

French Politics
POLS 3301
(POLS 4100)
Fall 2020
TR 9:25-10:40am
Hybrid Online Synchronous

Office hours: TR 10:50am-noon, and by appointment

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Online Course Meetings

There will be **NO** face to face (in classroom) meetings in this class. Rather, **ALL** meetings will be held synchronously online via Blackboard Collaborate Ultra. That means that we will meet at class time through the Blackboard Collaborate Ultra platform.

PowerPoint slides, if used, will be provided prior to class meetings so that you can follow along, however, I caution you that not all of the material needed to pass this class is included in the PowerPoint slides.

Course Overview

The course is designed to provide students with an understanding of modern French politics. While France is strong democratic country, with long traditions of republicanism, it uses an unusual governmental and political system. In this course, we will discuss this system in comparison to others in the advanced democratic world (i.e. the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, etc.), discussing the relative benefits and drawbacks of the French system. While this will be accomplished in large degree through readings, class discussion, and assignments, there is the possibility for a 1-credit addition to this course that includes 9 days in Paris, Lille and Lyon, France tentatively scheduled for Spring Break 2021.

The objective of this course is to enable you to develop a critical understanding of the nature of French politics and society, to the point where you can think critically about France and its role in the world. Further, you will learn to critically evaluate not only the French political system, but you will also develop a stronger understanding of other political systems in contrast to that of France. Class meetings for this course will be a mixture of lectures and seminars. You will be required to read some academic research concerning French politics, and you will be asked to discuss this material in class.

If you opt for the additional 1-credit travel aspect of this course, you will travel over Spring Break to Paris, Lille and Lyon, France where you will meet with multiple political stakeholders, including representatives from political parties (i.e. *La République en Marche*, *Les Républicains*, *La France Insoumise*, *Rassemblement National*, *Europe Écologie – Les Verts*, and *Parti*

Socialiste), members of the media (i.e. *Le Figaro*, *Charlie Hebdo*, and *Le Monde*) and interest groups (i.e. *Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail* and *Solidaires Unitaires Démocratiques*). These meetings will be coupled with readings and class discussion.

Expectations

It is important to remember that you are adults, and success at the collegiate level is dependent upon approaching your studies as a responsible adult. While there will be no formal attendance grade, there will be a participation grade, and it is impossible to participate if you are not in class. As this is an upper level course that covers a large amount of unfamiliar material, attendance will also serve to improve your grade. Further, you will be expected to do all of the readings (both textbook and other readings) by the below enumerated dates.

The 1-credit travel aspect of this course is treated as a separate course in Spring 2021. Grading for this additional 1-credit course will be determined by 1 assignment based off of your larger project from the Fall 2020 seminar, keeping of a travel journal, and participation while in France. These expectations will be elucidated in the travel addendum.

Course Goals

At the end of this course you will be able to:

- 1) Identify the major institutional structures of France
- 2) Understand the differences between the French and other political systems
- 3) Analyze the effect of the institutional structures that produce the differences in the French and other systems.
- 4) Discuss the effects of reformation of political systems

And you will have developed:

- 1) A greater understanding of French and American politics, as well as politics generally
- 2) Important critical and analytical thinking skills
- 3) An ability to engage in comparative political analysis.

Required Reading

Cole, Alistair, Sophie Meunier, and Vincent Tiberj. 2013. *Developments in French Politics*. Red Globe Press. 5th Edition.

Additional articles will be required for this class. These articles can be found on Blackboard or via a link in the syllabus.

Course Assignments

1. Exam 1	30 %
2. Exam 2 (Lincoln-Douglas Debate)	30 %
3. Constitutional Design	30 %
4. Participation	10%

Grading for 1 Credit Travel Course

1. Constitution Alterations	40%
2. Travel Journal	40%
3. Travel Participation	20%

Grading: Grading will follow a standard scale: 89.5% or higher is an A, 79.5% to 89.49% is a B, 69.5% to 79.49% is a C, and 59.5% to 69.49% is a D.

In order to avoid myriad problems I will NOT do any of the following:

1. Change grades unless a computational error is made
2. Reveal grades via e-mail or telephone
3. Give any extra credit opportunities other than those mentioned in the syllabus or by me in class
4. ***ACCEPT ANY LATE MATERIALS***
5. Allow any makeup exams, unless in extenuating circumstances

Exam grades will be posted on Blackboard, usually within 7 days of the exam.

If you do poorly on any of the assignments, I advise you to see me as soon as possible. It is your responsibility to seek my help if you need it.

It is important to note, I may provide a general curve on each exam. This is done in order to avoid curving the final grades which is again possible, however, unlikely.

Exams: Two exams will be given in this course. The first exam will be a midterm and will consist of 2 essays. You will be given a choice of 3 essay questions, of which, you will be required to answer two. This exam will test you regarding all course content up until the date of the exam. This exam will be worth 30% of your overall grade.

The second exam will be the final. This will be done differently than the midterm. You will be randomly paired with another student in the class and you will be provided with an important political issue facing France. You will be required to engage in a Lincoln-Douglas style debate regarding this issue. Students will also be given partisan identities. These identities should inform your positions on the issue and drive the debate with the other team member regarding these positions.

The teams and issues will be assigned on November 17. You will be asked to record your debate and submit it via Blackboard by December 15 at 10:00am. The debate should last no

more than 15 minutes. You will be graded on your individual preparedness regarding the issue. That is to say, you should show a working knowledge of the issue you have been assigned. You should also provide a clear and concise argument regarding why your position is the best way to address the issue. Your teammate will also be asked to provide feedback regarding your engagement with the assignment. With the recording, you should provide a list of all resources (i.e. a short bibliography) that you used in preparing for this exam. This exam will be worth 30% of your overall grade.

The only exam that could possibly be made-up, if missed, is the midterm. Makeup exams will only be given in light of a university excused absence or at the discretion of the instructor. Inform me of your absence before or within 48 hours of the examination date, either in person or by e-mail. I will need specific, written documentation to verify the nature and legitimacy of your absence. You must present this documentation to me, in person, during my office hours (or make an appointment) and before the last week of classes. At that time, I will determine whether you are eligible to take a makeup exam. You will have fifty (50) minutes to complete the makeup exam, which consists of answering *one essay question*. ***All makeup exams will take place during the last week of classes. YOU MUST CONTACT ME BEFORE THE LAST WEEK OF CLASSES TO SCHEDULE A MAKEUP EXAM. MAKE UP EXAMS WILL NOT BE GIVEN FOR THE FINAL EXAM.***

Exam Preparation: The optimal way to succeed in this class is to attend class regularly, take good notes, and keep up with the readings. Your notes will alert you to the material that I think is most important, however, everything in the required readings is fair game.

Constitutional Design: As your project for this class, you will each be expected to write a new constitution for France. This project will consist of you writing a 5-6 page new constitution for France as well as including a 5-6 page appendix in which you explain your constitutional changes. This explanation should be based in the materials read and discussed in this course. This means that you will need to apply the empirical research on institutional structures, and discuss why these new institutional structures will be better for France. Details of this project are provided through the appendix to this syllabus, which is available via Blackboard. This assignment will be worth 30% of your overall grade. More details regarding this assignment will be provided in the coming days.

For those taking the 1-credit travel section of this course in Spring 2021, you will be asked to make alterations to your new constitution after we return from the trip to France. This alteration will be worth 40% of your grade in the 1-credit course.

Participation: You are expected to participate in class. Each student will start with 0 participation points for the class. Points will be allocated based on positive participation in class discussions on seminar days. That is, if a student participates in a way that forwards conversation about a topic, demonstrating that they read the assigned reading, they will receive 1 participation point up to 10. However, if a student is asked to participate and has not done the reading they will lose a participation point, down to 0. Participation will account for 10% of your final grade, thus 1 participation point is equivalent to 1% of your final grade.

Travel Journal: Those who opt to take the additional 1-credit travel portion of this course will be required to keep a travel journal. This journal is to be a written log of your interactions each day during the course of the travel portion of the class. This should consist of a brief synopsis of what you did in a day, and provide thoughts regarding social and political ramifications of what you discussed with policymakers, politicians, media elites, and interest group leaders. This journal will be turned in at the end of the travel section of the class, and will account for 40% of the grade in the 1-credit course.

Travel Participation: Those who opt to take the additional 1-credit travel portion of this course will have an additional 20% of their grade for the 1-credit course determined by participation while in France. We will be meeting with a number of policy and political elites in France. You are expected to attend these meetings and actively engage with those we are meeting with. This means you should come with some knowledge of who we are meeting with, and have well formed and informed questions for those we are meeting.

Travel Rules: Those who opt to take the additional 1-credit travel portion of this course will also be expected to follow an enumerated and clear set of rules while in France. These rules will be provided as an addendum to this syllabus. Importantly, failure to comply with these rules may result in losing up to 10% of your final grade for each infraction. That is, you can lose more than 10% of your grade if there are multiple individual infractions.

Meme Extra Credit: You have a one possibility for extra credit this semester through the creation of French politics memes. Your task is to create up to 3 French politics memes that address ideas we have covered in class. The memes should also be funny. Each meme will be worth 2 extra points on your midterm exam.

How will we determine the points? It will be opened up to a class vote. The meme will be shown to your classmates, and a majoritarian vote will be held. Your classmates will be asked to judge your meme on applicability to the class, and humor. If 50% of the class agrees that it is applicable to the class and funny, you will receive 2 points on your midterm grade. You can submit up to 3 memes, meaning you can receive up to 6 points on your midterm. All memes must be submitted by 11:59pm on November 13.

Two important notes: First, the memes should not be offensive. Ask yourself, would I show this to a French person and still expect them to be my friend? Second, there should be no memes about the French losing wars. Not only is that joke banal and unfunny, it also misrepresents French history.

Attendance: Attendance is expected, but not required for this class. Remember, however, participation is part of your grade and it is impossible to participate without being in class.

Communications: If you have any questions about the class, please see me during my office hours. If you cannot make my office hours, please schedule an appointment to see me. You are more than welcome to e-mail me as well.

Dropping Courses: Please visit the website of UALR Student Records (<http://ualr.edu/records/drop-class/>) for information concerning drops, withdrawals, and other administrative information.

Students with Disabilities: Your success in this class is important to me, and it is the policy and practice of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock to create inclusive learning environments consistent with federal and state law. If you have a documented disability (or need to have a disability documented), and need an accommodation, please contact me privately as soon as possible, so that we can discuss with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) how to meet your specific needs and the requirements of the course. The DRC offers resources and coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process among you, your instructor(s) and the DRC. Thus, if you have a disability, please contact me and/or the DRC, at 501-569-3143 (V/TTY) or 501-683-7629 (VP). For more information, please visit the DRC website at www.ualr.edu/disability.

Academic Dishonesty: Academic dishonesty, which includes, but is not limited to cheating on an exam, unauthorized collaboration on an assignment, and plagiarism, is taken very seriously in this course. Students who commit such actions will be reported to the Dean of Students and will receive an F for the course. If you have any questions about whether an action is considered to be academically dishonest, please see me or read the complete description of the UALR policy on academic dishonesty, which is available in the student handbook at www.ualr.edu/www/handbook/student_rights.html.

Course Materials and Copyright Statement: The handouts used in this course are copyrighted. “Handouts” refers to all materials generated for this class, which include but are not limited to presentation slides, syllabi, quizzes, exams, in-class materials review sheets, and additional problem sets. Because these are copyrighted, you do not have the right to copy, in any manner, including through photographs, the handouts, unless I expressly grant permission.

Course Schedule (All Dates Subject to Change)

1. DEVELOPMENT OF NATION STATES AND IDENTITY IN EUROPE

August 24 – 28

Read: Rokkan (1999); Anderson (1983)

2. THE FRENCH REVOLUTION: MARXIST?

August 31 – September 4

Read: Soboul (1969); Lucas (1973)

3. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FOURTH AND FIFTH REPUBLICS

September 7 – 11

Read: French Constitution (available via Blackboard);
Cowans (1991); Clift (2008)

4. THE MODERN FRENCH PRESIDENCY

September 14 – 18 Read: Cole et al. (2013; Chs. 1 and 2); Lewis-Beck (1980)

5. THE FRENCH LEGISLATURE

September 21 – 25 Read Cole et al. (2013; Ch. 3); Costa and Kerrouche (2009); François and Navarro (2019)

6. MIDTERM EXAM WEEK

September 29 Exam Review

You will be provided the exam after our meeting on September 29, you will have until 11:59pm on October 1 to submit your exam.

October 1 Midterm Exam Due

7. FRENCH ELECTORAL SYSTEM

October 5 – 9 Read Cole et al. (2013; Ch. 10); Blais and Loewen (2009);

8. FRENCH PARTIES AND PARTY SYSTEM

October 12 – 16 Read Cole et al. (2013; Chs. 6 and 7); Cole (2018); Lachat and Michel (2019); Gougou and Persico (2017)

9. FRENCH PUBLIC OPINION AND BEHAVIOR

October 19 – 23 Read Cole et al. (2013; Ch. 11); Vassallo (2004)

10. FRENCH INTEREST GROUPS AND UNIONS

October 26 – 30 Read Cole et al. (2013; Ch. 9); Baumgartner (1996); Béland (2001); Howell (2009)

11. IDENTITY AND FRENCH POLITICS

November 2 – 6 Read Cole et al. (2013; Ch. 13); Belot and Brechon (2016); DeSoucey (2010); Farinelli (2020)

12. FRANCE IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

November 9 – 13 Read Cole et al. (2013; Ch. 14); Schmidt (2002); Ivaldi (2018); Guinaudeau and Persico (2013)

13. FINAL EXAM REVIEW AND TRIP PREP

November 17

Exam Teams Revealed, Meme Vote, Travel Prep Meeting (only for those traveling)

You will be provided your final exam on November 17. You will have until 10:00am on December 15 to submit your exam.

November 19

Submit your Constitution project by 11:59pm

December 15

Final Exam Due at 10:00am