



Current Political Issues in France

UNH Course Code: POL362

Subject Area: Political Science

Level: 300

Prerequisites: One introductory course in Political Science

Language of Instruction: English

Contact Hours: 45 hours

Recommended Credits: 3 credits

Description

This course provides a survey and analysis of the major political, ideological, social, economic and cultural issues confronting France in the early 21st century. You will first receive an overview of France's quest for domestic political and social stability as well as international stature and cultural recognition abroad since the founding of the Fifth Republic in 1958.

You begin with a review the political history of the Fifth Republic. A study of the 1958 constitution and the considerable powers it bestows upon the President is central to this history, as is the evolution of the often confusing, ill-disciplined and chaotic party system. You will review how French institutions have changed as a result of the major political upheavals of the last thirty years—the Left's ascent to power from 1981 to 1995, the collapse of the Communist Left and rise of the Extreme Right, the painful experience of successive Cohabitation governments, the political debacle of the 2002 elections, the controversy surrounding the Sarkozy Presidency, and the Left's bid under François Hollande to return to power.

You then turn to the many political issues determining the form and substance of political debate and decision-making in France today. These include the political fallout and ramifications of the 2012 presidential and legislative elections; France's ongoing struggle to respond effectively to Greek debt and the related financial and identity crisis it is provoking in the EU; the many initiatives in France for reforming French political institutions; the current debates over what to do about unemployment, immigration, retirement, financial and fiscal regulation, cultural policies, health care, energy policy, education, housing, gender equality, discrimination; and finally what foreign policy role France can play both in sustaining European integration and in responding constructively to the Arab spring. These and related current issues figure prominently in readings and discussions and are articulated around the theme of France's ability to adapt to the changes and tensions of the 21st century.

The course concludes with a critical evaluation of France's present-day domestic political stability and social-economic health, of her international diplomatic power and cultural influence, and of her sense of identity and self-assurance.

Learning Objectives

Disciplinary and Cultural Knowledge Skills (Cognitive Skills)

- Explain the basic political chronology of France under the Fifth Republic
- Describe the basic structure of French political institutions and constitutional processes
- Account for the diversity of French party system, its evolution and present configuration
- Describe the role the French State plays in political and social organization
- Use both local and international scholarship to inform your knowledge of current political issues in France

- Situate France’s current political issues within a larger global context

Critical Thinking Skills (Oral and written)

- Use standards of critical thinking to assess and evaluate current issues in France
- Research, write and defend a critical essay on a current political issue in France
- Explain how present political, social, economic, and cultural issues are interrelated
- Comment intelligently upon France’s ability to adapt in a changing world

Attitudinal Skills (Affective)

- Develop and convey empathy for host culture attitudes to current political struggles
- Appreciate cultural differences in France’s handling of current political issues

Behavioral Skills

- Acquire and use effectively lexical skills for communicating key course-related concept with people from different cultures
- Use knowledge of local political issues to engage positively with host people and culture
- Participate in French public debate and discourse regarding current political issues.

Instructional Format

Class meets once a week for 2 ½ hours. Course work is comprised of in-class lectures and discussions, group exercises, student *exposés*, documentary films, extensive outside readings, independent group and individual onsite study, a research project, and a number of instructor-led onsite research excursions to relevant course-related sites and institutions in the city. Some onsite study will be integrated into class-time while others will be assigned as out-of-class independent learning.

Please be advised: If you require any special accommodations or have any special learning needs, please inform the instructor and the onsite academic affairs staff on the first day of class.

Forms of Assessment

The instructor will use numerous and differentiated forms of assessment to calculate the final grade you receive for this course. For the record, these are listed and weighted below. The content, criteria and specific requirements for each assessment category will be explained in greater detail in class. Whether you plan to transfer letter grades back to your home institution or not, CEA expects that you will complete all graded assessment categories in each course in which you are enrolled. In addition, your work and behavior in this course must fully conform to the regulations of the [CEA Academic Integrity Policy](#) to which you are subject. Finally, all formal written work you carry out in this course (research papers, projects, studies, etc.) must be submitted in electronic format. Your instructor may also require that you hand in a hard copy of such work.

Class Participation	10%
Quizzes (3)	15%
Midterm examination	15%
Research Presentation	10%
Research Paper	15%
Political Blog Presentations	15%
Final examination	20%

Class Participation: This grade will be calculated to reflect your participation in class discussions, your capacity to introduce ideas and thoughts dealing with the required texts, your ability to use language effectively, and your analytical skills in intellectual, constructive argumentation. When determining your class participation grade, traditional criteria such as material preparation, completed reading before class, and collaborative group work are all evaluated. But it is the active, meaningful and informed verbal and written contribution that you make that is most important to your overall participation grade. Indeed, willingness to share views in

classroom discussions and the insightfulness of your comments and questions about assigned readings will all be taken into account when evaluating your participation. Whereas attendance and punctuality are expected and will not count positively towards the grade, laxity in these areas will have a negative effect. The instructor will use the following specific criteria when calculating your class participation grade:

Criteria for Assessing Class Participation	Grade
You make major and original contributions that spark discussion, offering both critical and analytical comments clearly based on readings and research and displaying a working knowledge of theoretical issues.	A+ (9.70–10.00)
You make significant contributions that demonstrate insight as well as knowledge of required readings and independent research.	A-/A (9.00–9.69)
You participate voluntarily and make useful contributions that are usually based upon some reflection and familiarity with required readings.	B/B+ (8.40–89.90)
You make voluntary but infrequent comments that generally reiterate the basic points of the required readings.	C+/B- (7.70–8.39)
You make limited comments only when prompted and do not initiate debate or show a clear awareness of the importance of the readings.	C (7.00–7.69)
You very rarely make comments and resist engagement with the subject, attending class having manifestly done little if any preparation.	D (6.00–6.69)
You make irrelevant and tangential comments disruptive to class discussion, a result of frequent absence and complete un-preparedness.	F (0–5.90)

Quizzes:

The three quizzes test your knowledge of the texts read and concepts discussed in class. The quiz serves to help you assess whether you have understood the key concepts of discussed in class.

Research Paper: The instructor will explain in detail the specific approach and suggested content that will be integrated into your research, methodology and paper on an angle to be decided in conjunction with the instructor. You will submit to the instructor periodic updates on the progress of your research and these will count towards the overall assessment of your work.

The paper will be a 1,000 - 1,500 word essay on a topic chosen by the student in agreement with the professor, and related to a major “issue” in French politics, such as immigration, economics, education, etc. You will be expected to present and defend their conclusions in class. The particulars will be discussed at further length in class.

In this exercise, your work will be evaluated according to the tenets and principles of scholarly academic research and Standard English usage and expository writing. Therefore, ensure that you are using a recognized handbook of style, a good dictionary, and that you are guided by the highest principles of academic integrity. The instructor will supply you with additional guidelines and advice on research topics, methods and resources for successfully completing your paper in a “foreign” country. However, as a quick checklist of things to begin thinking about, the following guidelines will help you in deciding on a research topic and in planning its execution.

1. Make a clear and compelling link between your topic & course themes & issues.
2. Link your subject to the learning objectives listed above.
3. Search out a wide variety of scholarly, peer-reviewed bibliographical sources.
4. Show personal involvement in your subject in a demonstrable way.

- Use local resources and make your finished project one that could only be done in your host city.

Research Presentation: At the end of the course, each student will make an oral presentation of the findings of the research paper, supported with a PowerPoint slide presentation, and presented according to tenants of critical reasoning.

Political Blog: The instructor has created a political weblog to support the learning objectives of this course. Each student must publish a weekly posting to this blog on current political issues. These posts may be related to current events as they arise or may be related to issues you are treating in your course research paper. The instructor will call upon students in each class to present and comment upon their weekly blog post and the information you present—both in the post and in your comments—should be related to course learning objectives.

These assignments encourage you to keep informed of current political issues while reflecting upon the larger meaning behind them, both in terms of local politics but also in terms of cross-cultural comparison. Your goal in these assignments is to draw from your first-hand experience and overall political and cultural awareness and reflect upon your own value system and political values in a structured manner within the context of living in a different culture. These exercises should contribute to your appreciation and respect for people with differing political and cultural values and add to your general adaptive skills necessary for living in a cultural milieu different from your own.

Midterm & Final Examinations: The midterm and final exams are designed to establish and communicate to you the progress you are making towards meeting the course learning objectives listed above. They are comprised of questions and exercises that test your abilities in three important areas of competency: the amount of information you master; the accuracy of the information you present; and the significance you ascribe to the facts and ideas you have integrated across your study in this course.

CEA Grading Scale				
Letter Grade	Numerical Grade Low Range	Numerical Grade High Range	Percentage Range	Quality Points
A+	9.70	10.00	97.0 - 100%	4.00
A	9.40	9.69	94.0 - 96.9%	4.00
A-	9.00	9.39	90.0 – 93.9%	3.70
B+	8.70	8.99	87.0 – 89.9%	3.30
B	8.40	8.69	84.0 – 86.9%	3.00
B-	8.00	8.39	80.0 – 83.9%	2.70
C+	7.70	7.99	77.0 – 79.9%	2.30
C	7.00	7.69	70.0 – 76.9%	2.00
D	6.00	6.99	60.0 – 69.9%	1.00
F	0.00	5.99	0 - 59.9%	0.00
W	Withdrawal			0.00
INC	Incomplete			0.00

Workload Expectations: In conformity with CEA policy, all students are expected to spend at least two hours of time on academic studies outside of, and in addition to, each hour of class time.

Please be advised: Any grade dispute you encounter in this course must immediately be discussed with the instructor and definitively resolved before the last week of class. Only end-of-term assignments graded after the end of your program are subject to CEA’s formal grade appeal procedure. For more information, see [CEA Academic Policies](#).

CEA Attendance Policy

Every student is expected to attend all scheduled class sessions on time and be thoroughly prepared for the day's class activities. In compliance with NEASC and UNH accreditation requirements, CEA instructors compile regular attendance records from every course and take these records into account when evaluating student participation and performance.

- In each course, a maximum of the equivalent of two weeks of accumulated absences due to sickness, personal emergency, inevitable transportation delay and other related impediments will be tolerated.
- Final course grade will drop one full letter grade (e.g. A- to B-) for each additional class missed beyond this two week period, regardless of the reason for absence.
- However, if a student's absences exceed the equivalent of three weeks of class, the student will fail the course.

Furthermore, to comply with immigration and financial regulations, each student must maintain full-time student status and attend at least 12 hours of class every week. Consequently, the Dean and Program Director will dismiss—from all CEA courses, programs, activities and housing—any student who fails to maintain full-time status.

Arriving Late for Class: Consistently arriving late is disruptive and shows a lack of respect for instructor and fellow students. For persistent lateness, the instructor deducts percentage points from the total 10% earmarked for Participation as indicated in the syllabus. Missing a significant portion of one of your classes may constitute a full day's absence. The instructor decides. If you arrive late due to serious and unforeseen circumstances, or if you must leave class early due to illness, you must inform the instructor.

ceaClassroom: CEA's Moodle CMS

CEA instructors use the open source course management system (CMS) called Moodle that creates an interactive virtual learning environment for students and educators alike. This web-based platform provides you with 24/7 access to the course syllabus, daily schedule of class lectures and assignments, non-textbook required readings, and additional resources directly related to your studies. Moodle includes the normal array of forums, up-loadable and downloadable databases, wikis, and related academic support designed for helping you achieve the many course learning objectives. The ceaClassroom website is located here <https://www.ceaClassroom.com/>

During the first week of class, the CEA academic staff and instructors will provide you with log-in information and corresponding passwords to access this site. They will also help you navigate through the many functions and resources Moodle provides. While you may print a hard copy version of the syllabus that is projected on the first day of class, it is the class schedule on Moodle that is the definitive and official one, given that the instructor will be announcing updates and additions there and nowhere else. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have access to all Moodle materials related to your course and that you monitor Moodle on a daily basis so as to be fully informed of required course assignments and any scheduling changes that might occur.

Required Readings

Drake, Helen. *Contemporary France* (Contemporary States and Societies Series), Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. 256pp. (ISBN 987-0-333-80319-6)

Knapp, Andrew, & Wright, Vincent. *The Government and Politics of France*, Routledge, 5th Edition, 2006; 560p, (ISBN 9780415357326).

Milner, Susan and Parsons, Nick (eds.). *Reinventing France: State and Society in the Twenty First Century*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, 240p, (ISBN 1403902151).

Cole, Alistair, Le Gales, Patrick and Ley, Jonah (eds.). *Developments in French Politics, 3rd. Edition, Palgrave, 2005.*

Bowen, John R. *Why the French Don't Like Headscarves – Islam, the State & Public Space*. Princeton University Press, 2007.

Recommended Readings

Given the very current content of a subject such as this, additional selected reading materials, articles and clippings will be assigned as part of weekly readings. These will be made available at the CEA Paris Center. Students are required to keep abreast of current events in France through the daily newspapers (see below).

Catherine Fiesci, *Fascism, Populism & the French Fifth Republic*, Manchester Univ. Press, 2004.

Jocelyn Evans, *The French Party System*, Manchester University Press, July 2003.

Robert Elgie, *Political Institutions in Contemporary France*. Oxford: OUP, 2003.

Journals on French Politics (in French): *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, *Critique internationale*, *Genèses*, *Mots*, *Politix*, *Revue française de science politique*, *Raisons politiques*, *Sociétés contemporaines*

Journals on French Politics (in English): *French Politics, culture and society* (Revue de l'Institute of French Studies), *French Politics, Contemporary French Civilization*, *Modern & Contemporary France*.

Online Reference & Research Tools:

You should consult newspaper websites such as the *International Herald Tribune*, *The New York Times*, *Washington Post* as well as French dailies such as *Le Monde*, *Le Figaro*, and *Libération*.

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Course Content

Session	Topics	Activity	Student Assignments
1	<p>Introduction Presentation of Syllabus France in the 20th Century Current Issues Overview</p>	<p>France's Vital Signs & Statistics A Survey of Current Political Issues Online Press Review</p>	<p>Overview of readings and resources</p>
2	<p>History & Legacy Post-War France The Origins of the 5th Republic Gaullism in the Cold War Years French Presidential Chronology</p>	<p>Lecture & Discussion Student Presentation: Blog Post on Current Issues</p>	<p>Readings: • Drake, <i>Contemporary France</i>, Chap. 1 pp.8-36. • Knapp, chaps. 1(1-48); 2 (49-66); 3 (67-85).</p>
3	<p>Who Are the French? Connections to the Land & to History French Mentalities Being French</p>	<p>Lecture & Discussion Student Presentation: Blog Post on Current Issues</p>	<p>Readings: • Drake, <i>Contemporary France</i>, Chap. 2 pp.37-63.</p>
4	<p>French Political Culture The French Party System A Brief History of Political Factions The Left & Right in France Party Transformation Current Problems</p>	<p>Quiz #1 Lecture and Discussion <u>Student Presentation:</u> Blog Post on Current Issues</p>	<p>Readings: • Drake, <i>Contemporary France</i>, Chap. 3, pp.64-92. • Knapp, chaps. 7 (168-215); 8 (216-251); 9 (252-280).</p>
5	<p>French Government & Institutions A "Republican Monarchy" The French State Decentralization The French Electoral System</p>	<p>Lecture & Discussion <u>Student Presentation:</u> Blog Post on Current Issues <i>Study Excursion:</i> <i>The French National Assembly</i></p>	<p>Readings: • Drake, <i>Contemporary France</i>, Chap. 4, pp.93-121. • Knapp, chaps. 4 (85-108);5 (109-140);6 (141-167); 10 (281-311).</p>

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Session	Topics	Activity	Student Assignments
6	<p>The French Social Republic The Secular State May 1968 Education, Class & Opportunity</p>	<p>Film, Drescher, <i>1968</i></p> <p>Lecture and Discussion</p> <p><u>Student Presentation:</u> Blog Post on Current Issues</p>	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drake, <i>Contemporary France</i>, Chap. 5, pp.122-146. • 1968 Documents. • ATTAC documents.
7	<p>Interest Groups Interest Group Politics in France Unions and the MDEF The French Civil Service</p>	<p>Lecture and Discussion</p> <p><u>Student Presentation:</u> Blog Post on Current Issues</p>	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milner, ch.7 • Knapp, chaps. 11(312-348).
8	<p>Midterm Exam</p>	<p>Exam</p>	<p>Review All Class Readings & Materials</p>
	<p>Culture & Identity Immigration and integration The French Melting Pot? Suburban Unrest Integration & Solidarity</p>	<p>Film: <i>La Haine</i></p> <p>Lecture and Discussion</p>	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drake, <i>Contemporary France</i>, Chap. 6, pp.147-173. • Milner, chap. 8, Cole, Chap. 10.
9	<p>Unemployment and the Economy The Euro Crisis The Battle Against Unemployment <i>Delocalization</i></p>	<p>Quiz #2</p> <p>Lecture and Discussion</p> <p><u>Student Presentation:</u> Blog Post on Current Issues</p>	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drake, <i>Contemporary France</i>, Chap. 7, pp.174-195. • Milner, chap. 4, 9. • Cole, chap. 11.
10	<p>Immigration & Integration</p>	<p>Lecture and Discussion</p> <p><u>Study Excursion:</u> <i>The Museum of Immigration</i></p>	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milner, chap. 8, Cole, Chap. 10.

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11	<p style="text-align: center;">France and Europe The Greek Debt Crisis The Turkish Question Whither Europe?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Lecture and Discussion</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Student Research Paper Presentations</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Student Presentation:</u> Blog Post on Current Issues</p>	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knapp, Ch.14 (422-486) • Milner, Ch. 5 <p>Research Paper Due</p>
12	<p style="text-align: center;">French Foreign Policy The Arab Spring Franco-American Relations France in Global Politics</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Quiz #3</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Lecture and Discussion</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Student Research Paper Presentations</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Student Presentation:</u> Blog Post on Current Issues</p>	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drake, <i>Contemporary France</i>, Chap. 8, pp.196-220. • Cole, Ch. 9. • Philippe Roger, “American Enemy”
13	<p style="text-align: center;">Public Opinion & Media in Politics The Law of Parity Headscarves and Veils</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Lecture and Discussion</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Student Research Paper Presentations</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Student Presentation:</u> Blog Post on Current Issues</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Study Excursion:</u> <i>France 24 – France’s CNN</i></p>	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bowen, “Why the French Don’t Like Headscarves” (Extraicts) • Parity Documents
14	<p style="text-align: center;">French Politics & the Future Where Do We Go From Here? Women and Minorities in Politics The Crisis of Representative Democracy</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Lecture and Discussion</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Student Research Paper Presentations</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Student Presentation:</u> Blog Post on Current Issues</p>	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drake, <i>Contemporary France</i>, conclusions, pp.220-223. • • Milner, Chaps. 2, 3, 6, • Cole. Ch. 13. • Knapp, Chap 15 487-500).
15	Final Exam	Exam	Review All Class Readings & Materials

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