

## **POLITICS, ECONOMY AND SOCIETY IN FRANCE TODAY**

University Year 2014/2015 – Fall Semester

**Horaires : Thursday 14:00 to 18:00**

### **1/ COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

The main objective of this course is to give students a basic grounding in how France functions by critically examining the political system, the workings of the economy and pertinent social issues. The prime place given to the Republic and Republican values have colored French institutions and society for more than two centuries but today France is faced with a number of contradictions that challenge many of its founding myths. Through this course, students will gain a better understanding of the peculiarities endogenous to the French Republic and the important debates within politics, economy and society that mark France today.

### **2/ COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

Students are expected to read the relevant course materials for each class and to follow events in France as active participation in class discussions is an essential requirement of the course.

Students have to complete the given assignments:

- comment and personal assessment of the week's topic based on the reading of the core texts.
- a 10-minute presentation based on personal research on a topic related to French politics, the economy and society. Students are free to choose the topic but should demand prior approval for their choice.
- a term paper (5 - 7 typewritten pages with double spacing). The topics for this paper will be distributed in class. Students are expected to research the topic and present a critical assessment and analysis of the topic with concrete references. A detailed bibliography of at least three additional sources to those used in class should be included.

### **3/ COURSE MATERIAL**

The material for the course consists of the required reading and class handouts, both collections of core texts to be read in advance and additional texts distributed in class.

Multimedia documents will also be used when possible.

#### **Recommended reading:**

*Sixty Million Frenchmen Can't Be Wrong*, Nadeau, Jean-Benoît & Barlow, Julie, 2008, Robson Books. Available at numerous bookshops (Village Voice, Smith's, The Red Wheelbarrow, Galignani, FNAC ...)

### **4/ REFERENCES:**

The British press regularly has articles on France and some American newspapers and magazines have correspondents in France. The French international television channel, *France 24*, has an English web site. *The Connexion* and *France Today* are English-language newspapers in France available on the Web.

### **5/ EVALUATION:**

The final grade for the course will be based on student performance on the following tasks:

- Test on politics and economy (25%)
- A written term paper (25%)
- A presentation (25%)
- Attendance/Participation (25%)

Students are required to be present for tests and to hand in their papers at the scheduled time. Late papers are penalized.

### 6/ ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance is essential and checked on a daily basis. Only three unjustified absences will be accepted and all 'justified' absences must be documented. The final evaluation will take both absences and repeated unpunctuality (three 'lates' count as one absence) into account.

Students who are late (i.e. who show up during or after attendance is being checked) should see the instructor after class so that they are marked as present.

### 7/ Practical information

Classes that fall on a public holiday will not be made up

**Fall break: October 25 to November 2**

### COURSE PROGRAM

Date	Theme
1. 09/25/2014	An overview of the French Revolution and subsequent regimes The French Republic and the core Republican values today: Liberty, Equality and Fraternity; <i>Laïcité</i> (Secularism)
2. 10/02/2014	The founding of the Fifth Republic by Charles de Gaulle The political institutions - the President, the Prime Minister, the Senate, and the National Assembly The state, government and legislation
3. 10/09/2014	The different layers of local government Political parties and the various elections Elitism at the top and the Republic
4. 10/16/2014	The French economic model: <i>dirigisme</i> and liberalization The role of the state and the "national champions" The French way of working: practices and key labor laws
5. 10/23/2014	France and globalization, or anti-globalization French transnational corporations and foreign investment in France France and the euro crisis
6. 11/06/2014	In-class test on politics and the economy. The French inclination for strikes and street protest The media in France
7. 11/13/2014	The French social model – health care and welfare for all The situation of women in France Student presentations
8. 11/20/2014	Republican education: Universities and <i>Grandes écoles</i> The situation of youth in France Student presentations
9. 11/27/2014	Issues linked to immigration and "assimilation" France and national identity Student presentations
10. 12/04/2014	The Overseas departments and territories The importance of the French language and <i>La Francophonie</i> Student presentations

11. 12/11/2014

France and the world: France still a "great nation"?  
France as an international actor  
Defending the French exception in today's world