5% per presentation)

Class participation (30%): During the seven role-playing weeks, students will be judged on the cogency and accuracy with which they present the arguments of the historical figures and historians they have been assigned to play or present. Your grade on these two (French, Algerian) written and oral performances will reflect the logic and rhetorical power of your arguments. The precise guidelines will be distributed in class, according to the RTTP format.

(Points will be deducted for making ahistorical arguments, that is, ones that do not reflect the possible world view of their character: e.g. Louis XVI would not have repudiated Marie Antoinette because she was a foreigner. By the same token, points will be deducted for inaccurately reflecting a particular historian's interpretation.)

2. Grading Criteria

- **Essays:** will be evaluated according to 1. their historical accuracy, 2. The clarity and logic of their argumentation. (More detailed prompts will be distributed in class two weeks before the paper is due.) Late papers will drop a fraction of a grade for every day they are late; thus a B+ paper that is a day late will receive a B.

- **Class participation:** do you make a well-informed, accurate, and cogent contribution in terms of defining goals, developing strategies, reacting to setbacks, and dealing with dissension?

3. Ground rules in the classroom

1. This is a discussion-based course where everyone is expected to be courteous and respectful of others, except when your role requires the contrary!
2. Please be punctual and ready to work when you come to class. Repeated lateness will affect your grade.
3. Please switch your phone to silent and put it out of eyeshot for the entirety of the class.
4. Laptops and tablets should be used only to take notes or to complete an in-class activity.
5. **Attendance** is mandatory at all the classes listed below. The number of unexcused absences for the whole semester is limited to a maximum of 2. For each additional unexcused absence after the two allowed, your overall grade will be lowered by 5%. An excused absence is one that is due to 1) illness, 2) a religious holiday, 3) participation in a sporting event or a similar legitimate reason, or (4) a family emergency. An absence will be excused only if I am provided with the proper documentation (an official doctor's note, a letter from a coach or a dean, etc.). Students with legitimate reasons for missing class should forewarn me by email and contact me in order to make up assignments.
6. This class is interactive and discussion-based. As the course format depends on class participation and student interaction and collaboration, you must come to class well-prepared, having carefully completed the readings and assignments listed in the course schedule below. (Writing Intensive Learning Outcome 2)

COURSE SCHEDULE

Please note that minor changes may be made to the below syllabus from time to time.

Week 1 (3 and 5 Sept.): Introduction: discussion of revolution as a concept

- **First essay due Friday the 5th:** UNGRADED 2-page essay answering the questions: how do you define revolutionary change? under what circumstances do you think it is necessary? What risks does it pose? Your answers to these questions should be honest expressions of your own personal beliefs and understanding.

Week 2 (10 and 12 Sept.): Prelude to the French Revolution

- J. Popiel et al., *Rousseau, Burke, and Revolution in France, 1791* (NY, Norton, 2015), pp. 3-47.
- William Doyle, *The French Revolution, A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, OUP, 2001), pp. 1-36.

Weeks 3-6 (17 and 19, 24 and 26 Sept., 1 and 3 Oct., 8 and 10 Oct., 17 Oct.): Reacting to the Past (4 weeks of role-playing – writing speeches and position papers, etc. -- using the role-sheets that I will distribute to each of you, plus reading, rereading, and studying closely the documents in *Rousseau, Burke, and the Revolution in France, 1791* that are relevant to your role, as well as the rest of Doyle):

- **Second essay due week 6 (17 Oct.):** 3-page essay critiquing/analyzing dispassionately the stand taken by the character you played in the French Revolution

Your purpose during these four weeks will be to advance your policy agenda: should the moderate constitution of 1791 be passed? You will do so by: conducting research, writing speeches and position papers, delivering formal speeches in class, participating in informal debates and negotiations. I will give immediate feedback to your oral presentations and written work. Depending on your role, you may preside over a class session, abiding by the Podium Rule (a person at the podium has the floor). You may use your role sheets to inform your efforts to build a coalition that can persuade the Indeterminates among you. You must always speak in role during these debates, though doing so may sometimes require you to be deceitful. You will write to persuade others, and you will deliver at least one formal speech from the podium. You may continue the game outside of class, especially when initially organizing your faction. Our last, debriefing, session on Oct. 17 will correct any historical inaccuracies that have arisen.

Week 7 (22 and 24 Oct.): Interpretations of the French Revolution:

- Reading: Students will work in pairs to present orally to the rest of the class the central argument in one of the following classic interpretations of the French Revolution:
 - Simon Schama, *Citizens*, pp. xiii-xvi, 573-618 (skim 588-600). (online)
 - Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Old Regime and the French Revolution (1856)*: Foreword and Part 1 (pp. vii-21), Part 3, chapter 8 (pp. 203-11). (online)
 - François Furet, "The Ancien Regime and the Revolution," in Pierre Nora, *Realms of Memory, vol. 1* (1992), pp. 79-91 . (online)
- **Third essay due week 7:** 3-page essay critiquing the historical interpretation of the French Revolution you were responsible for presenting orally to the class.

Week 8 (29 and 31 Oct.). Prelude to the Algerian Revolution

- Reading: Benjamin Stora, *Algeria 1830-2000, A Short History*, Part one. (Intro: 1-31).

EVENING VIEWING OF THE FILM *THE BATTLE OF ALGIERS* (1966): date and place TBA

Week 9-11 (5 and 7 Nov., 12 Nov., 19 and 21 Nov., 26 Nov.). The Algerian Revolution: Objectives and Means, 1950s

- Reading: students will present the arguments, interests, points of view of one of the actors in the Algerian revolution. What are your objectives? What strategies are you willing to employ to achieve them (armed conflict, torture)? What do you think the terms of a peace accord should be? You will *inter alia* debate the November 1954 FLN Proclamation, the Soummam Congress resolutions 1956 and Ben Bella's response (**photocopied**). (You will use Stora Part One (pp. 29-115) to put your role in context.)
 - FLN cadre (male): Hamou Amirouche, *Memoirs of a Mujahed, Algeria's Struggle for Freedom, 1945-62*, (2014), pp. 24-8, 56-74, 100-32. (scanned selection)
 - French military: Paul Aussaresses, *The Battle of the Casbah, Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism in Algeria, 1955-7* (2005), pp. 112-180 (scanned selection)
 - Nationalist Intellectual: Mouloud Feraoun, *Journal 1955-1962, reflections on the French-Algerian War* (**scanned selection of his writing in 1956**)
 - Nationalist Intellectual: Frantz Fanon, *A Dying Colonialism*, pp. 23-33, 69-97, 147-81 (scanned selections)

- French Algerian Intellectual: Albert Camus, *Algerian Chronicles*, pp. 117-84, 203-16 (scanned selection)
- FLN cadre (female): Zohra Drif-Bitat, *Inside the Battle of Algiers: memoir of a woman freedom-fighter*, chapters 3 and 4 (online access)

Fourth essay due week 11 (Nov. 26): 3-page essay critiquing/analyzing dispassionately the stand taken by the character you played in the Algerian Revolution. Our last, debriefing, session on Nov. 26 will correct any historical inaccuracies that have arisen.

Week 12 (3 and 5 Dec.). Interpretations of the Algerian Revolution:

- Reading: pairs of students will be responsible for advocating the interpretation of the Algerian Revolution in one of the below books.
 - Kamel Daoud, *The Meursault Investigation* (2013) (on reserve)
 - Laurie Brand, *Official Stories, Politics and National Narratives in Egypt and Algeria* (2014), chapters 4 and 5. (online)
 - Benjamin Stora, *Algeria 1830-2000*
- **Fifth essay due week 12 (5 Dec.):** 3-page essay critiquing the historical interpretation of the Algerian revolution you were responsible for presenting to the class

Week 13 (Dec. 10). Conclusion

Student presentations of what they learned and how these lessons relate to their understanding of contemporary political rhetoric and the work of historians.

- **Sixth and final essay due (Dec.10):** 5-page essay, due the last day of class, indicating what you have learned from the course/how the course has changed the way you think (about political slogans in general and revolution in particular), using paper 1 as an index of your earlier thoughts.

There will be no final examination.

APPENDIX

University Policies

Academic Integrity. Plagiarism is best defined as using someone else's words or ideas as though they were your own. Students will write papers using their own words and providing full citations for ideas or language taken from any sources, including the Internet. If you take any text or idea from someone, you must make that clear by using quotation marks and citing the source. If you have any questions about what does or does not constitute plagiarism, ask me. In addition, you may consult the University's Academic Conduct Code: <https://www.bu.edu/academics/policies/academic-conduct-code/>

Any case of academic dishonesty will result in an immediate F for the assignment and, possibly, an F for the course.

Academic Support. The University's Educational Resource Center (ERC) provides a variety of support programs, including peer tutoring and writing assistance. For more information, please visit the Center's website: <http://www.bu.edu/erc/link/>

Accessibility. Boston University is committed to providing equal and integrated access for all students. If you are a student with a disability for which you may need accommodations, you should register with the Office of Disabilities Services (ODS). The guidelines for applying for accommodations can be found here: <http://www.bu.edu/disability/new-students-disability-accommodations/>

Sex-Based Discrimination. Boston University is committed to the safety and well-being of all its students. Please be aware that educators must report incidents of sex-based discrimination including sexual assault, stalking, and domestic/relationship violence that come to their attention. I am required to report such incidents to the University's Title IX Coordinator and assist you in accessing available resources. Confidential resources where you can talk about such situations and receive assistance without the incident being reported are available both on- and off-campus.