THE FRENCH UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE: A CRASH COURSE
The Big Picture

Each year is 2 semesters of 12-14 weeks

Semester 1: end of September or the beginning of October to the middle or end of January

Semester 2: the end of January or Beginning of February to the end of May or mid-June

A University degree generally takes 3 years

1st year: License 1 or L1: semesters 1/2
2nd year: License 2 or L2: semesters 3/4
3rd year: License 3 or L3: Semesters 5/6

Degree Progression

L1: General and multidisciplinary courses
L2: Consolidation of subject area
L3: Disciplinary specialization
COURS MAGISTRAL: A general course, usually in an auditorium; generally the professor lectures; professor-student interactions are rare, but students can ask questions; 60, 90, or 120 minutes long

TRAVAUX DIRIGÉS: A smaller classroom course; often more specialized or practical application; more professor-student interaction; 2, 3, or even 5 hours long
ASSESSMENT

WHAT MIGHT ONE FIND ON THE SYLLABUS?
JUST ABOUT EVERYTHING ONE MAY FIND ON AN
AMERICAN UNIVERSITY COURSE SYLLABUS

- In-class work
- Continuous assessment
- Multiple choice examinations
- Dissertations
- Essays
- Close reading/literary or text analysis
- Quizzes
- Oral examinations
- Summaries
- Lab work
- Midterm and Final Exams

AND SO MUCH MORE...

Grading scale:

From 0-20
10 or higher is passing
13 or 14 is considered a good grade

A well-known quotation about the French grading system: "18 is for the best student,
19 is for the professor,
20 is for god"