



POLITICAL CHALLENGES IN CONTEMPORARY FRANCE

APA Program: Paris Advanced

Language of instruction: French

US semester credits: 4.0

Term: Fall & Spring Semester

Class: APA, Wednesday 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Course Description

This political science course will familiarize students with French political life, French society, analyze France's place in Europe and the world, and its relationships with other countries. This course aims to provide tools to students to look at major political issues intelligently in the particular context of France and in the general Western world. As an equal objective, this course will allow students to meet with political and social stakeholders by attending a National Assembly session and completing a study tour to Brussels consisting of visits to European institutions and meetings with its representatives.

Schedule

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| Week 1 | Introduction: France under the 5th Republic <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentation of course, objectives, and policies• Setting the scene for the 5th Republic and its evolution from de Gaulle to Mitterand (1958-1995) |
| Week 2 | France under the 5th Republic <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evolution of the 5th Republic from Chirac to Macron (1995-2017)• Institutions of the 5th Republic and the presidentialization of the regime• Preparation of the National Assembly observation |
| Week 3 | France and Europe <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The role of France in the European Construction• The Franco-German motor of Europe and its evolution• The French actors in Europe: interest groups and European diplomacy <p>National Assembly observation</p> |
| Week 4 | France and Europe <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The relationship between France and European institutions• The challenges of the European construction and the rise of Euro-skepticism• Study tour preparation |
| Week 5 | France in the world <ul style="list-style-type: none">• France: A great diplomatic, cultural, and economic power?• The evolution of the relationship between two great international powers: the United States and Russia• National Assembly report due• Friday: Brussels study tour |

- Week 6 France in the world
- France and the Middle East: relationships with Israel, Palestine, and Iran
 - France and the Middle East: uncertainty surrounding the Arab Spring revolutions
- Week 7 Midterm**
A democratic crisis?
- Decline of militancy
 - Do the elected representatives truly represent? Political officials in relation to gender, race, and socioeconomic status
- Week 8 Towards a new democracy?
- France, a representative democracy
 - Participatory democracy: an alternative model?
 - **Half-page summary of study tour report due**
- Week 9 The rise of populism
- Historic origins of populism
 - Populism in Europe: similarities and national differences
- Week 10 The rise of populism: the case of the National Front
- The French extreme right and populism
 - **Study tour report due**
- Week 11 France, immigration, and integration
- France, a postcolonial society?
 - French immigration policies: State racism?
 - What is French secularism?
 - Discrimination through power
- Week 12 France and questions surrounding sexuality
- The return of conservatism?
 - From PACS to marriage for all
 - Issues around the PMA and GPA
- Week 13 Oral final exam**

Assessment

The final grade is composed of five parts:

1. Attendance, oral participation, and class preparation (20%)

Two excused absences will be permitted. Further class absences will result in course failure. Tardiness will result in a deduction of the course grade. According to the class, students will have to:

- Read articles or passages from books
- Contribute to class discussion and participate in class debates

2. Report on the National Assembly (20%)

Students will write a report on their observations of the National Assembly during the observation session, explain the role of Parliament, and give an example. Due Week 4.

3. Report on the Brussels study tour (20%)

Students will write a report on the meetings and visits scheduled in Brussels. Work will be completed in multiple stages:

- A half-page draft summarizing the choice of an institution, theme, problem, and the possible solutions will be handed in Week 8
- Final report due Week 10
- Student participation will be particularly expected during the study tour and will be taken into account for the final grade

4. Written midterm exam (15%)

Two-hour knowledge check in the middle of the semester, Week 7.

5. Oral final exam (25%)

Students will be evaluated with an oral final exam on a subject related to the course. Subjects will be selected at random and documents will be provided in advance to assist in preparation. The student will have 20 minutes to prepare and 20 minutes to speak. The first part will be dedicated to the presentation of the assigned subject and the second half will allow for an exchange with the professor to discuss the student's points on the subject and to talk about the work done throughout the course.