

## SELF PROGRAM 2023/2024

### **French constitutional law**

Pr. Mathilde Philip-Gay, Lyon  
Center of Constitutionnal Studies,  
Lyon Chair in Human Rights

#### **Course information**

*Number of credits:* 6 credits

*Contract hours:* 30 hours

*Hours taught per week:* 3 hours

*Teaching-period:* Winter-Spring 2024

#### **Course description**

France, which has experienced 14 constitutions, is often referred to as a “constitutional laboratory”. The constitution of 1958 has withstood the country’s chronic political instability for 60 years, but now faces severe challenges following the events of recent months (which will be discussed in this course).

As well as learning about French constitutional rules, students attending this class will be able to compare and contrast with the laws of their own countries, including the American and British constitutions.

#### **Course outline**

*Class 1:* A brief history and classification of former French constitutions

*Class 2:* The birth of the Republic (with references to British constitutional law)

*Class 3:* The Birth of the rationalized parliamentarism (with references to the German Fundamental Law)

*Class 4:* The birth of the current Constitution (with references to the US constitutional law).

*Class 5:* President or Prime Minister, who is the leader? (with references to the US and British constitutional law) – Part 1

*Class 6:* President or Prime Minister, who is the leader? (with references to the US and British constitutional law) – Part 1

*Class 7:* Does the French Parliament really make the law?

*Class 8 :* French constitutional council compared to US Supreme Court

### **Prerequisites**

No previous study of the topic is required. The course may be of particular interest to those with a background in law, politics or history, but the only prerequisite is a deep interest in these matters.

### **Course objectives**

This course aims at providing students with an overview of French law and politics, and of the national protection of human rights.

### **Assessment**

50% –in-class assessment of knowledge comprehension

50% – final in-class written examination (i.e. class 10)

### **Attendance:**

In order to participate, students must be present. A maximum of 2 (two) unexcused absences will be allowed, otherwise no mark will be given. An unexcused absence at a test (final test or continuous assessment) means no credit for the course.

### **Reading :**

Marie-Luce Paris, Principles of French Constitutional Law, 2024, 1<sup>st</sup> edition.

Constitution of 4 October 1958, <https://www.conseil-constitutionnel.fr/en>

Constitutional case-law (selection in English), <https://www.conseil-constitutionnel.fr/en>

*Further reading will be provided relating to each of the weekly themes as the course progresses.*