This course enables students to discover and deepen their understanding of the principal elements of France’s contemporary political and institutional systems. It aims to define political French culture of the 5th Republic as well as current political events.

Particular emphasis is placed on the role of the President of the Republic, both through this office’s formal power and practices as well as the direct presidential elections. The course will help students examine the specificities and possible controversies linked to the great influence of the President over French politics. Notions of constitutional rights, political science and sociology will be called upon. This course aims to help students master these different disciplines in a broad and complementary fashion.

In-class work is complemented by following current political events. Each class will begin with a 30-minute collective discussion about the main events of the week. To prepare, students are asked to read the weekly magazine *L'Express*, as well as one of the following daily newspapers: *Le Monde*, *Libération*, or *Le Figaro*. The internet sites of these newspapers allow access to the entire article.

Reading and discussing French academic texts about the President will be particularly emphasized. The texts have been selected in order to grasp a diversity of views (constitutional law, electoral sociology, political anthropology, international relations...).

Last but not least, particular attention will be paid to the newly-elected President, François Hollande, by examining the connections of the related policies, strategies and events to a broader notion of political science.

**Books and materials**
*L’Express* (weekly magazine);
Recommended reading: *Le Monde*, *Libération*, *Le Figaro* (via their websites)

**Examples of visits:**
Jean Moulin Museum, Charles de Gaulle Historial, Mont Valérien, political rallies.

**Examples of Guest Lecturers:**
Cédric Moreau de Bellaing, « Violent political participation in France - in decline or on the rise?”; Nora El Kadim, « Sarkozy’s strategy toward migration ».
Grading
Students will be graded on a number of levels. Aside from the midterm and final exams, students will be split into two groups and will alternate in writing summaries about class readings, which will be collected by the professor. Students must also prepare an 8 minute oral presentation with accompanying texts, and a 3-page essay. Outside research, however, is essential.

Class participation: 15%
Oral presentation: 25%
Written assignment: 15%
Midterm: 15%
Final: 30%

Attendance Policy
See PIP policy on absences and tardiness

Bibliography