CAS PO 240 Paris Politique

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

Professors: David Vauclair
Schedule: 16 two-and-a-half-hour sessions over 7.5 weeks
(2 weekly sessions + 2 additional sessions)
Office hours: Weekly and by appointment

Course visits (examples):
- Walking tour of Parisian political sites and institutions
- Visit to the Charles de Gaulle exhibition at the Musée de l’Armée
- Attendance at a political rally (when applicable)

Course material:
- Course pack with all required and suggested readings to be purchased by the student.
- Websites to read regularly:
  o www.vie-publique.fr
  o www.ladocfrancaise.fr

I. COURSE PRESENTATION AND OUTCOMES

This course allows students to discover and deepen their understanding of the primary elements of institutional and political life in contemporary France, with a special focus on the state of French democracy today. Specifically, we 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 Presidents? Special emphasis will also be placed on the current main events related to the French political calendar.

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

Outcomes

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

- a thorough knowledge of the French political system: the major stages of constitutional history since 1789, the specificities of a constitutional system, certain striking aspects of political life (parties, elections, voters) and contemporary issues (women, police, xenophobia);
- 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, combining history, constitutional law, electoral sociology, political elite sociology and political anthropology; the ability to compare American, European 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.

II. ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

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 class to current events.

Essay: 20%
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 to be handed in one week after the oral presentation. The essay also allows students to develop their written French in an academic context.

Midterm exam: 20%

Final exam: 30%

Participation and preparedness: 10%
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 in each class session. This grade also takes into account the quality of a student’s presence in class, energy, relevance of comments, effort and progress in language proficiency, and attendance and punctuality.

Grading conversion (out of 100)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FINAL GRADE FOR THE COURSE</th>
<th>GRADES FOR INDIVIDUAL COMPONENTS/ASSIGMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>93-100 : A</td>
<td>B+/A- = 89,5 C+/B- = 79,5 D+/C- = 69,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-92,5 : A-</td>
<td>A+ = 97 B+ = 88 C+ = 78 D+ = 68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87-89,5 : B+</td>
<td>A/A+ = 96 B/B+ = 86,5 C/C+ = 76,5 D/D+ = 66,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83-86,5 : B</td>
<td>A = 95 B = 85 C = 75 D = 65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-82,5 : B-</td>
<td>A/A- = 92,5 B/B- = 82,5 C/C- = 72,5 D/D- = 62,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79,5-0 : F</td>
<td>A- = 91 B- = 81 C- = 71 D- = 61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A-/B+ = 89,5 B-/C+ = 79,5 C-/D+ = 69,5 F = 55</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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/
### III. CALENDAR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PART ONE</th>
<th>DEMOCRACY AND REPUBLIC IN FRANCE</th>
<th>Assignments and Activities</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Session 1</td>
<td><strong>Visit:</strong> Guided walking tour of Parisian political institutions and important sites</td>
<td>- Group activity: analysis of the Constitution - Current events (group 1)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Session 2 | What is democracy?  
- Varying definitions  
- Democracy in France  
- Constitutional history of France | |
| Session 3 | Values of the French Republic  
- Does a republican model exist?  
- Republic and nation  
- Liberté, égalité, fraternité | - Group activity: analysis of the Constitution - Current events (group 1) |

**Required reading:**

**Suggested reading:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PART TWO</th>
<th>DEMOCRACY, AN INSTITUTIONALIZED REGIME</th>
<th>Assignments and Activities</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| Session 4 | The Fifth Republic  
- Major phases of the Fifth Republic  
- Presidential power  
- The five-year term | - Group activity: analysis of municipal campaign posters and official presidential portraits - Current events (group 2) |

**Required reading:**

**Suggested reading:**

| Session 5 | **Visit (TBD)** | |

| Session 6 | Weakness of opposing powers  
- Parliament: weakness and resurrection  
- Judicial nomination  
- Europe: limits and opportunities | - Current events (group 1) |

**Required reading:**

**Suggested reading:**
| Session 7 | The law in France  
- Legal domain |  
Required reading:  
Suggested reading:  
- Current events (group 2) |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **PART THREE** | **ELECTIONS AND POLITICAL LIFE** | **MIDTERM EXAM**  
- Oral presentations briefing |
| Session 8 | Political notions of the left and right in France |  
- Oral presentation #1: Is *Le Front national* becoming normalized?  
- Current events (group 1) |
| Session 9 | The party system  
- Introduction to political parties in France  
- Party politics in the Fifth Republic  
- From polarization to bipartisanship? |  
Required reading:  
Suggested reading:  
- Oral presentation #2: Why did François Hollande win the 2012 presidential election?  
- Current events (group 2) |
| Session 10 | The French vote  
- Voting and abstention in France  
- Voting and social groups  
- Electoral geography |  
Required reading:  
Suggested reading:  
- Oral presentation #3: Analysis of social movements related to the vote on universal marriage in 2012  
- Current events (group 1) |
| Session 11 | New forms of political participation  
- The referendum and participatory democracy  
- Electronic democracy  
- The crisis of representative democracy |  
Required reading:  
Suggested reading:  
- Oral presentation #4: Analysis of social movements related to the vote on universal marriage in 2012  
- Current events (group 1) |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PART FOUR</th>
<th>PUBLIC DEBATE IN FRANCE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Session 12</td>
<td>Internal security</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Guest lecturer: Cédric Moreau de Bellaing, PhD, Lecturer at the Ecole Normale Supérieure, will speak about political violence in France, specifically regarding the 2005 riots in the Parisian suburbs, and the political reaction to such events and behaviors.</td>
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<td>- Current events (group 2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session 13</td>
<td>Women in French democracy</td>
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<td>- Women’s suffrage: a belated right to vote</td>
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<td>- Difficulties in accessing power</td>
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<td>- Parity and republican universalism</td>
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<td>- Oral presentation #4: Was the transition of power in 2012 beneficial to women in France?</td>
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<td>- Current events (group 1)</td>
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<td>Session 14</td>
<td>French values</td>
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<td>- Resistance to globalization</td>
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<td>- Decline in authoritarian values</td>
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<tr>
<td>- The crisis of confidence</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Suggested reading:</strong></td>
<td>Etienne Schweisguth, « Valeurs et attitudes politiques en Europe », dans Pascal Perrineau et Luc Rouban (dir.), <em>La politique en France et en Europe...</em>, pp. 35-60.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Oral presentation #5: Is there still a “exception française” in politics?</td>
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<td>-ESSAY: final deadline</td>
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<td>- Current events (group 2)</td>
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<td>Session 15</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
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<td>- Synthesis and review for Final Exam</td>
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<td>Session 16</td>
<td>Visit (TBD)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Last Friday</td>
<td>FINAL EXAM</td>
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</tbody>
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IV. ADDITIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

**Textbook**


**Websites**

www.vie-publique.fr  
www.ladocfrancaise.fr

**Additional readings**