



IFE course syllabus

Course title

French Politics and the Evolving State, since Napoleon

Course taught by

Thérèse Krempp

Holding degrees from the Sorbonne and the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences (EHESS), Thérèse Krempp is a specialist of the First World War and the societal upheavals resulting from four years of war. Currently she is researching wartime discovery of difference and otherness, drawing on the model of military-scientific expeditions of the 19th century. A recognized expert in her field, Thérèse publishes her findings in specialized journals as well as being called upon for expertise in museum exhibits or publications for the general public.

Purpose of the course

This course presents a multifaceted France constructed by the juxtaposition of diverse spheres. The history of this construction is an arduous one of conflict and constant change. By focusing on evolving institutions, the course helps students grasp the political struggles out of which the French State arose and developed its current form.

Class discussion plays an important role in this course, as students are encouraged to interact with the material not only to consolidate their grasp of the subject but also as a way to analyze events, explore causality and therefore discover the complexity and subtlety of historical analysis.

Students become familiar with the mainstays of French academic literature on modern French political history.

Description of the course

Since French political institutions today can only be understood in the light of an inherited past, this course pays particular attention to fundamental developments during the 19th century, using a novel approach to study of that period. The years 1815-1870 is an essential, groundbreaking period for French political life not only in terms of the rise of a parliamentary system but also due to the new emphasis placed on social questions and on economic development. After the French-German war of 1870, the Third Republic founded the “*modèle républicain*” and the attendant political culture and crises lasting until WWI. From 1918 this model was fully established, and the rest of the century saw the impact of the major figure of DeGaulle as the savior of the nation and its independence on the world stage, the modernization of the State, the effects of social upheaval after 1968, and the advent of economic crisis and inequality in France under François Mitterand despite hopeful beginnings when he came to power. The current century has seen inequality and economic strain increase resulting from and in an unraveling of the republican model inherited from the era of Resistance and Liberation.

This course meets approximately 32 hours, including mandatory site visits.

Outcomes

1. In addition to the fundamental outcomes relative to the course subject matter per se, as listed in the rubric “Purpose of the Course” above, this course is designed to enable students to develop the following “applied outcomes”:
 - understand the interactions between the political sphere (institutions, laws, political life) and the social sphere (behaviors, values,...) in France
 - acquire a sense of what it is to live in the French (Fifth) Republic through knowledge of the long difficult process of its development
 - become familiar with key concepts like laïcité, jacobinism, decentralization, etc.
 - recognize main figures in modern France and their contribution
 - appreciate the French habit of analyzing the past for confronting current issues

- acquire an informed-citizen's grasp of current events, issues and their context while learning the differences that may exist between political systems and values
- understand Alsatian specificity in French and European history
- acquire French vocabulary in historical and political subjects
- become familiar with French news media
- develop oral skills of presentation, debate and exchange, in French
- master the use of French for the specific purpose of being able to engage professionally with the issues of the day and to produce useful texts in a work setting
- learn the use of European methodology for structuring argumentation and marshaling relevant information.

2. Contribution to outcomes of an integrated program of study

The IFE semester is a fully integrated whole, academically. An important set of outcomes of this and every course comprising an IFE preparatory session is the repertory of skills and knowledge acquired in order to succeed in the next phase of the semester. Students as they enter the internship phase will know how – in French – to make oral presentations, write *dissertations*, organize material according to a standard methodology, comprehend oral material, take notes in a meeting, discuss the issues of the day, understand the work of their host organization in its societal context, and so forth. The result is a student-intern's readiness to take fuller advantage of the field experience opportunity including as a research terrain thus enhancing the final academic exercise, the 30-page guided independent field research paper (qv), the keystone of the IFE integrated semester.

3. Outcomes in the context of a program of experiential learning

Outcomes are essentially seized learning opportunities. Experiential learning outcomes result from the opportunity to study a subject both *in situ* as well as in words and in theory. At IFE, cultural and linguistic otherness enhances both factors of the experiential education equation, yielding the final, fundamental intended outcomes of comparative knowledge strengthening a student's grasp on a particular subject and discipline, along with robust language skills, and the knowledge of the world and of oneself that comes from having learned to operate effectively with and in otherness.

Pedagogical methods

1. Lecture-seminars whereby each two-hour class meeting is devoted to a specific theme, including lecture presentation of new material reinforced by in-class tools such as powerpoints, videos and readings (including some materials to be reviewed by students in preparation for class). Small class size allows for questions and some discussion.
2. Discussion or "workshop" sessions (*travaux pratiques*, a standard part of European university pedagogy), designed to assist students in assimilating the information and knowledge transmitted during the lecture-seminar sessions and applying it to current events and issues. Typical exercises include:
 - a review of national press on specific subjects linking course material with current events
 - short student oral presentations on selected subjects
 - a detailed draft outline as if for a dissertation on a topic of current debate.
3. Site visits, encounters with civil society actors, and other activities; these may include, for example:
 - Strasbourg Historical museum (local, national and German sources)
 - A guided visit of the historic city center (German heritage, religious heritage).

Participation in these course-related visits and activities is mandatory. These activities are prepared in advance and debriefed and commented afterwards, in workshop sessions. Material presented during these activities is part of the body of material on which students may be tested.

Course outline

1815-1871: Inheritances, political instability, economic development

- Gaining perspective on the inheritance of the past
- A difficult political construction
- Economic development

1871-1914: The founding of the Republic

- Domestic political life: establishing and consolidating the Republic
- International politics (colonization and international relations)
- France of the *Belle Epoque*

1914-1939: The Republic takes root

- The first world war
- The inter-war period

1939-1958: Military disaster and weak institutions

- France during WWII
- The Fourth Republic and its uncertainties
- Economic prosperity and political weakness

Since 1958: The Fifth République

- The contradictions of an established system
- World crisis and political consequences
- The Fifth Republic showing its age

The Jacobin model and centralization

- The Jacobinism of the French Révolution and its applications
- Jacobinism partially called into question: Decentralization

Laïcité: The question of religion in France

- Inheritance and contributions from the French Revolution
- The Third Republic and the separation of Church and State
- The stakes of *Laïcité* in the 21st century: The French model in the face of the European Human Rights Court

Suggested bibliography

Atlas de l'histoire de France, Aurélie Boissière, Paris, Belin, 2012, 480 pages.

Histoire de l'Europe contemporaine : de l'héritage du XIXe siècle à l'Europe d'aujourd'hui, Serge Berstein et Pierre Milza, Paris, Hatier, 2002, 447 pages.

Les cultures politiques en France, sous la direction de Serge Berstein, Paris, Seuil, 1999, 407 pages.

Histoire de la France au XXe siècle, Serge Berstein et Pierre Milza, Bruxelles, Editions Complexe, 5 volumes, 1990-1995.

Manuel d'histoire politique de la France contemporaine, Frédéric Bluche, Paris, puf, 2008, 296 pages.

La France de 1914 à nos jours, Jean-François Sirinelli, Paris puf, 2004, 576 pages.

La France de 1848 à 1870, Jean Garrigues, Paris, Armand Colin, 2002, 192 pages.

La France et les débuts de la IIIe République (1870-1896), Frédéric Lejeune, Paris, Armand Colin, 2011, 240 pages.

La France de la Belle Epoque 1896-1914, Dominique Lejeune, Paris, Armand Colin, 2011, 240 pages.

La Grande Guerre des Français 1914-1918, Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, Paris, Perrin, 2003, 515 pages.

La France dans la Deuxième Guerre mondiale, Yves Durand, Paris, Armand Colin, 2011, 224 pages.

Histoire politique de la France depuis 1945, Jean-Jacques Becker, Paris, Armand Colin, 2011, 280 pages.

La France du temps présent : 1945-2005, Michelle Zancarini-Fournel, Paris, Belin, 2010, 653 pages

Grading methods

There are two in-class written examinations:

- a one-hour examination mid-way through the preparatory session comprising multiple-choice and short-answer questions (20% of the final grade)
- a two-hour final examination taking the form of a dissertation, or long essay in which the student – on the subject given for the examination – first constructs a specific question to be examined and then proceeds to do so in a formal, well-structured manner, drawing on and thereby demonstrating a certain master of course material (30% of final grade).

A sample examination subject for this course: *1815-1939: Birth and consolidation of the French Republic*

Class preparation and participation in the lecture-seminar sessions are taken into account in assessing the grade for this part of the course.

Grades for the various exercises of the workshop section, taking into account active participation in all class sessions and course-related visits and activities, are averaged to assess a grade for these aspects of the course (50% of final grade).

A note on grading – IFE teachers use a standard grading system based on a scale of 20. The final grade is also transposed into an American letter grade according to a scale of equivalence, and both grades are displayed.

The grade assessed for written work reflects the degree of acquisition of the information and knowledge presented during the course as well as how well the extent to which the methodology is followed. Since the language of instruction and examination is not the student's own language, the quality of the written expression only enters into account in cases of noteworthy progress or, on the contrary, repeated and avoidable errors and carelessness.

Those who grade IFE students' work are guided by the principle that this course – in its several parts – is not intended to train specialists in French history or politics. Therefore, evaluation of student work pays particular attention to knowledge gained during the five weeks of the preparatory session, demonstrated curiosity and a student's motivation to apply this knowledge to their experience and to gaining new perspectives, including on their home culture and society.

Grading scale

A+	18 - 20/20	B+	14/20	C+	10/20
A	16 - 17/20	B	13/20	C	9/20
A-	15/20	B-	11 - 12/20	C-	8/20

Equivalent in American university course offerings

Political History of Modern France, History of the French State