



**Arcadia University-AGS-Alliance Française**  
**AGSD SMHP 310 (Fall Semester)**  
**Core Seminar: History, Politics and Diplomacy of France**  
**AGSD SMHP 310 (Fall Semester)**

**Credits: 6**

**Prerequisites: junior standing or permission of instructor**

**Fall Semester**

**Professor D.A. Yates**

### **Course Description**

This is the first semester of a two-semester interdisciplinary core course designed for American undergraduate students who want to study the political systems of France and Europe. The purpose of this course is to introduce students to France – its history, its domestic politics, and its foreign relations, both in Europe and around the world. Paris itself is the classroom for much of the course, which includes several field trips to some important French institutions. It will analyze how those institutions function, discuss how they came into existence, and speculate about their ability to face twenty-first century challenges.

### **Course Objectives**

The goal will be to interpret current affairs in France from a multidisciplinary perspective, that is, to employ the different methods of history, political science and international relations to understand the nature, variety and significance of the political issues confronting France both at home and abroad. Upon the completion of this course, therefore, students should be able to: (1) locate important historical events in the political history of France, (2) describe the political institutions of French government, (3) identify the major French political parties and their location in the ideological spectrum, and (4) use all of the above to interpret current affairs, both domestic and foreign, that will be making the headlines over the course of this semester. In short, the goal is to produce informed observers of French politics.

### **Required Texts**

Andrew Knapp and Vincent Wright, *Government and Politics of France*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: Routledge, 2006) ISBN 978-0415357326 Cost: To Be Determined.

Anne Sa'adah, *Contemporary France: A Democratic Education* (Oxford: Rowman Littlefield, 2003) ISBN 978-0742501973 Cost: To Be Determined.

Douglas Yates, *The French Oil Industry and the Corps des Mines in Africa* (Trenton/Asmara: Africa World Press, 2009) ISBN 978-1592216673 Cost: To Be Determined.

### **Methods**

In-class sessions will be a mixture of lecture, student presentations, and class discussions. Students are expected to come to class having done their assigned course readings, and to be

prepared to both discuss and to answer questions about them. Over the semester each student will make one short oral presentation on a topic chosen by the student, in agreement with the professor, and related to an important current affair in French politics. Students will each write a 1,500 word essay based on their presentation. All of the field trips will require the students to arrive at the scheduled location on time (or in advance), purchase their admission tickets (if necessary) and most of all, to take notes. Experiential learning is an integral part of this course, getting out of the classroom and into the surrounding environment. Since students are representing not only themselves, but our graduate school, they will be expected to behave like more than typical tourists, but active learners (i.e. bring a notepad).

### **Attendance and Lateness Policy**

Student presence is mandatory, and two unexcused absences a semester will mean a reduction of a full grade for the course (for example, a B becomes a C). Three unexcused absences will result in student failure of the course. For in-class sessions, arriving to class more than five minutes late will be counted as a half-absence. For field trips, arriving more than fifteen minutes late will be so counted.

### **Plagiarism Policy**

Plagiarizing or cheating on any assignment will result in a failing grade for the course.  
Grades

Midterm 25%

Presentation 25%

Capstone Essay 25%

Final Exam 25%

### **Capstone Essay**

The Capstone Essay is a special part of the core course. Besides using the usual academic sources, you will be required to conduct interviews in relations to the subject of your paper (which can be in English), translate at least one article from the French press, and provide the interview transcripts and original articles in an appendix. (Paper length around 3,000 words)

### **Field Trips [*theme*] metro station (line)**

Arènes de Lutèce [*site gallo-romaine*] Place Monge (n° 7)

Basilique Saint Denis [*nécropole des rois de Franc*] Basilique de St-Denis (n° 13)

Musée de Carnavalet [*histoire de Paris*] St-Paul (n° 1)

Bibliothèque Nationale de France [*grands projets de l'Etat*] Quai de la Gare (n° 6)

La Défense [*capitalisme français*] Esplanade de La Défense (n° 1)

**SCHEDULE OF CLASSES** The following schedule indicates the general themes to be studied during the week, the topics of particular in-class lectures, any films to be screened, tests to be taken, or official holidays, as well as the sites to be visited during class field trips. (Assigned textbook readings, to be completed before the indicated class, are provided in parentheses.)

**PART ONE. PRE-MODERN FRANCE** *Where does the reality of “France” or “French” begin? To answer these questions, it is necessary to start before the invention of France, with*

*the Gauls whose conquest by the Romans resulted in a unique Gallo-Roman Civilization, the ultimate cradle of the French language and culture. Upon this foundation later emerged the kingdoms of the Franks, and from these, France.*

### **Week One - Introduction**

Lecture 1. Map of France

Lecture 2. Gallo-Roman France (Film: *Lutèce: Paris Gallo-Romain*, 2009)

### **Week Two - The Ancient Régime in French Memory**

Lecture 3. Field Trip (Arènes de Lutèce)

Lecture 4. The French Revolution (Sa'adah, intro)

**PART TWO. FRENCH NATIONAL IDENTITY** *France invented the ideology of modern nationalism, as well as the terms Left and Right, which emerged during the French Revolution of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Two traditions of political identity with the “nation” and ideological conflict between the Left and the Right are lasting themes of modern French political history. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century these traditions were threatened by war, end of empire, and globalization.*

### **Week Three - Historical Foundations of French Nationalism**

Lecture 5. Nationalism, the Left, and the Right (Sa'adah, ch. 1)

Lecture 6. Field Trip (Musée de Carnavalet)

### **Week Four - War and Its Legacies on French Nationalism**

Lecture 7. The Occupation and Vichy (Sa'adah, ch. 2)

Lecture 8. The Algerian War (Sa'adah, ch. 3)

### **Week Five - End of Empire and French Nationalism**

Lecture 8. The Algerian War (Film: *Battle of Algiers*, 1966)

Lecture 9. Field Trip (Basilique Saint Denis)

### **Week Six - Gaullism and French Nationalism**

Lecture 10. The Legacy of De Gaulle (Sa'adah, ch. 4)

Lecture 11. **Midterm Exam**

**PART THREE. POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT** *The 1958 Constitution of the Fifth Republic created a new hybrid system of government, half-presidential, half-parliamentary, called a “semi-presidential system.” This creates special problems for students of French government in trying to determine the center of decision-making and power. Another hybrid novelty was the two-round ballot, which has promoted a unique “bipolar-multiparty” system.*

## **Week Seven - Constitutional Foundations of Government**

Lecture 12. From the Fourth Republic to the Fifth Republic (Knapp, ch. 2)

Lecture 13. Constitution of the Fifth Republic (English translation)

## **Week Eight - French Model of the Dual Executive**

Lecture 14. Presidents of the Republic (Knapp, ch. 3)

Lecture 15. Powers of the President and Prime Minister (Knapp, ch. 4)

## **Week Nine - *Fall Break***

## **Week Ten - The Decline of the French Parliament**

Lecture 16. Policy-Making of the Dual-Executive (Knapp, ch. 5)

Lecture 17. The National Assembly and the Senate (Knapp, ch. 6)

## **Week Eleven - Politics of the Left and Right**

Lecture 18. Political Parties of the Left (Knapp, ch. 7)

Lecture 19. Political Parties of the Right (Knapp, ch. 8)

## **Week Twelve - Why France is Hard to Govern**

Lecture 20. A Theory of the French Party System (Knapp, ch. 9)

Lecture 21. Field Trip (Bibliothèque Nationale de France)

## **PART FOUR. CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES**

## **Week Thirteen - Bureaucracy and the Administrative Elite**

Lecture 22. The Myth of Administrative Power (Knapp, ch. 10)

Lecture 23. *Grandes Ecoles* and *Grands Corps* (Yates, intro.)

## **Week Fourteen - French Capitalism in Evolution**

Lecture 24. The Age of National Enterprises (Yates, ch. 4, 5, 7)

Lecture 25. The Age of Private Multinationals (Yates, ch. 9, 10, 11)

## **Week Fifteen - Contemporary France**

Lecture 26. Field Trip (La Défense)

Lecture 27. ***Final Exam (Capstone Papers Due)***