



Course title

Political History of France: Transformations in the state and political life since Napoleon

Course taught by

A doctoral candidate at Paris' prestigious Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales where her research focuses on the French Army's oriental division during the First World War, Thérèse Krempp is co-author with Jean-Noël Grandhomme of the biography "Charles de Rose, Pionnier de l'aviation de chasse" (Nuée Bleue Publishers, 2003). In 2006 she participated in a restructuring of the Meseum of the Légion d'honneur, and she currently collaborates on many scholarly projects, including *Encyclopedia of French general officers in the Great War, 1914-1919*, and the *Dictionary of war ministers 1789-1939*, with the ministry of defense.

Purpose of the course

This course is designed to provide students with several important keys to understanding France today, chief among them being the development of the French notion of the State as well as changes in this central concept over time. Taking a historical and political approach, the course demonstrates how the notion of the State has structured and continues to structure French political life and French society.

The legacy of past centuries is an invaluable tool for understanding the current role of French political institutions. This course will focus particularly on the importance of the 19th century in markedly changing the traditional approach of this period. The years between 1815 and 1870 were essential and groundbreaking in French political history, not only for the establishment of a parliamentary system and the development of ideologies, but also for the importance of social issues and economic development. After the Franco-Prussian war of 1870 the *beginnings* of the Third Republic established the republican model, defining a political culture and tradition, despite crises and upheavals that disappeared with the First World War. By 1918 the republican model was *ingrained/solidly rooted/well established* in France, and was no longer questioned. After the Second World War and the difficult reconstruction period, France experienced a period of exceptional economic growth. From 1958 on, the figure of general de Gaulle, the *savoir* of 1940, embodied the spirit of national independence, economic modernity, and the renewal of political institutions, even though, with the end of its colonial empire France had ceased to be one of the great world powers. The deep schism of 1968 launched a massive transformation and *outlet opening prospect end* on an economic and social crisis, crisis in adapting to capitalism. The conscience of the crisis weighed on the country and ended with a political shift, embodied by Francois Mitterrand, who lifted people's hope. Unfortunately, these hopes were quickly crushed by the weight of economic realities. French society in the 21st century has seen social inequalities deepen, and the erosion of the republican legacy of the Resistance and the Liberation.

Description of the course

The legacy of past centuries is an important tool for understanding the current role of French political institutions. This course will focus particularly on the significant shifts in traditional approaches that happened during the 19th century. The years between 1815 and 1870 are essential to French political history, not only for the establishment of a parliamentary system and the development of political ideologies, but also for the importance given to social issues and economic development. Despite crises and upheavals, the republican model was established and a political culture and tradition was defined with the beginning of the third Republic, at the end of the Franco-Prussian war of 1870.

By 1918 the republican model was ingrained in the French mentality. After the Second World War and the difficulty of reconstruction, France experienced a period of exceptional economic growth. From 1958 on, the figure of general de Gaulle, the *savoir* of 1940, embodied a spirit of national independence, economic modernity, and the renewal of political institutions, despite the end of France's colonial empire and resulting decline of international power.

In 1968 a deep schism resulted in a major transformations, and lead to and economic and social crisis, as France adapted its state-centered model to modern capitalism. The sense of crisis weighed heavily on the country, resulting in a political shift to the left with the election of Francois Mitterrand, who embodied a new hope. Unfortunately, this hope was quickly crushed by the weight of economic realities. French society in the 21st century has seen social inequalities deepen, as well as the erosion of the republican legacy of the Resistance and the Liberation.

Course format

The format of this course has been designed for maximum pedagogical effectiveness in light of 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 students' participatory exercises. Student participation is both informal (debate and discussion) and more structured methodologically (oral exposés, press reviews, and other presentations).

Course outline

1815-1871 Political legacies, governmental instability, economic development

- A background of France's political legacies
- Difficulty in constructing a government
- Economic development

1871-1914: Founding the Republic

- Domestic policy (establishment and consolidation of the Republic)
- Foreign policy (colonization and international relations)
- France in the "Belle Epoque"

1914-1939: The Republic becomes ingrained

- The First World War
- The inter-war period

1939-1958: From a military disaster to institutional powerlessness

- France in the Second World War
- The Fourth Republic
- Economic prosperity and political instability

1958-2012: The Fifth Republic

- Reinforcing contradictions in the system
- The global crisis and its political fallout
- The fifth Republic and the test of time

Centralization and the Jacobin model

- The application of the Jacobinism of the French Revolution
- Reconsidering parts of the Jacobin model: Decentralization

The secular model: religion in France during the 19th and 20th centuries

- The legacy and contribution of the French Revolution
- The Third Republic and the separation of church and state
- The challenges of secularism in the 21st century: the French model and the European Court of Human Rights

Readings

- Atlas de l'histoire de France, Aurélie Boissière, Paris, Belin, 2012, 480 pages.
- Histoire de l'Europe contemporaine : de l'héritage du XIXe siècle à l'Europe d'aujourd'hui, Serge Berstein et Pierre Milza, Paris, Hatier, 2002, 447 pages.
- Les cultures politiques en France, sous la direction de Serge Berstein, Paris, Seuil, 1999, 407 pages.
- Histoire de la France au XXe siècle, Serge Berstein et Pierre Milza, Bruxelles, Editions Complexe, 5 volumes, 1990-1995.

- Manuel d'histoire politique de la France contemporaine, Frédéric Bluche, Paris, puf, 2008, 296 pages.
- La France de 1914 à nos jours, Jean-François Sirinelli, Paris puf, 2004, 576 pages.
- La France de 1848 à 1870, Jean Garrigues, Paris, Armand Colin, 2002, 192 pages.
- La France et les débuts de la IIIe République (1870-1896), Frédéric Lejeune, Paris, Armand Colin, 2011, 240 pages.
- La France de la Belle Époque 1896-1914, Dominique Lejeune, Paris, Armand Colin, 2011, 240 pages.
- La Grande Guerre des Français 1914-1918, Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, Paris, Perrin, 2003, 515 pages.
- La France dans la Deuxième Guerre mondiale, Yves Durand, Paris, Armand Colin, 2011, 224 pages.
- Histoire politique de la France depuis 1945, Jean-Jacques Becker, Paris, Armand Colin, 2011, 280 pages.
- La France du temps présent : 1945-2005, Michelle Zancarini-Fournel, Paris, Belin, 2010, 653

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.