



## IFE course syllabus

---

### Course title

**The Foundations of French Politics, Policies, and Institutions, Yesterday and Today**

### Course taught by

Pascal Cauchy is Professor of History at the Institut d'Études Politiques de Paris ("Sciences Po") and Visiting Professor at the State University of Moscow. Pascal also served Sciences Po as Dean of International Studies and is currently attached to that institution's Center for History both as researcher and administrator. Pascal joined Sciences Po after nine years of research and teaching in Moscow and is a specialist in the historiography of communism. He has published "A History of the IVth Republic" (Presses Universitaires de France) and is currently researching the work of Blandine Kriegel, a historian of communism.

### Purpose of the course

The purpose of this course is to help students grasp fundamental notions of French society and State today by studying the roots and the development of the main institutions and concepts of French political life. This course in turn contributes to the overall purpose of the IFE preparatory session which is to equip students to participate as fully as possible in French professional life and social and political discussion. It should be seen as a companion course to "Structure, Transformation and Crises in French Society".

The course aims at a thorough familiarity with the politically and institutionally constitutive elements of contemporary France by examining how history shaped institutions and outlooks which in turn shape France today. This includes an understanding of the interactions between the political/institutional sphere and social structures. Students also come to understand France's role in the world, perceived and real, past and present. Students become familiar with the mainstays of French academic literature on these subjects.

### Description of the course

The course is taught in two parts, or "modules", the first one focusing on the foundations and structures of the French State and the second on the French State in a European and international context from a historical perspective.

As a survey for non-specialists, the course adopts a hybrid chronological-thematic approach to looking at the major notions of the state and the nation, since the Revolution. Founding principles, the rapid institutional developments of the 19th century, the effects of 20th century upheavals, and other themes are treated in turn.

This course meets approximately 48 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":
  - grasp the French political process and the specific characteristics of the French "République"
  - recognize main figures in modern France and their contribution
  - 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
  - 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.
3. Site visits, encounters with civil society actors, and other activities; these may include, for example:
  - A lecture-visit to the Shoah Memorial, in conjunction with the theme of France during WWII
  - A guided visit to the Pantheon, in conjunction with the theme of history, heritage, memory and identity.

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

- I **Introduction / Nation and State.** The concept of the Nation was born of the French Revolution, but it took all of the 19th century to develop the habits and institutions of the French Nation-State and of citizenship (right to vote, political party membership, etc.). Revolts, international conflicts and difficult successions all helped forge these new institutions, while the State also played a role in forming a political identity.
- II **The French Revolution.** This lesson is devoted to one of the founding events of French political and social life. An examination of the major moments of the Revolution and their importance as central political events on which have been founded a new legal system, complex institutions and a thoroughly renovated social organization.
- III **The Advent and Impact of the Modern Era.** The transformations taking place at the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th century constituted the framework of a new society. A look at the main aspects of the legal and institutional inheritance from this period.
- IV **The France of the 19th Century.** A panorama of French society as it traverses the 19th century.
- V **Paris in the 19th Century.** Paris holds a unique place in the history of France but it was through enormous changes in the 19th century – when Paris was the biggest urban renewal project in Europe – that it became the city it is today. What have been the means and the consequences of this transformation?

- VI Church and Religion.** An examination of the ties between France and religious affairs, and in particular catholicism. The principal moments in the struggle – occasionally violent – between advocates of a secular society and those still attached to a society embodying religious principles.
- VII Colonial Empire.** France came late to the colonializing process. At the end of the 19th century, the nation began to be interested in overseas expansion, at first mostly in Asia and then Africa.
- VIII The Great War.** The First World War was a very trying experience for French society. A large number of workers, especially rural workers, were lost. A consequence of the war was a strong theme of pacifism in French politics.
- IX World War II.** France began WWII with a defeat, came out of war quickly, and found itself under enemy occupation for four years. The consequences were in particular political.
- X Left and Right.** Political life in France appears to be organized around two large formations ; the institutions of the Fifth Republic reinforce this two-party effect, which was not always the case in France. What is the genealogy of left-right relations?
- XI The Gaullist Republic.** In 1958, France adopted a new constitution and began the 5th Republic. In the sixty years since there have been a number of deep changes in the initial republican model sought by General DeGaulle, such as in 1992 with the transfer of certain powers to the European Union.
- XII French Political Life Today.** A look at current political events and trends, at the time that the course is held.
- XIII France in the World.** A major European power, France re-acquired an empire at the end of the 19th century. Why and how did this happen? Six decades later the empire disappeared in two wars and various emancipation movements. This lesson examines the relations between French society and empire.

## Readings

- Historical essays:

*Histoire des Institutions et des Régimes politiques de la France de 1789 à 1958*; by Jean-Jacques - Chevallier, Armand Colin (10<sup>th</sup> Ed.) 2005

*La France de 1914 à Nos Jours*; by M. Agulhon, A. Nouchi, R Schor – Nathan, 2001

*Dictionnaire de la politique et de l'administration*, Guillaume Bernard, Jean-Pierre Deschodt, Michel Verpeaux, PUF, 2010

*Dictionnaire historique et juridique de l'Europe*, Jean-Paul Bled, Edmond Jouve, Christophe Reveillard, PUF, 2013

*Dictionnaire des relations internationales*, Dario Battistella, Franck Petiteville, Marie-Claude Smouts, Pascal Vennesson, Paris, Dalloz, 2012

*Problèmes religieux contemporains*, Alain Besançon, 2015,

*L'invention de la France*, Hervé Le Bras, Emmanuel Todd, 2012

*Etre (ou ne pas être ) républicain*, Frédéric Rouillois, 2015

*Nouvelle Histoire de la France Contemporaine*, Seuil (any recent edition)

*La Politique en France XIX-XX siècle. Régimes, institutions, élections, courants, partis, groupes de pression, médias*, by H. Néant, Hachette, 1991

*La France d'un Siècle à l'Autre, 1914-2000*, René Rémond, Hachette, 1999

- Suggested reading:

### Literature:

*Le Colonel Chabert*, by Honoré de Balzac

*Souvenirs*, Alexis de Tocqueville

*Les dieux ont soif*, Anatole France

*Qu'est-ce qu'une nation ?* Ernest Renan

*Le Hussard sur le toit*, Jean Giono

*La gloire de mon père*, Marcel Pagnol

*Si le grain ne meurt*, André Gide

*Le Rivage des Syrtes*, Julien Gracq

*Le Blé en herbe*, Colette

*Uranus*, Marcel Aymé

*Candide*, Voltaire

*Le Contrat social*, Jean-Jacques Rousseau

*Pensées*, Blaise Pascal

Theater:

*La Ville dont le prince est un enfant*, Henry de Montherlant

*L'Aigle à deux têtes*, Jean Cocteau

*Antigone*, Jean Anouilh

*Les mains sales*, Jean-Paul Sartre

Poetry:

*Poésies*, Arthur Rimbaud

*Poèmes saturniens*, Paul Verlaine

*Les Yeux d'Elsa*, Aragon

## Grading

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: *The major tools and means of French diplomacy on the world stage*

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

This course is pluridisciplinary by design. Nonetheless it roughly corresponds to a Political Science Department course in Comparative Politics or Politics and Government of France or French Political Institutions, or a History Department course such as Citizenship in France since 1789.