



## IFE course syllabus

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### Course title

**Structure, Transformation and Issues in French Society: A socio-cultural approach**

### Course taught by

This course is taught in two parts, by Sophie Enos-Attali and Clara Bouveresse.

Teacher/researcher in Political Science, International Relations and Contemporary History, **Sophie Enos-Attali** holds a doctorate in Political Science from the Institut d'Études Politiques de Paris ("Sciences Po") as well as an ABD in International Relations from the University of Paris and an ABD in History from the same institution. An associate professor of Political Science at the Institut Catholique de Paris, where she is the director of Master's theses in the social sciences, Sophie also has ten years experience teaching French politics and society to American students in education abroad programs in Paris. Her research activities include work as a member of the research group on "multilateral action" of the French Association of Political Science (AFSP), of the standing group on Advancing Teaching and Learning of Political Science of the ECPR (European Consortium for Political Research) and of the Thucydides Center for International Research of the University of Paris.

**Clara Bouveresse** is a doctoral candidate in Art History at Paris I University, completing a dissertation on the history of Magnum Photos agency. She teaches the history of photography at Paris I University. In 2014-2015 Clara was a Georges Lurcy Fellow at the Columbia School of Journalism. She contributed to the Dictionary of Photography (Thames & Hudson, 2015). Clara's previous training includes graduating from the Ecole Normale Supérieure de Lyon and studying visual anthropology at University College London (UCL).

### Purpose of the course

The purpose of this course is to provide students the necessary keys for deciphering contemporary French social issues as well as the structure of contemporary French society. A multi-part focus on economic and demographic data, on social systems, on social issues and problems, and on the societal importance of culture provides students – as much as is possible – with an insider's perspective on and knowledge of French society.

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 "The Foundations of French Politics, Policies and Institutions, Yesterday and Today". The course aims at a familiarity with the forces that have shaped French society in the modern era, the structure and main tenets of that society, and recent phenomena and emerging trends.

### Description of the course

The first part of the course examines French society first by looking at three important structuring elements: the economy and work; education; and family. Secondly, students are led to an understanding of several key social issues. Students are expected to read short, essential texts, as well as to engage those around them in their lodgings and elsewhere in discussion on French society, to benefit from their viewpoint. Readings and outside discussion will feed class-time debates.

The second part of the course takes a detailed and analytic look at the role of culture in France. This brief history of French art and culture, focuses on the relationship between the arts and the State, from Renaissance kings who were patrons of the arts to contemporary public cultural policy.

### Course format

This course is designed for maximum pedagogical effectiveness in light of the constraints of a course offered intensively over a short period of time. Accordingly, the course comprises two types of sessions. The morning session is given over to a largely lecture format (although the small size of the group makes it possible for students to ask questions and for teachers to engage students). The lecture session also reflects a European approach to university education whereby lecture material is as important or more so than

reading. In the afternoon, a shorter session adopts a workshop format, with the emphasis on assimilating lecture material through discussion, debate, reading of the press and other student participatory exercises. Student participation is both informal (debate and discussion) and more structured methodologically (oral exposés, press reviews, and other presentations).

Each course of the preparatory session also includes appropriate site visits. Visits linked to this course include outlying Paris' neighborhoods, the Immigration Museum, the 104 Cultural Center, a play about Parisians, and a day of guided exploration of a city outside Paris.

This course meets approximately 45 hours, not including site visits.

## **Course outline**

### **SOCIETY**

#### **Lesson 1** - The family in France

From the "traditional family" to "marriage for all". Demography of France and the French health and welfare system.

#### **Lesson 2** - Growing up and studying in France

School in France: its specificities, and differences compared to the American system. Higher education in France, strengths and weaknesses of the system.

#### **Lesson 3** - France at work

Some macro-economic figures by main sector of economic activity. French corporations. The size of the public sector. Unemployment.

#### **Lesson 4** - Violence in the "banlieues": indicator of a social malaise?

Socio-political violence in France: from the unrest of 2005 to the attacks of November 2015. Coming to grips with French against French: the reasons for the malaise.

#### **Lesson 5** - Receiving immigration: from assimilation to integration

France, nation of immigration? History of immigration in France (factors, origins, dimension...) from the end of the 19th century to our day. French immigration policy. The French approach to equal opportunity compared to the American practice of affirmative action.

#### **Lesson 6** - A secular society ("laïcité"), the French version of respect for religious belief.

From the laws of the Second Republic to the ban on the full veil in public. The "headscarf question" and the French debate on the place of religion in French society.

### **CULTURE AND SOCIETY**

#### **Lesson 7** – State and Culture, from François I to the Louvre Museum

This lesson sets the stage for understanding the connection between political power and the arts, which is one of the unique, fundamental features of French society. The Louvre is studied as the nexus par excellence of the patrimoine national, the concept born of the politics-arts connection.

#### **Lesson 8** – Artistic and cultural revolutions in the 19th and 20th centuries

The avant-garde movements such as impressionism, fauvism, cubism and surrealism represented a departure from patron-supported arts to a new form of artistic dissemination supported by the rising bourgeois class against the backdrop of industrialization. In the new configuration art galleries sell works of art, which are validated by art critics, and new media arise such as photography and cinema.

**Lesson 9** – Cultural policies Although avant-garde movements were sponsored by private collectors, the State did not ignore its role in shaping and disseminating culture. Various cultural policies promote the idea of "art for all". The program of the Front Populaire, André Malraux' vision, the upheavals of May 68 and the cultural policy of Jack Lang are emblematic of this phenomenon.

**Lesson 10** – Museums, monuments and the patrimoine national Major state museums are prestigious institutions, but the patrimoine national also comprises architectural heritage. This lesson looks at conservation policies (Viollet-le-Duc) and the debates on contemporary architecture (Pompidou Center and the Louvre pyramid), as well as the thorny question of access by the general public to contemporary art, often seen as an elitist and obscure art form.

**Lesson 11** – French culture and globalization

The final lesson widens the focus to look at the role of French culture in the world. As a colonial power France collected objects from around the world, and a tradition of ethnographic study arose centered on the Musée de l'Homme. Today, museums such as the Quai Branly and the Arab World Institute look again at French colonial history. France also defends specific values on the international stage, such as cultural exception and freedom of artistic expression.

## Readings

Frémont, Armand. *France : géographie d'une société*. Paris, Flammarion, 2011.

Héran François. *Le Temps des immigrés: essai sur le destin de la population française*. Paris: Seuil, 2007

INSEE. *France, portrait social*. Paris: Insee-Références edition, 2015

Noiriel, Gérard. *Gens d'ici, venus d'ailleurs, la France de l'immigration de 1900 à nos jours*, Paris, Ed. du Chêne 2004

Picq, Jean. *La Liberté de religion dans la République : l'esprit de laïcité*. Paris : Odile Jacob, 2014

Ribert, Evelyne. *Liberté, égalité, carte d'identité: les jeunes issus de l'immigration et l'appartenance nationale*, Paris: La Découverte, 2006

Galland, Olivier et Yannick Lemel (dir.). *La Société française : un bilan sociologique des évolutions depuis l'après-guerre*. Paris : Armand Colin, 2011.

Wylie, Laurence et Brière, Jean-François. *Les Français*. Upper Saddle River : Prentice Hall, 2001.

Site Internet francoscopie.fr

Antoine de Baecque, *Les nuits parisiennes, XVIIIe-XXIe siècle*, Paris, Seuil, 2015

André Chastel, *Introduction à l'histoire de l'art français*, Paris, Flammarion, 2008

Jean-Michel Frodon, *Le cinéma français, de la Nouvelle Vague à nos jours*, Paris, Cahiers du cinéma, 2010

Dominique Lecourt, Claude Nicolet, Michelle Perrot, Emile Poulat et Paul Ricœur, *Aux Sources de la culture française*, Paris, La Découverte, 1997

Jean-Yves Mollier, *Une autre histoire de l'édition française*, Paris, La Fabrique, 2015

Michel Pastoureau et Dominique Simonet, *Le petit livre des couleurs*, Paris, Points histoire, 2014

Philippe Poirrier, *L'Etat et la culture en France au XXe siècle*, Paris, Livre de Poche, 2000

Dominique Poulot, *Patrimoine et Musée : l'institution de la culture*, Paris, Hachette, 2014

Dimitri Vezyroglou (dir.), *Le cinéma : une affaire d'Etat. 1945-1970*, Paris, La Documentation Française, 2014

Maryse Fauvel, *Exposer l'autre : Essai sur la cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration et le Musée du quai Branly*, Paris, l'Harmattan, 2014