

UC Center Program Courses - Fall 2009

PCC 116. Cultural Identities of France

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Since the end of the Second World War, France has undergone formidable changes, and French "national identity" along with the political ideal republicanism has been seriously challenged. Much of the 1980s and 1990s, indeed, was spent worrying about the "crisis of French identity", as intellectuals and the "political classes" attempted to make sense of France's history and identity in light of the challenges posed by immigration (especially non-European immigration), feminism, economic and cultural globalization (considered an American-directed movement), and France's peculiar version of "multiculturalism." The first years of the new millennium see France trying to maintain its distinctiveness in a world of globalization, while the 2002 presidential election has, more than ever, demonstrated the power of "national identity" discourses. To understand these movements and their impact on France, this course considers contemporary debates in French political life surrounding the politics of recognition, national identity, and French "exceptionalism" in a European and global context. [History, Sociology, Political Science, Anthropology, French Studies, European Studies] **6.0 Credits**

COURSE MATERIALS

- Azouz Begag and Alec Hargreaves, *Ethnicity and Equality, France in the Balance*
- Articles and book chapters reproduced in the Course Reader (hereby referred to as **[CR]**)
- Recommended readings for each week are either online, in the Reserve Cabinet **[RC]**, or on the Course Reserve Shelf **[RS]**
- Online materials, including the weekly dossiers that will be discussed in lecture and section. Note that for any set of topics covered by the weekly dossiers, students are urged to search materials using the CDL (in particular, [Lexis-Nexis](#)) and www.scholar.google
- There are also separate [Web Resources Pages](#) for this course with links to online reference sites, as well as other research material. The best English-language summary of French current events on the web is [The Tocqueville Connection](#).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students are required to do all reading before the first weekly session and to attend all guest lectures and sites visits scheduled during the semester. Students are required to complete the weekly readings comprised of secondary sources (in English) found in the assigned books, the Course Reader, and directly on the web (with links from the syllabus). In addition, most weeks require the perusal of a "dossier" of primary sources including speeches, articles in the newspapers by experts, politicians or scholars, government reports.

- Weekly Readings and Class Participation (20% of the final grade)
- Writing Assignments (30% of the final grade)

- Two short papers (5-7 pages each) on two different topics to be chosen in consultation with the instructor.
- Mid-term exam (20% of the final grade)
- Final exam (30%).

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK 1.

Introduction

From Renan to Sarkozy : What is a Nation ?

Reading:

Begag and Hargraves, Introduction

Fernand Braudel, "Introduction" in *The Identity of France, vol. 1 History and Environment*, Collins, 1988, pp. 15-28 [CR]

Ernest Renan, "What is a Nation?", text of a conference delivered at the Sorbonne-University, 11 March 1882 in Ernest Renan, *Qu'est-ce qu'une Nation?*, Paris, Presses-Pocket, 1992

Nicolas Sarkozy's speech in Caen, 9 March 2008

Ségolène Royal's speech in Marseille, 23 Mars 2008

I Challenges to the Integrity of the Nation 1974-1989

This section will focus on the fifteen years between the immigration ban in 1974 and the first « headscarf affair » in 1989. It studies the various events and processes that account for the rise of the feeling that France is enduring a national identity crisis : the debate about the place to be given to migrants into French society, the election of François Mitterrand as the President of the Republic, the transformation of the party system with the re-emergence of a right-wing party, and the advent of crises that seem to challenge the unity that had been glorified by the historian Fernand Braudel in the early 1980s: the bicentennial of the French revolution and the headscarf affair.

WEEK 2.

From Immigration to Closing the Borders

Reading:

Begag and Hargreaves, Chapter 1

Gérard Noiriel, "Immigration: Amnesia and Memory" in *French Historical Studies*, vol.19, n. 2, Autumn 1995, pp. 367-380

Dominique Schnapper, "The Debate on Immigration and the Crisis of National Identity" in *West European Politics*, vol.17, n.2, April 1994, pp. 127-139

WEEK 3.

« Être Français, ça se mérite » : Reframing Nationality

Reading:

Begag and Hargreaves, Chapter 2

Pierre Bréchon and Subrata Kumar Mitra, "The National Front in France: The

Emergence of an Extreme Right Protest Movement” in *Comparative Politics*, vol.25, n.1., October 1992, pp. 63-82

Miriam Feldblum, *Reconstructing Citizenship. The Politics of Nationality Reform and Immigration in Contemporary France*, New York, State University of New York Press, 1999, chapter 4, p. 57-76

WEEK 4.

The Opening of the Public Sphere and the « Droit à la Différence » [ASSIGNMENT 1 DUE]

Reading:

Judith E. Vichniac, « French Socialists and Droit à la Différence : A Changing Dynamic », *French Politics and Society*, vol. 9, n°1, Winter 1991, p. 40-55.

WEEK 5.

A New « Terrible Year » ? 1989 and the Birth of Neo-Republicanism

Reading :

Begag and Hargreaves, Chapter 3

Michael F. Leruth, “The Neorepublican Discourse on French National Identity” in *French Politics and Society*, vol.16, n.4, Fall 1998, pp. 46-61 [CR]

II. Losing Sight with Universalism : the Search for Compatible Responses (1990-2005)

France is a Republic, where public law officially forbids the political recognition of any subgrouping (of race, gender, or ethnicity) in the public sphere. In the recent years, this republican model has been frequently challenged by globalization seen as the Americanization of the world ; by the rise of new territorial identities, smaller (regions) or larger (European) than the nation-state ; by the claims for the official recognition of gender and sexual differences; as well as by the Republic losing control over part of its territory, namely « the banlieues ».

General Reading for this section :

Jeremy Jennings, “Citizenship, Republicanism and Multiculturalism in Contemporary France”, *British Journal of Political Science*, 30, 2000, p. 575-598

Cécile Laborde, “The Culture(s) of the republic. Nationalism and Multiculturalism in French Republican Thought”, *Political Theory*, 29:5, October 2001, p. 716-735.

WEEK 6.

Threats From Above and From Below : France between Fragmentation and Dissolution

Reading:

Begag and Hargreaves, Chapter 4

Alain Renaut, “The French Debate on Regional Languages” in *Comprendre. Revue de Philosophie et de Sciences Sociales*, special issue “Les identités culturelles”, edited by Will Kymlicka and Sylvie Mesure, n.1, 2000, pp. 381-400

Sophie Meunier, Globalization and Europeanization: A Challenge to French Politics », *French Politics*, vol. 2, n°2, août 2004, p. 125-150

**WEEK 7.
MID-TERM**

FALL BREAK

**WEEK 8.
Recognition Politics ?**

Reading:

Begag and Hargreaves, Chapter 5

Laure Béréni, « French Feminists Renegotiate Republican Universalism: The Gender Parity Campaign », *French Politics*, vol. 5, n°3, septembre 2007, p. 191-209

Enda McCaffrey, « From Universalism to Post-Universalism : the Pacts and Beyond », *Modern and Contemporary France*, vol. 14, n°3, 2006, p. 291-304

**WEEK 9.
French Ghettos ? The Banlieues as the Lost Territories of the Republic**

Reading:

Loïc Wacquant, « Urban Outcasts: Stigma and Division in the Black American Ghetto and the French Urban Periphery.” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 17-3 (September 1993): 366-383.

Riva Kastoryano, “Territories of Identities in France”, available on the SSRC website

Jean Baubérot, « Laïcité and the Challenge of Republicanism », *Modern and Contemporary France*, vol. 17, n°2, 2009, p. 189-198.

Elaine Sciolino, “France Has a State Religion: Secularism” in *The New York Times*, February 8, 2004

III. Current Unsolved Debates (2005-2009)

In twenty-first century France, the issue of French national identity is structured by two different meanings of the French word « reconnaissance » that fueled intense debates : the recognition, identification and representation of the various groups composing society (the so-called « diversité ») and the acknowledgement of the complexity of French history, including darker pages such as slavery and colonization.

**WEEK 10.
What is Diversity in a Republic ?
[ASSIGNMENT 2 DUE]**

Guest Speaker : Azouz Begag, sociologist and former minister

Reading:

Begag and Hargreaves, Chapter 6

WEEK 11.

Recognizing Groups or Creating Groups ? « Discrimination positive » and Ethnic Data

Reading:

Begag and Hargreaves, Chapter 7

Erik Bleich, "Antiracism without Races: Politics and Policy in a 'Color-Blind' State" in *French Politics, Culture and Society*, vol.18, n.3, Fall 2000, pp. 48-74 [CR]

Daniel Sabbagh, "Affirmative Action at Science Po" in *French Politics, Culture and Society*, vol.20, n.3, Fall 2002

Patrick Simon, « The Choice of Ignorance. The Debate on Ethnic and Racial Statistics in France », *French Politics, Culture and Society*, vol. 26, n°1, printemps 2008, p. 7-31.

WEEK 12.

History, Memory and Repentance : France and Its Past

Reading

Begag and Hargreaves, Conclusion

Julie Fette, « Apology and the Past in Contemporary France », *French Politics, Culture and Society*, vol. 26, n°2, été 2008, p. 78-113

Brigitte Jelen, « "Leur Histoire est Notre Histoire". Immigrant Culture in France Between Visibility and Invisibility », *French Politics, Culture and Society*, vol. 23, n°2, été 2005, p. 101-125

WEEK 13.

Review and Final Exam