



## IFE course syllabus

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### Course title

#### **The Foundations of French Politics, Policies, and Institutions, Yesterday and Today**

### Course taught by

Pascal Cauchy is Professor of History and former Dean of the Doctoral School at the Institut d'Études Politiques de Paris ("Sciences Po"). Pascal also served Sciences Po as Dean of International Studies and is currently attached to that institution's Center for History both as researcher and administrator. Pascal joined Sciences Po after nine years of research and teaching in Moscow and is a specialist in the historiography of communism. He has published "A History of the IVth Republic" (Presses Universitaires de France) and is currently researching the work of Blandine Kriegel, a historian of communism.

### Purpose of the course

The purpose of this course is to help students grasp fundamental notions of French society today by studying the roots and the development of the main institutions and concepts of French political life. 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 "Structure, Transformation and Issues in French Society". The course aims at a thorough familiarity with the politically and institutionally constitutive elements of contemporary France by examining how history shaped institutions and outlooks which in turn shape France today.

### Description of the course

The course is taught in two parts, or "modules", the first one focusing on the foundations and structures of the French State and the second on the French State in a European and international context from a historical perspective.

The first module takes a thematic rather than a chronological approach to understanding the principal phases and achievements in constructing French state institutions.

The second module treats France in the context of the upheavals of the twentieth century, the beginnings and current status of European integration, French foreign policy past and present and the French State in the face of globalization.

### Course format

The format of this course has been 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 the National Archives, Paris City Hall, OECD, Radio France, the Shoah Memorial, and the regional government of the Ile-de-France Region.

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

## Course outline

### I The French Revolution

This first lesson is devoted to one of the founding events of French political and social life. The idea is to examine the major moments of the Revolution to understand their importance as major political events on which have been founded a new legal system, complex institutions and a thoroughly renovated social organization.

### II Political life from Left to Right

Political life in France appears to be organized around two large formations ; the institutions of the Fifth Republic reinforce this two-party effect, which was not always the case in France. What is the genealogy of left-right relations?

### III La construction of the Nation

The concept of the Nation was born of the French Revolution, but it took all of the 19th century to develop the habits and institutions of the French Nation-State and of citizenship (right to vote, political party membership, etc.). Revolts, international conflicts and difficult successions all helped forge these new institutions.

### IV. The metamorphosis of Paris

Paris holds a unique place in the history of France but it was through enormous changes in the 19th century – when Paris was the biggest urban renewal project in Europe – that it became the city it is today. What have been the means and the consequences of this transformation?

### V State, public administration and the national territory

Very early France acquired a centralized and effective public administrative system, which has shaped and shapes practices but also the territory itself. What are its essential characteristics and how will it develop in the context of EU membership where 80% of laws are EU-sourced.

### VI The wars of the “First Twentieth Century”

Europe experienced two conflicts of an intensity never before seen. Some historians now refer to them together as the “European Civil War”. What were the causes, the characteristics and the consequences – for Europe but also for the rest of the world – of these wars?

### VII France in the world and its international heritage historically

Chief European power, France possessed a significant overseas empire in the 17th century, lost it at the end of the 18th, and re-acquired an empire at the end of the 19th century. Why and how did this happen? Six decades later the empire disappears in two wars and various emancipation movements. This lesson examines the relations between French society and empire.

### VIII French geo-political power and influence in the 20th century

Although not a super-power, France made a place for itself internationally after World War II: founder of the European Union, enjoying a large zone of influence at the end of empire, possessing an independent military strategy and means, and equipped with a first rate diplomatic apparatus. All of that changed after 1991.

### IX Who's in charge of French foreign policy?

This lesson examines the tools and the mechanisms of French foreign policy. Who are the actors, both institutional and individual, public and private? How do they function, how do they develop, and what is their current place in Europe and in light of the international crisis?

### X. French society, European integration and the post-Cold-War system

In 1992 Europe became a different legal entity; 80% of French law is now subordinated to European regulation. The power of EU institutions has increased. What is the effect of this “semi-federalism” on the organization of French society? What are the sources of “euro-scepticism” and “euro-phobia”?

### XI The last session will be devoted to a diplomatic role-playing exercise of international negotiation on some current topic.

## Readings

- Texts:

*Histoire des Institutions et des Régimes politiques de la France de 1789 à 1958*; by Jean-Jacques - Chevallier, Armand Colin (10<sup>th</sup> Ed.) 2005

*La France de 1914 à Nos Jours*; by M. Agulhon, A. Nouchi, R Schor – Nathan, 2001

*Dictionnaire de la politique et de l'administration*, Guillaume Bernard, Jean-Pierre Deschodt, Michel Verpeaux, PUF, 2010

*Dictionnaire historique et juridique de l'Europe*, Jean-Paul Bled, Edmond Jouve, Christophe Reveillard, PUF, 2013

*Dictionnaire des relations internationales*, Dario Battistella, Franck Petiteville, Marie-Claude Smouts, Pascal Vennesson, Paris, Dalloz, 2012

- Required reading (see “course format”):

daily newspaper reading is required; in the workshop sessions students are assigned short readings for discussion or presentation, are required to read daily newspapers, and prepare press reviews on specific topics.

- Suggested reading:

Literature (des textes classiques à connaître):

*Le Colonel Chabert*, by Honoré de Balzac

*Souvenirs*, Alexis de Tocqueville

*Les dieux ont soif*, Anatole France

*Qu'est-ce qu'une nation ?* Ernest Renan

*Le Hussard sur le toit* Jean Giono

*La gloire de mon père*, Marcel Pagnol

*Si le grain ne meurt*, André Gide

*Le Rivage des Syrtes*, Julien Gracq

*Le Blé en herbe*, Colette

*Uranus*, Marcel Aymé

Et

*Candide*, Voltaire

*Le Contrat social*, Jean-Jacques Rousseau

*Pensées*, Blaise Pascal

Théâtre :

*La Ville dont le prince est un enfant*, Henry de Montherlant

*L'Aigle à deux têtes*, Jean Cocteau

*Antigone*, Jean Anouilh

*Les mains sales*, Jean-Paul Sartre

Poésie:

*Poésies*, Arthur Rimbaud

*Poèmes saturniens*, Paul Verlaine

*Les Yeux d'Elsa*, Aragon

Essais sur les questions d'actualité:

*Problèmes religieux contemporains*, Alain Besançon, 2015,

*L'invention de la France*, Hervé Le Bras, Emmanuel Todd, 2012

*Etre (ou ne pas être ) républicain*, Frédéric Rouillois, 2015

Histoire :

*Nouvelle Histoire de la France Contemporaine*, Seuil (any recent edition)

*La Politique en France XIX-XX siècle. Régimes, institutions, élections, courants, partis, groupes de pression, médias*, by H. Néant, Hachette, 1991

*La France d'un Siècle à l'Autre, 1914-2000*, René Rémond, Hachette, 1999

**Grading:**

Student work is evaluated on the basis of a written examination at the end of the course the grade for which is averaged with grades received for oral presentations, reading reports, and press reviews prepared for the afternoon workshop, as well as student's level of participation in the workshop.

**Equivalent in american university course offerings:**

This course is pluridisciplinary by design. Nonetheless it roughly corresponds to a Political Science Department course in Comparative Politics or Politics and Government of France or French Political Institutions, or a History Department course such as Citizenship in France since 1789.