



Boston University Study Abroad
Paris

CAS PO 240 Paris Politique

Prerequisite: CAS LF 212, college 4th semester French, or placement test equivalence

Credits: 4

Hub Units: **Social Inquiry 1 (1 unit)**
Global Citizenship and Intercultural Literacy (1 unit)

Schedule: 16 two-and-a-half-hour sessions over 7.5 weeks
(2 weekly sessions + 2 additional sessions)

Course visits (examples):

- Walking tour of Parisian political sites and institutions
- Visits to different Parisian revolutionary sites
- Attendance at political rallies / social protests (when applicable)

Course material:

- Course pack with all required and suggested readings to be purchased by the student.
- Websites to read regularly:
 - www.vie-publique.fr; www.ladocfrancaise.fr, Cairn (academic articles)
 - Le Monde Diplomatique (monthly); Revue Française de Science Politique (bi-monthly); Raison Politique (quarterly)
 - Radio France (France Culture; France Inter)
 - Le Monde, Libération, le Figaro, MediaPart, 20 Minutes, (daily)
 - Le Canard Enchaîné ; Charlie Hebdo (satirical)

Assessment for the course:

- Contribution and Press Review (20%)
- Midterm exam (20%)
- Oral presentation (20%)
- Essay and Round Table (40%)

Out-of-class workload:

- Mandatory readings for each session. About 10 pages in French per session.
- Press review on topical event for one session out of two.
- In-depth research for the oral presentation
- In-depth research for the essay

In-class sessions alternate between lectures illustrated with slides, group discussions about readings and press reviews, students' presentations, and are supplemented by commented group visits.

The course is accessible to students with no previous experience in Political science.
The course, including seminars and visits, is conducted entirely in French.

I. COURSE PRESENTATION

It is often said that “everything is political”. This is particularly true in France where political debates, discussions, controversies are everywhere, from places of power to cafés, not to mention social media. So one of the best ways to integrate into French society is to understand French politics, and in turn be able to participate in discussions about politics.

Thus the very goal of this course is to encourage and allow students to think about France politically, here and now. This encompasses three major approaches: knowledge, experience, reflection.

Knowledge

Throughout this course, students will deepen their understanding of French society through learning about its political institutions and its civil society today - and the impact of the European Union on interior politics. But since culturally all political or public debates in France refer to history, students will also get familiar with historical landmarks which have constituted paradigm shifts in French history and have had lasting repercussions: their effects can still be felt today. Thus, this course will be divided according to three aspects of the country's life, associated with four major historic landmarks:

- Institutional → The French Revolution (1789)
- Social → The Paris Commune (1871) and The Popular Front (1936)
- Societal → May 1968

Experience

This course also aims to encourage students to get involved in current political life. This will be done empirically through visits of political sites or areas in Paris where political life happens, but also through the regular use of media. Students will get familiar with all types of popular French media, use them regularly for press reviews, learn about their political orientations, analyze political biases and uncover implied meanings. Special emphasis will be placed on the current main events related to the French – and European - political and social agenda. Students will thus become active in their approach to current political, social as well as societal debates in France.

Reflection

In the light of the above, students will examine the notion of a much-cited “crisis of democracy.” To what extent are French political institutions dysfunctional? Is there a growing divide between the French government and the French people? In this context, how do we understand the great difficulties experienced by the last presidencies? This reflection will be facilitated by regular comparison with the political and social constructs students are used to, be it in the United States or other countries they have lived in.

II. HUB AREAS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

Hub area: Social Inquiry I (1 unit)

1. Students will apply their knowledge of essential milestones in French history as well as their understanding of political notions such as the difference between Left and Right, of social notions such as the Welfare State, of societal notions related to gender, discrimination, immigration, to explain the current state of French society and to reflect on the concept of Democracy. This will be done through their regular work on French current news as well as through their thematic work, including an oral presentation, an essay and participation in a final round table political discussion.

Hub Area: Global Citizenship and Intercultural literacy – Outcomes 1 & 2 (1 unit)

1. Students will demonstrate, through regular comparison between the American and French political and social systems, an understanding of the differences among both countries (and others) existing in institutions, in the role of the State and the social system, as well as in the ways common societal issues are differently addressed or major concepts such as Democracy, secularism, freedom are defined.
2. By remaining informed on French current realities, through their experiential approach of their daily environment and of the media, students will become active actors of French political life.

Specific outcomes

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

- a general knowledge of the French political system: the major stages of constitutional history since 1789, the characteristics of a constitutional system, striking aspects of political life (parties, elections, voters), the French "service public" (Welfare State) as well as contemporary issues (LGBTQIA+ and women's rights, police brutality, xenophobia, racism);
- an understanding of French political current events and their implications and familiarity with French political press, through regular oral press reviews discussed in class.
- the ability to analyze the advantages and limitations of French democracy and to evaluate the state of democracy through a comparative approach;
- a multidisciplinary insight of political science; the ability to compare American and French systems in their political function and in the ideals of democracy they promote, thus the capacity to view the American political system under a new light;
- the ability to read, understand and critically analyze political science academic texts written in French and 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.

III. ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

Contribution & Press Review: 20%

Included in this grade is weekly homework, which involves following current news and events in Paris and France and participating in discussions on current events during each session.

Midterm exam: 20%

The midterm exam will focus on knowledge and understanding of the French institutional political system and will consist of specific factual questions.

THEMATIC WORK

At the beginning of the semester, each student will choose a theme related to French political life, on which to focus during the whole course by remaining informed of its current treatment in the press and public opinion. This theme will be the subject of both the oral presentation and the essay. Students' findings and reflections will be shared during a final collective round table political discussion.

Oral presentation: 20%

Each student will prepare a 10-15 minute presentation responding to a given question on a current political reality of contemporary France. This assignment aims to relate the theoretical themes of the session to current events. Presentations will serve as an introduction of the theme studied on that day to the class.

Essay & Round table: 40%

The essay will build on the topic studied for the oral presentation, developing a critical analysis on a specific focus and complementary research, determined with the professor's guidance, in a 600-word paper. The essay also allows students to develop their written French in an academic context. In order to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the contradictory stands on a subject, students are required to convey academic references but also collect throughout the semester articles from the mainstream press. Essays thus will have theoretical introductions and analytical conclusions, which will be collectively shared during a final round table and discussion.

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
90-92,5 :	A-	73-76,5 :	C	A/A+	=	96	B+	=	88	C+	=	78	D+	=	68
87-89,5 :	B+	70-72,5 :	C-	A	=	95	B/B+	=	86,5	C/C+	=	76,5	D/D+	=	66,5
83-86,5 :	B	69-60 :	D	A/A-	=	92,5	B	=	85	C	=	75	D	=	65
80-82,5 :	B-	59,5-0 :	F	A/A-	=	92,5	B/B-	=	82,5	C/C-	=	72,5	D/D-	=	62,5
				A-	=	91	B-	=	81	C-	=	71	D-	=	61
				A-/B+	=	89,5	B-/C+	=	79,5	C-/D+	=	69,5	F	=	55

BU Paris Attendance Policy

Our program is subject to French student visa laws where an active student status is mandatory. As the sponsor of your visa, Boston University has the legal obligation to ensure that you comply with visa requirements. If you do not attend classes or your internship as required, you will be considered to be in breach of your visa and can be deported. Any student who does not comply with this policy may be sent home from the program at the discretion of the program director, and may, as a result, forfeit credit and program costs for part or all of the semester.

1 absence (courses* or internship**)	= -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

*Courses: class sessions, exposé preparation, in-class presentation

** Internship: EUSA meetings, BU Paris workshops, work placement schedule

EXCUSED ABSENCES = - Absence for illness excused by the *certificate of a French doctor*
 - Internship interview
 - OFII medical visit (must have *convocation*)
 - Professional imperative that conflicts with academic workshop

Documentation to be submitted to buparis@bu.edu 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*.
- *Leaving class* before it ends is considered as tardiness.
- *Late submission* of written work will entail a penalty on the assignment grade.
- Written work submitted *more than a week late* or *after final exams* will not receive credit (grade =F).

Students who do not complete a course on time will be given an F.

There are **no withdrawals** from classes, the internship nor the internship course.

PLAGIARISM – OFFICIAL BU POLICY

Simply stated, plagiarism is taking another's work and presenting it as your own. It is, in fact, intellectual theft. It is one of the most serious forms of academic misconduct. Plagiarism committed by a student will certainly result in course failure and may result in suspension or dismissal. It can take many forms, including reproduction of published material without acknowledgement, or representing work done by others as your own. This includes the increasing common practice of purchasing and downloading work from the Internet "paper mills". Plagiarism applies to all media – printed matter of all kinds, video, audio, and oral presentation. Even unacknowledged paraphrasing or use of another's methodology, structure or management of material is plagiarism. You must use quotation when quoting even if you do the translating yourself.

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'. Read the full Academic Conduct Code online at: <http://www.bu.edu/academics/policies/academic-conduct-code/>

IV. INDICATIVE CALENDAR

Readings will be specified in the updated syllabus students will receive once in Paris.

Session	Topics	Assignments and Activities	Readings
PART ONE: The French Revolution and Institutions in France			
Session 1	VISIT Guided walking tour of Parisian political institutions and revolutionary sites		
Session 2	Introduction of the course and its goals The French Revolution and its outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - France's Republican regime - Democracy in France - Constitutional history of France Methodology: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - how to read a political academic article - press review techniques 	Group activity: practice of reading and press reviewing	Preparatory readings
Session 3	Political notions of Left and Right in France <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Left and Right in political institutions - Left and Right in the media Methodology: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - how to read a mainstream press article 	- Current events (group 1)	Preparatory readings
Session 4	The Fifth Republic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Major phases of the Fifth Republic - Presidential power Methodology: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the oral presentation 	Group activity: oral presentation workshop	Preparatory readings
Session 5	The party system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction to political parties in France - Party politics in the Fifth Republic - Gender in French Politics - The National Assembly of 2022 - Is a Sixth Republic around the corner? Methodology: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the essay: research and writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Current events (group 2) - Essay: Choose your theme Group activity: analysis of campaign posters and presidential portraits	Preparatory readings
Session 6	MIDTERM EXAM Followed by a VISIT (the Accent Center area and its recent political meaning)		
PART TWO: Social Uprisings and Conquests			
Session 7	A Brief History of Social Uprisings in France <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Paris Commune and its legacy - The Popular Front - The culture of streets' politics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Current events (group 1) - Oral presentation 1: Political Uprisings in France (choice of one uprising OR synthesis of main uprisings) 	Preparatory readings
Session 8	Legacies of 1936 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The French social system - The Trade Unions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Current events (group 2) - Oral presentation 2: The social system: France vs US (comparison of welfare system OR of trade unions in both countries) 	Preparatory readings
Session 9	VISIT: The Père Lachaise Cemetery (Mur des Fédérés)		
Session 10	The French Social System confronting Neoliberalism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Paris 1979 riots - The Great Strike of 1995 - The CPE student riots (2006) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Oral presentation 3: Presentation of one of the riots or strikes - Essay: hand in excerpt and first bibliography 	Preparatory readings

	- The Yellow-Vest Movement (2018 -)		
PART THREE: Societal Shifts			
Session 11	May 1968 - Worker and student's strikes - The student movement - May's outcomes	- Current events (group 1) - Oral presentation 4: a choice of events or aspects of May 68	Preparatory readings
Session 12	French Post-68 Society - Changes in the School System - Value changes - French values and globalization	- Current events (group 2) - Oral presentation 5: French values in a globalized world	Preparatory readings.
Session 13	VISIT and discussion (TBD)	- Essay : 1st draft due	
Session 14	Recent Issues - "Race" and racism in French society - Republican Universalism versus Culturalism (non-exhaustive list)	- Oral presentation 6 : French universalism	Preparatory readings
Session 15	Recent Issues - Subjects to be determined by current events	- Oral presentation 7 : Choice of a current debate in French society	
Session 16	CONCLUSION & ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION Oral presentation of essays and political discussion about the state of democracy in France		
Last Friday	FINAL ESSAY DUE		

V. ADDITIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

- CARCASSONNE, Guy, *La Constitution*. Paris: Poitns, 16ème éd., 2022.
- DUHAMEL, Olivier, *Le pouvoir politique en France*. Paris : Seuil, 5ème éd., 2003.
- GUNTHER (de), B. MARTIN, A. NIOGRET, M. *Les Institutions de la France*. Paris : Nathan coll. Repères Pratiques, 2007.
- FRANCOIS, Bastien, *Le régime politique de la Ve République*, Paris, La Découverte (coll. Repères), 2011.
- HASTINGS, Michel, *Aborder la science politique*. Paris : Seuil, 1997.
- HAUDEGAND, Nelly, LEFÉBURE, Pierre (dir.), *Dictionnaire des questions politiques - 60 enjeux de la France contemporaine*. Paris : Éditions de l'Atelier, 2000.
- LAMBERT F., LEFRANC S., *50 fiches pour comprendre la science politique*. Paris : Bréal, 2014.
- Les Cahiers français*, numéro consacré à : « La Ve République, évolutions et débats », n° 332, mai-juin 2006.
- MENY, Yves, *Le système politique français*, Paris, LGDJ, 7ème éd., 2019.