Course Description

The AP Comparative Government and Politics course is a traditional college level introduction to the comparative study of state systems and their political components, and many of its topics speak to the contemporary global political issues such as globalization, democratization, political change, public policy, and citizen-state relations. The primary goal of the course is to increase your understanding of political traditions, values, structures of comparative systems. While gaining a deeper understanding of political science theory and methodology you will gain first hand understanding of how different nations operate through examination of case studies of six nations: the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Russian Federation, the People’s Republic of China, the United Mexican States, the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The European Union will also be examined as a multi-national organization.

Goals

- To explore the various types of governments globally and to critically analyze their long-term and day-to-day operations.
- To master the curriculum of the course.
- To actively participate in all aspects of the class.
- To gain experience working in collaborative working environments.
- To make successful presentations using technology.
- To improve research (text, electronic, live) and writing skills.
- Success on the AP Comparative Government & Politics Exam.

Essential Questions

1. How does the history of a nation impact its political structure?
2. How are governments organized and how do they operate?
3. How are policy/decisions made in the government?
4. What is the role of the state in economic management?
5. What are the pressures for more democracy and the challenges of democratization?
6. What is the political impact of diverse attachments and sources of group identity, including class, gender, ethnicity, and religion?

Grading Policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tests, Papers, Projects, Presentations, etc.</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework (Including Current Events)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
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Curricular Requirements (AP)
- Introduction to Comparative Politics
- Political Institutions
- Sovereignty, Authority, and Power
- Citizens, Society, and the State
- Political and Economic Change
- Public Policy

Textbooks


Supplementary Readings


**Other Sources**

**Journals and Newspapers**

The *New York Times* and *The Economist* are essential; they are used weekly for written and oral current events assignments and are available in the school library. Some of these periodicals newspapers will be helpful and can be used to complete current event assignments: Washington Post, Wall Street Journal World, US News and World Report, Time, and Newsweek.

**Other Media**

There are various other ways to get access to current events involving the nations of study. It is strongly suggested that students listen to National Public Radio (NPR) and watch the Nightly News including the British Broadcasting Company (BBC).
political Sunday talk shows are also recommended viewing: Meet the Press, Face the Nation, the McLaughlin Report will give students first hand viewpoints of political leaders, media specialists, etc. Other news related programs are suggested and sometimes will be assigned including: 60 Minutes, Frontline, and Frontline World. Many news programs are available as podcasts online. Websites that are suggested are at the end of each chapter in the textbook and are expected to be used during study of the nations.

Expectations & Requirements

- Students are expected to carry themselves with respect for themselves and others in the class.
- Students are expected to be punctual and attend class daily.
- Students are expected to actively participate in discussions.
- To submit assignments in a timely fashion.
- To use the school website for homework, calendar, and class information.

American Government & Economics

The NY State requirements state that students take two semester courses in American Government and Economics. In order to meet this requirement, students in the Comparative Government course will study the U.S. as a case study in the Fall semester and have a one period a week of Economics with Ms. Miller on Wednesdays, period 8 throughout the year.

Class Schedule

The class will meet in room 325 from Tuesday-Friday from 7:35-8:25.

Appointments to meet with the instructor can be made by request.

(Note: This Syllabus is a work in progress and is subject to change as the year progresses)
AP Comparative Government
Homework Rubric

In order to have the homework have a more equitable value I have decided to create a rubric that will make the grading clear to students. Homework will be rated according to the level of difficulty and have a certain value placed upon the assignments. Homework will usually range in the 5 to 10 point region but may exceed that if the instructor decides. The general rubric follows below.

10
(This will be used generally for critical analysis papers.)

9-10 – Excellent – The assignment is complete and shows evidence of critical thought. There are tangible examples of factual information to support the student’s work. There are citations within the assignment.

8 – Accomplished (Good) – The assignment is mostly complete but lacks enough analysis or there is a lack of factual information cited to support the student’s work. There are certain aspects of the assignment missing.

7 – Satisfactory (Average) – The assignment either lacks analysis or the student fails to cite factual information. There are several aspects of the assignment missing.

6 or below – Below Satisfactory – The assignment is incomplete or lacks critical thinking and or evidence to support the student’s work.

0 – The assignment was not submitted or is late without a valid excuse.

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5
(Outlines or shorter assignments)

5 – Excellent – Student completed the assignment and exceeded all requirements.
4 – Good – Student completed the assignment and met all the requirements.
3 – Satisfactory – Student completed the assignment but lacks certain requirements.
2/1 – Unsatisfactory – Student either failed to complete the assignment or lacks reqs.
0 – Student failed to complete the assignment.

Students should continue to work on incorporating vocabulary into the assignments and grammar/spelling. Please cite references when required in proper MLA Format.

*Note: The instructor reserves the right to alter this scoring rubric in the future if deemed necessary.*
Curricular Requirements

Unit 1 – Introduction to Comparative Politics (Weeks 1-4)

Topics Studied:
- Introduction to Comparative Politics
- Political Institutions
- Sovereignty, Authority, and Power
- Citizens, Society, and the State
- Political and Economic Change
- Public Policy

Readings:
- Kesselman, Chapter 1, “Introducing Comparative Politics”
- Wood, Ethel, “Introduction to Comparative Government & Politics”
- Kesselman, Readings in Comparative Politics
  Barber, Benjamin. “Jihad vs. McWorld”
  Fukuyama, Francis. “The End of History?”
  Huntington, Samuel. “The Clash of Civilizations?”
  Van Creveld, Martin. “The Fate of the State”
  Sassen, Saskia. “The State and Globalization”
  Sen, Amartya. “The Importance of Democracy”
  Ross, Robert J., and Anita Chan “From North-South to South-South”
  Stiglitz, Joseph E., “Globalism’s Discontent”
  Schmitter Philippe C., and Terry Lynn Karl. “What Democracy is…and Is Not”
  Sen, Amartya, “Democracy as a Universal Value”
  Wilensky, Harold L. “Migration and Politics: Explaining Variation Among Rich Democracies in Recent Nativist Protest”
  Connor, Walker. “A Nation is a Nation, Is a State, Is an Ethnic Group, Is a …”
  Stepan, Alfred. and Cindy Skach. “Constitutional Frameworks and Democratic Consolidation: Parliamentarianism versus Presidentialism”
  Reilly, Benjamin. “Electoral Systems for Divided Societies”
  Katzenstein, Mary Fainsod. “Stepsisters: Feminist Movement Activism in Different Institutional Spaces”
Note: Students will write several comparative papers using the articles above which will also serve as class discussion topics. We will incorporate more recent events from current sources as needed.

In this introductory unit and subsequent units, students will be introduced to the analysis and interpretation of data relevant to comparative government & politics by examining…

1. The impact of informal politics – Students will examine several governmental organizational charts such as for Great Britain, what role the prime minister plays as compared to the a president (e.g. the U.S.). Charts for the differences between the House of Lords and the House of Commons would be compared. This would take place consistently for all the nations of study that would be done nationally and comparatively among the case study nations.

2. The importance of political change – Students will gain an understanding of the three-world approach as well as the individual nations change through the years (e.g. Mexico and Russia would be compared as one party ruled states that have moved more towards democracy.

3. Data Analysis – Students use the summer to review the CIA Factbook where they do some initial reviewing and comparing of the data related to demographics, political data, economic data, social trends, women in government, etc. This data is used to understand the nation’s past and present and allows for comparison (e.g. – the development of democracy through examining the role of women, literacy rates, GDP, etc.)

4. Comparing economic and political systems – Students gain insight by examining data through charts, tables, readings that allow for comparative study. (There are several tables and charts in the Kesselman textbook as well as in the Wood review book.)

5. Comparing styles of government – Democracies and authoritarian regimes are reviewed by listing and analyzing data that demonstrate obvious and subtle differences among the case study nations.

Additional data is used to compare nations through several lenses including but not limited to legitimacy, ideologies, types of change, trends (democratization, movement toward market economies, revival of ethnic or cultural politics, role of citizens, levels of government, and policies. (We will use the textbook, review book, additional print sources, the internet, newspapers, magazines, and governmental sites to gather data and compare nations/political systems to one another.)

Example of interpretive essay for Unit I – Students will compare the essays written by Huntington, Fukuyama, and Barber to uncover various opinions on the future of global politics.
Compare how the authors have divided the world in these essays. What is the thesis argument for each of the authors? Discuss the major points of each of the authors. List two major arguments for each author. Which author do you agree with in terms of his take on the future? Why? What are your criticisms of the way that each of the authors discusses how the world is moving towards? How do you perceive the future of the world and how would you classify the direction it has taken by taking into account recent historical events? (3-4 pages)

Summer Assignment: Students will collect articles from newspapers, magazines, and internet sources to write brief country synopses to get acclimated with the nations.

Unit II – Great Britain (Weeks 5-8)

Topics Studied

- Historical Foundations: constitutionalism, legitimacy, nation/state, liberal democracy
- British Citizens, Society, and the State: demographics, cleavages, civil society
- Political Institutions: political parties/elections, Westminster Model, Parliament (House of Commons and House of Lords), the Cabinet and the Prime Minister
- Role of the E.U.: Sovereignty
- Public Policy: Thatcherism, N.Ireland, Role of NHS, Immigration, Tony Blair’s Third Way, the E.U., relationship with the U.S., Devolution.

Readings

Kesselman Chapter 2 “United Kingdom of Great Britain”

The following articles are from Colin Hay’s British Politics Today

Kavanagh, Dennis “The Paradoxes of British Political Parties”
Sanders, David “Electoral Competition in Contemporary Britain”
Coates, David “The New Political Economy of Postwar Britain”
Rosamond, Ben. “Britain’s European Future”

Wright, Tony “The Political Constitution”
“Accounting: Heckling the Steamroller”

Nairn, Tom. Pariah: Misfortunes of the British Kingdom (Selected Articles) Additional Readings:

Additional Readings: Selected articles from the New York Times, the Economist, BBC, and British governmental websites.
Activities:
- Prime Minister’s Question Hour (from CSPAN)
- Group PowerPoint Presentation
- MP Commercial – Students create a one-minute commercial of an MP (political parties and elections are focus)
- Papers – Example:
  Compare the philosophies and major accomplishments of the governments of Margaret Thatcher and Tony Blair. Which era had a stronger impact of Britain’s domestic policies (economy, education, social movements, politics, etc.) and international policies (terrorism, relations with the U.S./Europe/other areas, conflicts, etc.)? What arguments can you make for either side? (4-5 pages)

Unit III – The European Union (Weeks 9-10)

Topics Studied
- History of EU: Major Treaties, Periods of Expansion, Legitimacy.
- Political Institutions: The European Economic Community, The European Community, the European Union, The Commission, the Council of Ministers, the European Parliament, and the European Court of Justice.
- Citizens, Society, and the State: Representation
- Political and Economic Change: The Euro, Immigration (member and non-member states)
- Public Policy: Single Internal Market, Union of Monetary Policy, Common Agricultural Policy, Terrorism.

Readings

Excerpts from *Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe*


EU.org (Official EU Site)

*How the European Union Works* (Official Pamphlet)

*The Enlarging European Union at the United Nations* (EU Publication)

Activities:
- Research Paper – Students will be expected to choose and research one issue (below) that the EU is involved in from the EU website and write a paper that will give insight into the issue. They will be expected to discuss the issue in detail, give the current state of the issue, groups that are involved, the concerns, history, and their interpretation of the importance of the issue for the Union and beyond.
Visit to European Commission in New York City (Guest Speaker)

Unit IV – The Russian Federation (Weeks 11-14)

Topics Studied:

- Russia: Developing Democracy?
- Historical Foundations: Absolutism, Cultural Heterogeneity, 20th Century Revolutions, Fall of USSR, Transition to Democracy
- Political Institutions: Federal Government Structure, Political Parties, Elections, Interest Groups: the Oligarchs/Russian Mafia/Media, the President & Prime Minister, Bicameral Legislature, the Judiciary, & the Military.
- Citizens, Society, and the State: Role of the Media, Citizens access to information, murder of journalists, & protest/demonstrations.
- Public Policy: The Economy (e.g. perestroika), Relations with CIS, Terrorism/War in Chechnya, Relations with World (U.S., WTO, EU, G-8), Oil & Gas, Democratic development, & Russia’s growing global influence.

Readings:

Kesselman: Chapter 6 “Russian Federation”
Breslauer: *Gorbachev and Yeltsin as Leaders* – Comparison Paper on Leaders

Sakwa: *Russian Politics and Society* – Brief Analytical Papers on the collapse of the USSR, political institutions, role of media

Brown: *Contemporary Russian Politics* – Several Excerpts read with short answer questions and outlining.


Activities:
- Political Parties Group Project
- Paper – Is Russia a developing democracy or an autocratic state? Using the criteria from the Sakwa reading, review the criteria and use evidence to support your views.
- Several Video Presentations on USSR & Russia
- Guest Speaker: Edward Beliaev of Columbia University (Russia Specialist)

**Unit V – Mexico (Weeks 15-19)**

Topics Studied

- Political Institutions: Corporatist Structure, Camarilla, the Executive (sexenio), the Bureaucracy (role of para-statals), bicameral legislature (Chamber of Deputies & Senate), single-member districts vs. proportional representation, politicians (políticos) vs. technocrats (técnicos), the judiciary, and the military.
- Sovereignty, Authority, and Power: Legitimacy, Constitution, Formation of PRI (one-party rule), historical traditions, political culture, national identity, geographic influence, and the role of the Catholic Church.
- Citizens, Society, and the State: Cultural heterogeneity, political parties (PAN, PRI, PRD), elections, role of media, internet, interest groups, labor movements, liberation theology, cleavages (urban vs. rural, Mestizo vs. Amerindian, North vs. South), and patron-client system.
- Political and Economic Change: Economic development, NAFTA, maquiladoras, EZLN, Chiapas Revolt, relationship with U.S. (trade, immigration, drugs, tourism), development of tourism, Mexico’s growing leadership role in Latin America.

Readings

Kesselman: Chapter 10 “Mexico”

Levy and Bruhn: Mexico: The Struggle for Democratic Development

Harvey: The Chiapas Rebellion: The Struggle for Land and Democracy
Chapters 7 & 8, “Neoliberalism and Rebellion” & “The Zapatista Opening”


Activities:

• Video presentations on Mexican current issues/events.
• Example of Paper on Chiapas Rebellion:
  Chapter 1 – The Right to Have Rights

In your reaction to this article please focus on the following questions…

♣ What are some of the causes of the rebellion that took place? Why did the peasants turn to this form of expression? How was it met by the government?
♣ What is zapatismo movement? What historical references are there to Zapata?
♣ What is the thesis/central question of analysis in the chapter?
♣ What is something specific that you found interesting in the chapter and what are your thoughts on this aspect of his study?

• Major paper on relationship between Mexico and the United States.
• Internet project on Mexican political parties.

Week 20 – Midterm Exam

Unit VI – Nigeria (Weeks 21-24)

Topics Studied
• Historical Foundations: Pre-colonial era (trade, impact of Islam, kinship, political identities, democratic impulses), Colonial era (Authoritarian rule, interventionism, individualism, Christianity), Era since Independence (Parliamentarianism to Presidential system, ethnic conflict, military rule, personalized rule/corruption, federalism, economic dependence on oil), & geography.

• Political Institutions: The executive, military rule, patrimonialism, bureaucracy, para-statals, state corporatism, Senate, National Assembly, judiciary, political parties (esp. PDP, AD & ANPP), elections, interest groups (labor unions, business interests, human rights groups), media.

• Sovereignty, Authority, and Power: Constitutionalism, transition to democracy from military rule, shari’a law, federalism.

• Citizens, Society, and the State: Poverty, gap in wealth, health issues (AIDS/HIV), literacy rates, ethnicity, role of religion, regionalism, urban/rural differences, social class, prebendalism, voting behavior, public perception of government, corruption, protests, participation, and social movements.

• Political and Economic Change: Structural adjustment program (SAP), International Financial Institutions (IFIs), privatization, cultural diffusion, “national question”, Oil dependence, road to democracy, legitimacy of elections, interventionism, corruption, debt.


Readings:

Kesselman: Chapter 11 “Nigeria”

Maier: *This House Has Fallen* (Preface & selected chapters)

Aborisade & Mundt: *Politics in Nigeria* (selected chapters)

Suberu: *Federalism and Ethnic Conflict in Nigeria* (selected chapters)

Forrest: *Politics and Economic Development in Nigeria* (selected chapters)

Activities:

• Trip to the Nigerian Consulate in New York City, guest speaker on current issues
• Nigeria Development Project (groups propose ideas for Nigeria’s future/potential using above books and other resources)
Unit VII – Iran (Weeks 25-28)

Topics Studied

- Political Institutions: Theocracy, Supreme Leader, Guardian Council, Assembly of Religious Experts, the Expediency Council, Executive (President & Cabinet), Bureaucracy, Majles (Leg.), Judiciary (Laws – Shari’a and Qanun).
- Sovereignty, Authority, and Power: Constitution of 1906, traditional authoritarian dynastic rule, Qur’an, theocracy, Islamic Republic.
- Citizens, Society, and the State: Cleavages (Religion, ethnicity, social class, reformers vs. conservatives), role of women, Islam, political protests, shutting down of reformist media, flight of intelligentsia and elite.

Readings:

Kesselman: Chapter 12 “Iran”

Bill: The Eagle and the Lion (background reading on Iran-U.S. relations)

Hiro: The Iranian Labyrinth (readings on Iran since the revolution)

Keddie: Modern Iran: Roots and Results of Revolution (chapters 8-13 on politics in Iran)

Activities:

- Guest Speaker, filmmaker Bigan Saliani, Iran: Inside the Islamic Republic
- Viewing of several videos on Iran including above and nuclear weapons concern
- Mock United Nations Security Council Meeting on Iran’s nuclear aspirations
- Paper: Review the relationship between the United States and Iran. Using the history discuss why the relationship soured and how it has gotten to the current
belligerent state. If you were a specialist called in to advise the U.S.
administration or the Iranian administration (this will be decided by lot) what
would you present in terms of your suggestions? What options would you give as
the most viable? Why? What questions would you anticipate? This paper will be
then used to have a meeting between government officials.

Unit VIII – China (Weeks 29-32)

Topics Studied

- Historical Foundations: Centralized authoritarian power
  (Dynastic Rule/Mandate of Heaven), Confucianism,
bureaucratic hierarchy, the “Middle Kingdom”, Geographic
Influences, Ethnocentrism, resistance to imperialism, Sun
Yat Sen, Chiang Kai-shek and Nationalists, Long March,
World War II, Maoism, Communism, Deng Xiao Ping.
- Political Institutions: Authoritarian, Executive (president,
  vice-president, premier), the Judiciary, Chinese Communist
Party (CCP), National Party Congress, Central Committee,
Politburo/Standing Committee, Non-Communist Parties,
patron-client network (guanxi), nomenklatura, factionalism,
- Sovereignty, Authority, and Power
- Citizens, Society, and the State: Ethnic Cleavages (Han &
  minorities), political participation, Chinese Communist
Party, Youth League, “technocrats”, protests (Tiananmen
Square and Falun Gong), NGOs.
- Political and Economic Change: Dynastic Rule,
  Imperialism, Revolutionary upheaval, Soviet Model, land
reform, five-year plans, Great Leap Forward, Cultural
Revolution, Deng Xiao Ping’s “Four Modernizations”,
China’s Economic Growth (Expansion into Africa).
- Public Policy: Democracy, Human Rights, Fang Zhou,
  One-Child Policy, Agricultural Policies, U.S-China
Relations, Special Economic Zones (SEZ’s), Hong Kong,
Taiwan, WTO, Olympics 2008.

Readings

Kesselman: Chapter 13 “China”

Lieberthal: Governing China: From Revolution through Reform (excerpts
from several chapters)

Selected Articles from the NY Times and the Economist
Activities

- Group Project: Comparing the Non-Democracies (Iran & China) – PowerPoint/Visuals
- Video Presentations: *China: A Century of Revolution* and *60 Minutes* (Excerpts)
- Paper Example - Compare the Chinese government led by Mao Zedong and Deng Xiao Ping. Compare the policies of the two governments and discuss in detail the results of these policies, how were they received by the people, and the how decisions were made by the two governments. What are your thoughts on the decision-making and the policies taken by these two leaders?

Review for AP Exam

Post Exam: Major Research Paper on a Global theme, nation, conflict, or related topic of interest.