



POLI 089
Politics in France
M, W, 3:30–4:45pm, Murphey 115

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Office hours: M, W, 2-3pm and by appointment

This class focuses on politics in France. More important than understanding the details of politics in another country, we'll take the opportunity to discuss how France and the US have different models of democratic governance. Neither would cede the title of best functioning democracy to the other, yet the two models are starkly different. We pride ourselves on localism, separation of powers, and competing institutions sharing power. They pride themselves on equality of government across the national territory (e.g., no local control), on clear rules of authority, on the robustness of their ideological debates, and they are comfortable with an extremely powerful central government. Our central state grew really only in the 20th century; France has had large and prestigious bureaucracies since the monarchy, and none of the various revolutions in French history have done away with the powerful centralized state agencies that enact the policies that the governments (be they democratic, monarchical, or imperial) choose. It is a powerful state; ours is purposefully held to be weak. Yet they are equally democratic. Hopefully this class will make you think about what democracy means.

I have kept the readings in this class to a minimum but will assign many short reading assignments and post them to the class web site throughout the term. All are required. I will also assign many class presentations and those will require research outside of class on your own and in small groups. This is to give you lots of experience in looking up facts, figures, opinion, analyses, and scholarly work on line and in the library. In addition, you'll write a lot of very short little papers and I'll give you feedback on them quickly. The two most important skills will therefore be research and writing, and that is no coincidence. These are the skills that will help you most in all your future classes. Class participation including informal participation (e.g., asking questions, contributing to the discussion) as well as more formal presentations on assigned topics is another major element of the class. That is because you will need those skills in your future classes as well.

As a first-year seminar, part of the goal for the class is to introduce you to the type of work expected here at UNC, and to introduce you to the resources available to help you perform at that level. Further, you should consider this class a good opportunity to discuss such things as study habits, how to pick courses, how to get to know your professors, and how to find your way in the big U; we can talk about such matters a little bit each week, so come with those questions and prepared to discuss them as well. We'll discuss plagiarism as well; it's important to know right at the beginning of your experience here what that is and where the gray areas are so that you know what you are doing in terms of citing your sources properly, including web-based sources. I'll

also pay some attention to library skills and using electronic resources, both through the library web site as well as generally over the web, for example distinguishing between the kinds of sites and references professors like to see from those which make us think badly of the quality of research presented. These should be useful skills for you in the next 4 years.

Assignments will be as follows: First, class participation is an absolute must. There are only about 20 of you in the class, so I'll know your names and expect you to be in class each time, having done the readings and ready to participate. You don't have to have understood all the readings; it's fine to come to class with questions or points where you'd like some more clarification of the ideas. But you have to do the readings ahead of time, and come to class ready to ask questions as well as to answer those questions posed by others. Sitting quietly is a very bad habit.

Second, you'll each be assigned to one of three groups (blue, white, red) and I'll often assign the groups to make a short presentation the class on a given topic. For each presentation, you'll need to: a) explain the concept or facts in question; b) explain how it differs or is similar to the US practice; c) list and explain several positive elements of the French way of doing it; d) list and explain several negatives about the French practice; and e) summarize and conclude with an assessment of whether the French way of doing it is better or worse, on balance, than the US way. So if the assignment is the powers of the French President, your group will essentially present to the class what amounts to the overview of the powers of the French president as it compares to the US President, compare and contrast.

Third, I know you all hate group assignments because you can't be sure that someone in the group is not free-riding. So your six short writing assignments will be related to your part of the collective group assignment. For example if the group is presenting on the French President, and your part was to evaluate it in a positive light compared to the US case, then your paper can focus just on that aspect of it. You'll need to have citations and research to back it up, and in this way I can ensure that everyone is contributing to their group project. I'm hoping you'll develop this as a good habit and stick with it after this class is over. You can share the research with your group, but each writes their own paper.

Fourth, I'll give a series of quizzes on the readings and occasional homework assignments. The quizzes will focus on the readings and the assignments will be focused on library skills, plagiarism, internet research skills and other things that I think will help you be better students or simply get you accustomed to the resources that are available here at Chapel Hill. These will be graded on a scale of 2 (full credit); 1 (half credit); 0 (unacceptable or not handed in). I'm an easy grader so if you do the assignment with any care at all you'll get a perfect grade. Then again if I have a quiz in class and you skip that day, oops, you lose two points. Such things can add up and if you note the equation below, the combination of class participation and these short assignments will make up 40 percent of your total grade. These quizzes will be unannounced and we'll have as many of them as I feel like we need, fewer if everyone seems well prepared all the time, more if there seem to be free-riders.

Finally, there will be a midterm exam conducted in class.

Summary of grading and assignments:

Class participation including attendance	20%
Group presentations	20
Six short papers (5 points each):	30
Midterm	10
Short homework assignments and quizzes	20
Total:	100%

Readings: There are no text books to buy. All the readings will be available on line. Note, however, that you need to print them out and bring them to class with you in printed form. See the next page about my policy on computers in the classroom. You may not like it but after you take a few classes you'll see why it's my policy.

I will distribute a PDF copy of a text book on France that I wrote and which was published in 2007 by McGraw Hill. It is entitled "Politics in France: The Fifth Republic at Fifty." It is the (long) chapter on France available as part of a longer book called *Comparative Governance*, and is used in various universities for the large lecture classes on Introduction to Comparative Politics. We'll refer to that for basic facts but I will also assign various additional readings and expect you to find more during your research for presentations.

Formal Announcements and Policies

Attendance and class participation: I may or may not take attendance on any given day, though I usually will, I will do it a lot at the beginning of the semester in order to learn your names, and I always will if attendance is low. Coming to class so you can participate in the discussions is an important element of class participation and learning. The final grade in this course will incorporate a substantial weight for class participation, and you cannot do well in that portion of the course if your attendance is poor. Note that sitting quietly in class never with a question, never with an answer, never participating in the discussion will not get you a good grade either, even if your attendance is excellent. So attendance is a necessary condition for a good participation grade, but not a sufficient one.

Computers, cell phones, and other electronic gadgets: Here's the deal, it's very simple. Cell phones have to be off. Computers have to stay in your backpacks. Period. Ditto for any other e-gadget. The reason for the cell phone rule is obvious. The reason for the computer rule is that when I've gone to visit other classes and sat in the back I've seen too much facebook, solitaire, and ESPN.com. So experience real life happening right around you for 75 minutes each Monday and Wednesday; you might like it. If we need someone to look up some fact or figure during class, I'll designate someone and they can use their computer or else the one on the podium with the projector so we can all see the results. I realize that most of you use your computers for taking notes, so you'll have to take notes with paper and pen in this class, then transcribe them to your computer later. (You'll have better notes that way.) If I have complicated information to impart, I'll put it on the class web page in any case.

A Note on Academic Honesty

As you know the UNC Honor Code prohibits lying, cheating, or stealing. As regards this course the particular element of concern is academic honesty, especially plagiarism. Here, it is especially important that you understand exactly what plagiarism is, because many cases of plagiarism are due to carelessness or ignorance of the norms of attribution for academic work, not intentional cheating. So familiarize yourself with the Honor Code by reviewing this web site (<http://honor.unc.edu/>) and the "instrument" that is included there. Any work you hand in for this course will be assumed to be your own, in accordance with the Honor Pledge. In addition, the library has an excellent web site that includes a tutorial about citations, plagiarism, and related matters. Use this link to familiarize yourself in detail with these rules, as they will be necessary in all your courses: <http://www.lib.unc.edu/instruct/citations/introduction/>.

Students with Disabilities

I am happy to make reasonable accommodation for any disability. I only ask that you let me know of your disability status in the first week or two of the semester before accommodation is needed so that we can agree on a plan. Please use this web site for information about disabilities and accommodation: <http://www.unc.edu/depts/lds/index.html>. Contact the Office of Learning Disabilities and bring a letter from them indicating the type of accommodation needed. I'll be more than happy to comply. (It is very important that you get in the habit of letting professors know right up front about any disability status. If you do not let us know until there is a problem that requires accommodation, we may not be able to make adjustments once the semester starts.)

Weekly schedule and discussion topics

Note: Readings should all be done *before the Monday class*. You should read the relevant section of "Politics in France" for each topic, and additional readings will be assigned one or two weeks ahead of time. Each group, Blue, White, and Red will make six presentations on the topics marked below.

Week 1, Wed Aug 25, Introduction and overview

Week 2, Aug 30, Sep 1, The Legacy of Instability

Note: special class on September 1. Sue Harbor from University Career Services will meet with you in 239B Hanes Hall. Go straight to that room at the regular class time. Baumgartner will be out of town, unfortunately.

Week 3 Sep 8, What People Fight about in France (Political Culture)
(No class on Labor Day Sep 6)

Week 4 Sep 13, 15, Parties and Voters
Blue 1: UMP Party and Mainstream Right Parties
White 1: Socialist and Communist parties

Week 5 Sep 20, 22, The Political Parties
Red 1: Ecology and Far Left parties
Blue 2: Far Right parties

Week 6 Sep 27, 29, Elections and Representation
White 2: How the National Assembly is elected

Week 7 Oct 4, 6, The President and the Government
Red 2: The Presidency
Blue 3: The Prime Minister and the Government

Week 8 Oct 11, 13, The Parliament and the Courts
White 3: National Assembly and Senate
Red 3: The Constitutional Council

Week 9 Oct 18, 20, Review and Midterm Exam
Midterm in class Oct 20

Part Two: Comparing individual public policies and how they work in the two countries

Week 10 Oct 25, 27, Crime; Energy
Blue 4: Crime: What is the crime rate, how does policing / courts / punishment work?
White 4: Energy: Where do they get their electricity, how much does gas cost?

Week 11 Nov 1, 3, Heath; Social Benefits

Red 4: Health Care: how is it organized, how good is the care?

Blue 5: Other Social Benefits: what other social benefits are part of the French system?

Week 12 Nov 8, 10, The War in Algeria; Immigration

White 5: The War in Algeria

Red 5: Immigration

Week 13 Nov 15, 17, How the EU has affected France

Blue 6: Development of the EU from 1958

White 6: Current functioning of the EU

Week 14 Nov 22, More on the EU

Red 6: Expanding the EU to new members?

(No class on Nov 24, Happy Thanksgiving!)

Week 15 Nov 29, Dec 1, Federalism and Separation of Powers v. Centralization and Unified Powers

Debate this week, no papers due

Blue: Federalism is Better

White: Centralization is Better

Red: Separation of Powers is too Inefficient

Week 16 Dec 6, 8, Review, Overview, Discussion, Complaints about the Professor (optional)

Note: No final exam in this class; have a great break!