

## POPULISM VS. DEMOCRACY?

Professor: Nonna Mayer  
Session 1  
Language of instruction: English  
Number of hours of class: 2.5

### Objective of the Course

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This course is an introduction to the study of contemporary populisms with social science tools. After defining the concept of populism and the diversity of parties it applies to, it focuses on the electoral rise of populist radical right (PRR) parties in France and Europe since the 1990's, its causes, and its consequences for democracy.

### Summary

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One in four Europeans today votes “populist”. In a dozen European nations, populist parties have entered government. In countries like Hungary or Poland, they rule. What do they have in common? How can one define populism? What do these parties stand for? Who supports them? Why do they develop? To what extent are they a danger for democracy? This course will present the large populist party-family that developed in Europe, first on the far right, then since the Great Recession on the far left. It will review the main explanations put forward to explain their electoral rise, from globalization (Kriesi et al., 2007) to the state of the economy (Guriev 2018) and the “cultural backlash” theories (Inglehart and Norris, 2019). It will test them with an in-depth analysis of the French case, as the National Rally (ex National Front) is one of the oldest and most successful of the European Populist Radical Rights, especially since Marine le Pen succeeded her father in 2011. Finally, it will analyse the different strategies implemented by the mainstream parties to counter the PRR and their efficacy.

### Main Professor Biography

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Nonna Mayer is CNRS Research Director Emerita at the Centre for European Studies and Comparative Politics of Sciences Po (CEE). She chaired the French Political Science Association (AFSP) from 2005 to 2016. She is member of the National Consultative Commission for Human Rights (CNCDH) since 2015, and coordinates the design and analysis of its Annual Barometer on racism, anti-Semitism and xenophobia.

Main research topics are political participation, electoral sociology, populist radical rights, racism and antisemitism. Ongoing research projects: “The Yellow Vests Movement Impact on the 2019 European elections: online/offline polarization” and “Intercultural relations survey: the case of Sarcelles”.

Recent publications: “Les forces populistes après les élections européennes de 2019”, in Dieckhoff, Jaffrelot, Massicard (eds.), *Populismes au pouvoir*, Presses de Sciences Po, 2019 and « The political impact of social insecurity in France », *Partecipazione e conflitto*, 11(3), 2019.