

## 0ISSLX09 – Power and Institutions in France: Building the Fifth Republic

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**Lecturer:** Fabien POETE

**Contact information:**

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**Department:** International affairs

**Semester:** 1

**Course level:** L3 Undergraduate

**Domain:** Political sciences, History

**Teaching language:** English

**Number of in-class hours:** 33

**Number of course sessions:** 10 + Exam

**ECTS:** 6

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### Course description and objectives

The course is aimed at international students who are not necessarily familiar with France or with political studies in general: it is an introduction course (101-type), and it aims at providing a first look at French political institutions in a fun and interactive way.

The ten three-hour classes rely heavily on student participation and interaction. Weekly roleplays, debates and situation games will allow students to use the material discovered in class and to appropriate it in a dynamic context.

“Power and Institutions in France: Building the Fifth Republic” is a discovery of French politics: why do we speak of “left-wing” and “right-wing” politics? How do the French elect their lawmakers and how is political power exerted? Why is France not a federation? What are some legal checks on what a French government can and cannot do?

The first four classes will look at the emergence of the Fifth Republic from a historical perspective, going (briefly) all the way back to Roman times, while the last six classes will delve into the rules governing public institutions today.

### Prerequisites

Good understanding, speaking, and writing skills in English (B2, C1 or C2 in the [Common European Framework of Reference for Languages](#)).

An interest in discovering more about France and its political institutions. No prior knowledge of France or politics is required.

### Learning outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be familiar with French political institutions. They will be able to debate the organization of government and public administration in France, putting forward their own ideas and suggestions, and defending those with structured and logical arguments while taking into account specific historical contexts.

Students will also be able to understand and explain news items relating to the organization of government and political institutions in France.

### Assignments and grading

- Most of the work expected for this course happens in class: there is no compulsory reading material but active participation in class is required.

- The CC (“contrôle continu” or continuous assessment) grade consists of class participation (20%), one short in-class essay based on the study of four or five documents (Week 5, 40%) and one debate based on the study of individual files with four or five documents linked to the topic of the discussion (Week 9, 40%). The CC grade counts toward 50% of the final grade for this course.
- The CF (“contrôle final” or final exam) grade will assess students’ ability to use class content and to analyze a file consisting of five to seven documents to defend certain ideas and points of view about the organization of French institutions, in the context of a role-playing game (debate at the National Assembly). The CF grade counts toward 50% of the final grade for this course.

The numerical grade distribution will dictate the final grade. The passing grade for a course is 10/20.

**Class participation:** Active class participation – this is what makes classes lively and instructive. Come on time and prepared. Class participation is based on quality of comments, not quantity.

**Exam policy:** In the exam, students will not be allowed to bring any document (except if allowed by the lecturer). Unexcused absences from exams or failure to submit cases will result in zero grades in the calculation of numerical averages. Exams are collected at the end of examination periods.

## Course structure

Session	Topic
1	Centralizing Power: How Paris Became the Heart of France.
2	Watch Your Head: Is the French Revolution Still Going On?
3	Imbalance of Power: The Instability of the Third Republic (1870-1940).
4	A New Hope? Rebuilding After World War Two.
5	<b>Short In-Class Essay.</b> The Constitution of the Fifth Republic (1).
6	The Constitution of the Fifth Republic (2).
7	How Do the French Pass Laws?
8	One Branch to Rule Them All: Is the Government Too Powerful?
9	In the Name of the People: Justice in France. <b>Debate.</b>
10	Towards a Sixth Republic?
11	<b>Final Exam – Role-playing game (debate at the National Assembly)</b>

## Bibliography

All recommended readings are optional: our focus will be on the material studied in class.

### Monographs

- BERENSON Edward, Vincent Duclert et. al., 2011. *The French Republic: History, Values, Debates*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- COLE Alistair, 2017. *French Politics and Society*. Third edition. New York: Routledge.
- HALPERN Charlotte, Patrick HASSENTEUFEL, 2018. *Policy Analysis in France*. United Kingdom: Policy Press.
- HOWARTH David, Georgios VAROUXAKIS et. al., 2023. *Contemporary France: An Introduction to French Politics and Society*. Second Revised Edition. New York: Routledge (or 2003 first edition, reprinted in 2014).

- MAZUR Amy, Emiliano GROSSMAN et. al., 2016. *The Oxford Handbook of French Politics*. United Kingdom: Oxford University Press.
- SCHAMA Simon, 1989. *Citizens: A Chronicle of the French Revolution*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- *Constitution of October 4, 1958*. [https://www.conseil-constitutionnel.fr/sites/default/files/2018-10/constitution\\_anglais.pdf](https://www.conseil-constitutionnel.fr/sites/default/files/2018-10/constitution_anglais.pdf).

### Academic articles

- CONSTANT Benjamin, Blandine KRIEGEL et. al., 1996. "From 'Imperial State' to 'l'Etat De Droit'." In *Political Studies*, Vol.44 (3), p.488-504. <https://api-istex-fr.proxy.bu.dauphine.fr/ark:/67375/WNG-Q5XJKKHX-6/fulltext.pdf?sid=sfx%2Fdau>.
- KEITNER Chimène, 2000. "National Self-Determination in Historical Perspective: The Legacy of the French Revolution for Today's Debates." In *International Studies Review*, Vol.2 (3), p.3-26. [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=933730](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=933730).
- HICKS Peter, 2009. "The Napoleonic 'police' or 'security state' in context." In *Napoleonica. La Revue*. 2009/1 (4), p.2-10. <https://www.cairn.info/revue-napoleonica-la-revue-2009-1-page-2.htm>.
- JAKUBIAK Łukasz, 2018. "The Parliamentary Genesis of the French Semi-Presidentialism Against the Background of the Process of Presidentialisation of the Fifth Republic." In *Politeja*, Vol.53 (2), p.203-226. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26564339>.
- POPKIN Jeremy, 2020. "Vive la révolution !" <https://aeon.co/essays/what-can-we-learn-from-the-french-revolution-today>.

### News articles

- BOISSONEAULT Lorraine, 2017. "Why Is France in Its Fifth Republic?" In *Smithsonian Magazine*, April 20<sup>th</sup>. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/why-france-its-fifth-republic-180962983/>.
- CHEVAL Stéphanie, Sonia BARITELLO et. al., 2018. "Stability or monarchy? France's Fifth Republic turns 60." In *France 24*, September 28<sup>th</sup>. <https://www.france24.com/en/20180928-france-focus-fifth-republic-history-constitution-reforms-sixth-republic-jean-louis-debre>.
- HENLEY Jon, 2023. "Vive la révolution! But is France ready to establish a Sixth Republic?" In *The Guardian*, May 6<sup>th</sup>. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/may/06/vive-la-revolution-but-is-france-ready-to-establish-a-sixth-republic>.
- LICHFIELD John, 2023. "French democracy is in crisis. What else is new?" In *Politico*, April 25<sup>th</sup>. <https://www.politico.eu/article/france-democracy-macron-pension-reform-republic-crisis/>.
- MCNICOLL Tracy, Romain BRUNET, 2022. "Explainer: What does a French president do?" In *France 24*, February 11<sup>th</sup>. <https://www.france24.com/en/europe/20220211-explainer-what-does-a-french-president-do>.
- MOUTET Anne-Elisabeth, 2023. "The French need a revolution." In *Unherd*, July 14<sup>th</sup>. <https://unherd.com/2023/07/the-french-need-a-revolution/>.

- RIOULT Claire, Romain FATHI, 2023. “The French Revolution executed royals and nobles, yes - but most people killed were commoners.” In *The Conversation*, July 12<sup>th</sup>. <https://theconversation.com/the-french-revolution-executed-royals-and-nobles-yes-but-most-people-killed-were-commoners-200455>.
- VILLEMINOT Florence, 2023. “Presidential powers: Is it time for a Sixth Republic in France?” In *France 24*, April 13<sup>th</sup>. <https://www.france24.com/en/tv-shows/french-connections/20230413-presidential-powers-is-it-time-for-a-sixth-republic-in-france>.

### **Documentaries**

- BACQUÉ Raphaëlle, Philippe KOHLY, 2008. *L’Enfer de Matignon*.
- ROTMAN Patrick, 2013. *Le Pouvoir*.

### **Fictional movies and TV shows about French politics in the Fifth Republic**

- AKNINE Pierre, 2010. *Death of a President*.
- BENZEKRINE Eric, Jean-Baptiste DELAFON, 2016-20. *Baron Noir*.
- DURRINGER Xavier, 2011. *The Conquest*.
- GUEDIGUIAN Robert, 2005. *The Last Mitterrand*.
- HEYNEMANN Laurent, 2013. *An Unlikely Alliance*.
- TAVERNIER Bertrand, 2013. *The French Minister*.

## **Lecturer’s biography**

Fabien Poète is a teacher of English as a foreign language at Dauphine PSL university. He was an international student at Victoria University of Wellington (New Zealand), a Fulbright teaching assistant at Willamette University (Oregon, United States of America) and an intern at the French Embassy in New Zealand before he became a teacher in 2014.

After teaching classes in English as a Foreign Language, and in History and Current affairs of English-speaking countries at the École normale supérieure de Lyon from 2016 to 2019, his interest in public policies led him to Sciences Po Toulouse and to Dauphine PSL university. He has also been teaching classes at Sciences Po Paris since 2022.

## **Moodle**

This course is on Moodle: <https://moodle.psl.eu/course/view.php?id=22572>.

## **Academic integrity**

Be aware of the rules in Université Paris Dauphine about plagiarism and cheating during exams. All work turned in for this course must be your own work, or that of your own group. Working as part of a group implies that you are an active participant and fully contributed to the output produced by that group.