Topics in French Economy - G46.2910.001  
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« Work, Employment and Social Protection in France »

This course aims at providing a general picture of French economy and society through the lens of work. The centrality, not only as the basic economic activity, but as a social, legal and cultural institution. In the 40 years since May 68, the 35 years since the beginning of the economic « crisis » whose end was never really announced, France has undergone profound changes, and a big part of it can be linked to the appearance of mass unemployment. This course is also an introduction to an economic and sociological methods and concepts : recent research will be prominent in the readings. The course is taught in English (some optional readings may be in French).

Grades will be based on three papers (20% each, 3 to 5 pages) and participation (40%, weekly memos on the readings and class participation). Alternatively, a 20 minutes presentation may replace one of the papers. The readings will be available on Blackboard a week before each of the three parts.

Outline of Sessions

1) Introduction

Social Protection

2) The French Model of Social Protection
3) Health Care and the « Reforms »
4) Pensions and Redistribution
5) Silent Evolutions

Unemployment and Consequences

6) Unemployment and its Shadows
7) The Causes of Unemployment
8) Women at Work
9) Transformations of the Job Market
10) Where are the Social Classes ?
France in Globalization

11) The Long Story of Globalization
12) European Union : « Fortress » or « Trojan Horse ».
13) Is France « Mcdonaldized » ?

14) Conclusion