



Boston University Study Abroad
Paris

CAS PO 248/CAS IR 305 *Comparative European Politics: France and Beyond*

Credits: 4

Professor: Olivier Rozenberg (rozen@bu.edu)

Schedule: 16 two-and-a-half-hour sessions over 7.5 weeks
(Monday & Wednesday – 9:30 to 12pm + 2 additional sessions)

Office hours: Monday 12-12:30, and by appointment

Course visits:

- Walking tour of Parisian political sites and institutions
- Political gathering
- Visit to the museum Charles de Gaulle

Course material:

- On-line academic texts and press articles to be read by the student (Blackboard).

I. COURSE PRESENTATION AND OUTCOMES

This seminar course aims to compare the political systems of European countries as well as provide an overview of the main elements in contemporary European democracies. The course also seeks to introduce and assess multiple approaches to the study of social and political science, from rational choice to political anthropology as well as the sociology of elected officials. Finally, it offers a glimpse at the unity and diversity within the European political system. Within this framework, special attention is given to the French political system. The course seeks to circumscribe its specificities through in-depth comparison with other European democracies. The current situation, i.e. the French Presidential election of May 2017, will be especially considered.

Each session follows the same structure:

- The course presents an array of European political systems for each given topic.
- The course looks in depth at the French system taking into account its distinctive peculiarities.
- The reading of the day is collectively discussed.
- A topical event is examined through: an oral presentation by a student or a collective discussion.

The course is accessible to students with no previous experience in political science.

The course, including seminars and visits, is conducted entirely in English.

Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will have developed:

- a thorough knowledge of the diversity of the European national political systems: common features of the European systems as well as main lines of cleavage and major exceptions to common trends;
- an understanding of the on-going change within European democracies, especially the capacity of systems to produce both legitimate and efficient political institutions;
- a special analysis of the situation of France among European democracies with an emphasis on the controversial notions of French model or French exception.



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- the ability to read, understand and critically analyze political science academic texts written in English;
- the ability to formally present a thorough critical and structured analysis of a political issue, be it written or oral, based on sources and concepts requiring basic research.

II. ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

Out-of-class workload:

- Mandatory readings for each session. About 25 pages by session.
- Press review on topical event for one session out of two. Should deal with political issues within one European country or at the European Union level.
- In-depth research for the essay
- In-depth research for the oral presentation

Oral presentation: 20%

These individual 10-minute oral presentations deal with a specific aspect of each given session, examining a French perspective on the topic of the day. For instance, during session 6 dealing with legislatures, the subject of the oral presentation will be “Should the French Senate be abolished?”.

Essay: 20%

The take-home 4.000-word essay is due on session 14 and addresses one of the following question:

- “From a comparative European standpoint, is the domestic leadership of the French President unusual?”
- or: “What is specific to the crisis of representative democracy in France?”

2 tests: 20% (10% + 10%)

In-class tests 1 & 2 will consist of multiple choice questionnaires (20 questions each).

Final exam: 30%

In-class final exam will consist both of a multiple choice questionnaire (20 questions) and an analytical question that encompasses several aspects of the course.

Participation and preparedness: 10%

Included in this grade is weekly homework, which involves following current news and events in Europe and France and participating in discussions during each class session. This grade also takes into account the quality of a student’s presence in class, energy, relevance of comments, attendance and punctuality.

Attendance Policy

1 absence in class, a required activity or in-class presentation	=-1 point on your final grade
More than 3 unexcused absences	= F for the course
Unsubmitted written work Absence for a presentation or exam Plagiarism	= F (0 points) for the assignment in question



**Excused absences = absence for illness excused by the certificate of a French doctor or an internship interview
Documentation to be submitted to Renée 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 whole unexcused absence.
Late arrivals to class will impact the class participation grade.*
- *Late submission of written work will entail a penalty on the assignment grade
Written work submitted more than a week late will not receive credit (grade =F).*

Plagiarism – Official BU policy

All students are responsible for having read the Boston University statement on plagiarism, which is available in the Academic Conduct Code. Students are advised that the penalty against students on a Boston University program for cheating on the examinations or for plagiarism may be ‘expulsion from the program or the University or such other penalty as may be recommended by the Committee on Student Academic Conduct, subject to approval by the dean’.

Grading conversion (out of 100)

FINAL GRADE FOR THE COURSE		GRADES FOR INDIVIDUAL COMPONENTS/ASSIGNMENTS							
93-100 : A	77-79,5 : C+	A+ = 97	B+/A- = 89,5	C+/B- = 79,5	D+/C- = 69,5	A = 95	B = 85	C = 75	D = 65
90-92,5 : A-	73-76,5 : C	A/A+ = 96	B+ = 88	C+ = 78	D+ = 68	A/A- = 92,5	B/B+ = 86,5	C/C+ = 76,5	D/D+ = 66,5
87-89,5 : B+	70-72,5 : C-	A- = 91	B- = 81	C- = 71	D- = 61	A-/A- = 92,5	B-/B- = 82,5	C/C- = 72,5	D/D- = 62,5
83-86,5 : B	69-60 : D	A-/B+ = 89,5	B-/C+ = 79,5	C-/D+ = 69,5	F = 55	A- = 91	B- = 81	C- = 71	D- = 61
80-82,5 : B-	59,5-0 : F								

Academic Conduct

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Plagiarism (BU Policy)

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III. CALENDAR

(oral presentations will be adapted according to the final number of students)

A **Session 16** will be added and will consist of a late afternoon visit/attendance to a political gathering or ceremony.

Session 1. The architectural institutionalisation of politics (September 1: Friday)

Walk within the Paris political district

Meeting point: metro Champs-Élysées Clémenceau, on the Champs-Élysées avenue, at the statue of De Gaulle, at 15:30

Session 2. Comparing France and Europe (September 4) (press 1)

- The epistemology of comparison
- The special features of France in question

B. Guy Peters, "Approaches in comparative politics", in Daniele Caramani, *Comparative Politics*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 3rd ed., 2014, pp. 34-46.

Session 3. The individuality of the European system (September 6) (press 2)

- The origin of European states
- Common traits between European political systems

Arend Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy*, Yale University Press, 2nd ed., 2012, chapters 1, 2, 3, pp. 1-45.

Session 4. Diversity within European systems (September 11) (press 1)

- The main divisions of comparative analysis
- Approaches to political science from Lijphart to Tsebelis

Andrew Roberts, "What Kind of Democracy Is Emerging in Eastern Europe?", *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 2006, 22, 1, pp. 37-64.

George Tsebelis, *Veto Players*, Princeton University Press, 2002, pp. 1-37.

Session 5. Executive power (September 13) (press 2)

- Heads of State and Prime Ministers
- The rise and fall of governments

Cristian Bucur, Bjørn Erik Rasch, "Parliamentary Institutions and Portfolio Allocation in Coalition Governments", unpublished paper, 2015.

Robert Elgie, "Political Leadership in Old and New Democracies", in [Ludger Helms](#) (ed.), *Comparative Political Leadership*, Palgrave, 2012.



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Session 6. Legislatures and parliamentary politics (September 18) (press 1)

Oral presentation #1: Should the French Senate be abolished?

- Approaches to parliamentary influence
- Working vs. talking parliaments

Ulrich Sieberer (2011): The Institutional Power of Western European Parliaments: A Multidimensional Analysis, *West European Politics*, 34:4, 731-754.

Frank R. Baumgartner, Sylvain Brouard, Emiliano Grossman, Sébastien G. Lazardoux and Jonathan Moody, "Divided Government, Legislative Productivity, and Policy Change in the USA and France", *Governance*, Vol. 27, No. 3, 2014, pp. 423–447.

Session 7. The constitution, judges and the law (September 20)

Oral presentation #2: The high MP turn-over in 2017: a chance or a threat for the National Assembly?

Mid-term exam #1

- The spread of a rule-of-law structure
- Legislative procedure

John Huber & Charles Shipan (2002), *Deliberate Discretion*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, chap. 4

Session 8. Electoral systems, elections and campaigns (September 25) (press 2)

Oral presentation #3: Why did Macron win?

- Proportional representation vs. Majority rule
- Political financing

Achim Hildebrandt (2016) Who's in favour? Same-sex union laws in parliament, *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, 22:3, 404-423.

Nonna Mayer, Allison Rovny, Jan Rovny, Nivolas Sauger, "Outsiderness, Social Class, and Votes in the 2014 European Elections", *Revue européenne des sciences sociales*, 53(5), 2015, pp. 157-176.

Session 9. Political leadership (September 27) (press 1)

Oral presentation #4: Which kind of leadership is staged by Emmanuel Macron?

- Professionalization and plutocracy
- Parliamentarian roles compared

Luca Verzichelli & Maurizio Cotta, "The development of political elites in Europe", in *Routledge Handbook of European Politics*, 2014.

Lior Sheffer and Peter Loewen, "Non-Representative Representatives: An Experimental Study of the Decision Making Traits of Elected Politicians", unpublished paper, 2015.

Session 10. Parties, partisan groupings and political divides (October 2) (press 2)

Oral presentation #5: Is the socialist party dead?

- The widening and dissolution of political divides
- Questioning the political monopolies

Florence Faucher, "Leadership Elections: What is at Stake for Parties? A Comparison of the British Labour Party and the Parti Socialiste", *Parliamentary Affairs*, 2014, pp. 1–27.

Gregor Zons, "How programmatic profiles of niche parties affect their electoral performance », *West European Politics*, Vol. 39, Iss. 6, 2016, pp. 1205-1229.



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Session 11. Administration, centralization and public policy (October 4) (press 1)

Oral presentation #6: Why has France been less impacted by the refugee crisis?

Mid-term exam #2

- Types of administration
- Types of public policy
- Decentralization of power

Hélène Caune, Sophie Jacquot, Bruno Palier, “Boasting the National Model : The EU and the Welfare State Reforms in France”, in P. Graziano, S. Jacquot, B. Palier (eds), *The EU and the domestic Politics of Welfare State Reforms*, London, Palgrave, 2011, pp. 48-72.

Walter Korpi and Joakim Palme, « The paradox of redistribution and strategies of equality : Welfare State institutions, inequality, and poverty in the Western countries », *American Sociological Review*, vol.63, n°5, 1998, p.661-687.

Session 12. The crisis of representation I (October 9) (press 2)

Oral presentation #7: how can the success of the National Front be explained?

- Institutionalized disagreement
- Unconventional political participation

Hanspeter Kriesi, “The political consequences of the financial and economic crisis in Europe: electoral punishment and popular protest”, dans Larry Bartels et Nancy Bermeo (dir.), *Mass Politics in Tough Times: Opinions, Votes and Protest in the Great Recession*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014. Read up to p. 28 and then select one of the 3 cases.

Mark Blyht, Richard Katz, “ From catch-all politics to cartelisation : the political economy of the cartel party”, *West European Politics*, vol. 28, n° 1, 2005, pp. 33-60.

Session 13. Comparing the variety of capitalisms (October 11)

Essay due

Visit at the OCDE. Meeting at 9.30, 2 rue André Pascal, Paris 16.

Session 14. The rise of populism in Eastern & Western Europe (October 16)

Guest lecturer: Jan Rovny, Assistant Professor in Sciences Po

Readings to be determined

Session 15. The crisis of representation II (October 18) (press 1 & 2)

Oral presentation #8: Paris participatory budget: tool or toy?

- New forms of political involvement
- Calling e-democracy into question

GANUZA, E., NEZ, H., MORALES, E., « The Struggle for the Voice: Associations against Citizens in Participatory Budgeting », in *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 38.6, 2014, pp. 2274-91.

Meg Russell & Philip Cowley, “The Policy Power of the Westminster Parliament: The “Parliamentary State” and the Empirical Evidence”, *Governance*, Vol. 29, No. 1, 2016, pp. 121–137.

FINAL EXAM (October 20)



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IV. ADDITIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

Required Reading:

Arend Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy*, Yale University Press, 2nd ed., 2012, chapters 1, 2, 3.

Supplementary Readings:

Tim Bale, *European Politics*, Palgrave, 3rd ed., 2013.

Daniele Caramani (dir.), *Comparative Politics*, Oxford University Press, 3rd ed., 2014.

Michael Gallagher, Michael Laver, Peter Mair, *Representative Government in Europe*, Mc Graw Hill, 5th ed., 2011.

Kenneth Newton and Jan W. Van Deth, *Foundations of Comparative Politics*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 3rd ed. 2016.