FRANCE TODAY

APA Program: Paris
Language of instruction: French
US semester credits: 4.0
Term: Fall & Spring Semester

Course Description
France Today is designed to facilitate the assimilation of students in their host country by giving them inside knowledge of France and its intricacies. With this objective, the main themes discussed involve national life (culture, politics, economic factors, social security and protection system) as well as societal issues (immigration, secularism, violence, and education).

This course is based on not only the professor’s instruction, but the work accomplished by the students. As part of the framework of the course, students will be working on recent press articles given to them with the goal of engaging in conversations with their host families and by conducting personal research on the topics related to what France is today.

The following syllabus is given as a guide and may be modified at a later date.

Schedule

Section 1  The Political Culture of Contemporary France
- The Gaullist heritage
- Public and private life: the Mitterand example
- The ups and downs of the Chirac years
- From Nicolas Sarkozy to François Hollande: new presidential profiles?

Section 2  France in the World
- France, the driving force of the European Construction
- France and the US, between admiration and rivalry

Section 3  The French: Economic and Social Aspects
- The French day-to-day: babyboom and the aging population
- The French social security and protection system: a source of pride and apprehension
- French youth at school
- The French at work

Section 4  France, Between Republicanism and Multiculturalism
- Violence in the suburbs: symptom of social malaise?
- Reception of immigrants: from assimilation to integration
- Secularism, the French model of respecting religions

Syllabus subject to change
Section 5  France, Country of Culture?
  • The place of culture in France: between fantasy and reality

Assessment

Work required before each class:
  • Regularly read the articles requested and present findings to the class (5%)
  • Present a press review to the class (20%)
  • Write an essay (20%)
  • Presence, active attention and participation in class (5%)

Exams:
  • Midterm (15%)
  • Final written exam that will cover the entire course (20%)
  • Oral exam based on personal research of a specific area of Paris (15%)

Bibliography


Syllabus subject to change