

AP Comparative Government and Politics

Zoo Academy

Omaha Public Schools/Papillion La Vista Community Schools

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Schoology Access Code:



I. Course Overview

The AP Comparative Government and Politics course is designed to introduce students to a variety of political institutions through examining issues such as citizen participation, governmental organization, the idea of sovereignty and the root of power, public policy, and the ways in which political and economic institutions change. The primary goal of the course is to increase understanding of the different political institutions, values, and structures of different governmental systems. Students will become more familiar with these institutions through examining case studies of Great Britain, Nigeria, Mexico, Iran, China, and Russia. This semester long course is designed to have the workload and rigor of a freshman or sophomore level college course. Upon completion of the course students will be able to take the Advanced Placement test for potential college credit. The course will emphasize critical thinking and application of knowledge with the goal that students will have a better critical perspective of the inner workings of different systems of government.

Course Unit Guide:

Unit I: *Introduction to Comparative Government*
Unit II: *Substantive Democracies*
Unit III: *Procedural and Electoral Authoritarian*
Unit IV: *Closed Authoritarian*
Unit V: *Test Review*
Unit VI: *Final Project*

II. Content Objectives

- Students will describe and define major comparative political concepts
- Students will make generalizations about government forms which they will be able to support with factual information from China, Iran, Russia, Nigeria, Mexico, and Great Britain
- Students will analyze typical patterns of political processes and behavior and their consequences
- Students will compare and contrast different political institutions and processes across countries
- Students will be able to analyze different basic data relevant to comparative government and politics.
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III. Readings and Study Materials

- Wood, Ethel. A.P. Comparative Government and Politics: An Essential Coursebook. 6th ed. Woodyard Publications, New York, 2013.
- News Stories, Current Events, and Resources from various sources:

- Domestic News Agencies
 - C-SPAN, CNN, Fox News, MSNBC, National Public Radio, Politico, The Daily Show, The Washington Post, The New York Times, The Omaha World-Herald, The Economist
- International News Agencies
 - Al-Jazeera, Associated Press, BBC, CCTV, Sputnik
- Supplemental Readings
 - Additional scholarly articles will be used as needed

IV. **Weekly Course Plan**

Unit I: Introduction to Comparative Politics (Weeks 1-2)

Readings/Assessments:

- Wood Ch. 1- Introduction to Comparative Government and Politics: A Conceptual Approach
- College Board Briefing Papers: Globalization and Democratization
- Project: Democratic Matrix: Using research methods discussed in Unit 1, students will use a Democracy Matrix to compare and contrast the political institutions and cultures within the countries we will be studying this year. Students will be expected include both empirical and normative data to justify their findings. Students will be required to submit a power-point and essay that describes the methodology and analysis they used as well as the conclusions they reached. More details will be coming soon.
- Vocabulary assignment dealing with the difference between a state, nation, nation-state, stateless nation, etc...
- Unit Test

Unit Objectives:

- Basics of Comparative Politics..... 5% of AP Test
- a. Purpose and methods of comparison and classification
 - b. Introduction to basic concepts and ideas of comparative government
 - c. Why/ways to organize government
 - d. Normative and empirical questions
 - e. Concepts (state, nation, regime, government)
 - f. Process and policy (what is politics; purpose of government; what is political science/comparative; common policy challenges)
 - g. Relevance to modern world

Unit II: Substantive Democracy (Developed)-Great Britain, European Union and Mexico (Weeks 3-7)

Readings/Assessments:

- Wood Ch.2- Government and Politics in Britain
- Wood Ch.3- The European Union
- Wood Ch.6- Government and Politics in Mexico
- Data analysis of voter participation and elections
- College Board Briefing Papers
- Unit Test

Unit Objectives:

- See Unit II-IV Objectives below
- Unit Specific Objectives
 - Examine the formation of the EU over time
 - Map activity of EU membership
 - Compare and contrast structures of democracies (Parliamentary vs. presidential)
 - Brexit voter data and map analysis

Unit III: Procedural and Electoral Authoritarian - Nigeria, Russia (Weeks 8-12)

Readings/Assessments:

- Wood Ch. 4- Government and Politics in Russia
- Wood Ch. 8- Government and Politics in Nigeria and College Board Briefing Papers
- Data analysis of voter participation and elections
- Unit Test

Unit Objectives:

- See Unit II-IV objectives below
- Unit specific objectives
 - o Process of democratizing countries
 - o Multi-Ethnic states and tensions
 - o Compare to Substantive Democracies

Unit IV: Closed Authoritarian – Iran, China (Weeks 13-17)

Readings/Assessments:

- Wood Ch. 5- Government and Politics in China
- Wood Ch. 7- Iran and College Board Briefing Papers
- Unit Test

Unit Objectives:

- See Unit II-IV objectives below
- Unit Specific Objectives
 - o Analysis of civic participation in government pre and post revolutions
 - o Map analysis of modern anti-state movements
 - o The use of religion in Authoritarian states analysis

Unit V: Test Review (Weeks 18)

Readings/Assessments:

- Review All Readings

AP Comparative Government and Politics Exam – 8:00 a.m., Wednesday May 11th, 2017

Unit VI: Final Project

Readings/Assessments:

- Review All Readings
- Create a Stable Democracy/Dictatorship

Unit II-IV Objectives

Each one of the topics below will be reviewed and covered throughout Units II-IV

- I. **Sovereignty, Authority, and Power 20% of AP Test**
 - a. Political culture, communication, and socialization
 - b. Nations and states
 - c. Supranational governance (e.g., European Union)
 - d. Sources of power
 - e. Constitutions (forms, purposes, application)
 - f. Regime types
 - g. Types of economic systems
 - h. State building, legitimacy, and stability
 - i. Belief systems as sources of legitimacy
 - i. Religion
 - ii. Ideology (liberalism, communism, socialism, conservatism, fascism)
 - j. Governance and accountability

II. Political Institutions.....35% of AP Test

- a. Levels of government
 - i. Supranational/national/regional/local
 - ii. Unitary/federal
 - iii. Centralization/decentralization
- b. Executives (head of state, head of government, cabinets)
 - i. Single or dual
 - ii. President
 - iii. Prime minister
- c. Legislatures
 - i. Unicameral/bicameral (symmetric/asymmetric)
 - ii. Organization
 - iii. Membership (representation)
- d. Parliamentary and presidential systems
 - i. Institutional relations
- e. Elections
 - i. Presidential
 - ii. Parliamentary
 - iii. Referendums
 - iv. Noncompetitive
- f. Electoral systems
 - i. Proportional representation
 - ii. Single member district (plurality, majority runoff)
- g. Political parties (organization, membership, institutionalization, ideological position)
- h. Party systems
- i. Leadership and elite recruitment
- j. Interest groups and interest group systems
- k. Bureaucracies
- l. Military and other coercive institutions
- m. Judiciaries
 - i. Degrees of autonomy
 - ii. Judicial review (including European Union in relation to states, citizens)
 - iii. Types of law

III. Citizens, Society, and the State15% of AP Test

- a. Cleavages and politics (ethnic, racial, class, gender, religious, regional)
 - i. Civil society
 - ii. Media roles
 - iii. Political participation (forms/modes/trends) including political violence
 - iv. Political Culture
 - v. Relationship between people and government
 - vi. Social movements
 - vii. Interest groups
 - viii. Race and ethnic relations
 - ix. Citizenship and social representation

IV. Political and Economic Change15% of AP Test

- a. Revolution, coups, and war
- b. Trends and types of political change (including democratization)
 - i. Components

- ii. Promoting or inhibiting factors
- iii. Consequences
- c. Trends and types of economic change (including privatization)
 - i. Components
 - ii. Promoting or inhibiting factors
 - iii. Consequences
- d. Relationship between political and economic change
- e. Globalization and fragmentation: interlinked economies, global culture, reactions against globalization, regionalism

V. Public Policy10% of AP Test

- a. Common policy issues
 - i. Economic performance
 - ii. Social welfare (e.g., education, health, poverty)
 - iii. Civil liberties, rights, and freedoms
 - iv. Environment
 - v. Population and migration
 - vi. Economic development
- b. Factors influencing public policy making and implementation
 - i. Domestic
 - ii. International

* Schedule is tentative and subject to change

* Additional Readings & Maps may be used throughout the course of the semester

V. Evaluation

- a. Assignments: Students will be required to do assignments in class that will be checked for completion, or collected and graded. These assignments are designed to enrich, supplement, and extend the students' knowledge of the materials to help further prepare the students for the AP examination.
- b. Tests/Quizzes: The format of the tests will follow sections of the AP Exam as much as possible. Tests will be a way to measure the students' mastery of the materials and help prepare them for the AP Exam. Testing formats will rotate between multiple choices, Free-Response Questions. In order to give students as much practice as possible each end of unit test (a total of 4 tests) will include Multiple Choice and Free Response Questions.
 - a. Free-Response Question - Students will be given a selection of essay style questions in which they will have to answer a thematic style question.
 - b. Multiple Choice – Students are given a choice of responses, in many cases more than one of the choices may be correct. In this situation students will need to come up with a most correct answer
- c. Grading Scales:

Omaha Public Schools	Papillion La Vista Community Schools
A = 3.51 – 4.00	A = 100% - 90%
A- = 3.01 – 3.50	B = 89% - 80%
B = 2.51 – 3.00	C = 79% - 70%
B- = 2.01 – 2.50	D = 69% – 60%
C = 1.51 – 2.00	F = 59% - 0%
D = 0.76 - 1.50	
F = 0.00 – 0.75	

d. Assessments and Weights:

Assessment Type	Category Weight (%) OPS/PAPLV
Summative Assessment: assessments/assignments are major end of learning unit tests or projects, (e.g., a research paper, an oral report with a power point, science fair project). Summative assignments are graded for accuracy. Summative assignments assess the student's progress on grade level standards.	65% / 70%
Formative Assessment: assessments/assignments are done for learning. They are minor assignments, (e.g., a three paragraph essay, written responses to guiding questions over an assigned reading, completion of a comparison contrast matrix). Formative assignments are graded for accuracy and descriptive feedback is provided. Descriptive feedback provides the student with the necessary information to improve their learning. Formative work is at the student's instructional level and/or grade level standards.	35% / 30%

- e. Multipliers: All assignments will be the standard x1 multiplier unless otherwise stated. Assignments will be listed in the gradebook with labeling as either a formative or summative assignment, and any special multiplier will be explained in the explanation of the assignment. All end of unit examinations will be counted as a Summative Assessment with a x2 multiplier.

VI. **Course Requirements**

- a. Redoing/Revising Coursework: Students are allowed redos and revisions of coursework for full credit during that unit of study. Scores for student work after retaking, revising or redoing will not be averaged with the first attempt at coursework or assessment but will replace the original student score.
- b. Late Coursework: Students are expected to complete missing coursework. Late coursework is accepted for full credit until the end of the unit. Once late coursework is turned in, the zero will be replaced with the score earned by the student. Late work completed during the unit of study will not result in a reduction in grade. Work that is not turned in during the unit of study will receive a score of zero.
- c. Missing Coursework: Work not turned in at all will receive a score of M. An M is weighted the same as a zero in the gradebook. Students have until the end of the unit to hand in any missing assignments. Accommodations due to extended illnesses are to be arranged with the teacher.
- d. Academic Dishonesty/Cheating: Any students caught cheating, or attempting to cheat, will be given an automatic zero on the assignment. Further action may be taken depending on the situation.
- e. Analytical Writing Samples: Students will be assigned to submit written essays that analyze case countries. These essays will assess the degree of democracy that exists within each case country and what students see as the biggest threat to the democracy that exists OR the strongest asset that exists for promoting a greater degree of democracy within the assigned country. Some writing samples will have students compare and contrast governmental systems. An example writing might have students compare two different governmental systems of different countries, or examine the same country's government to see how it has changed over time. There will be a minimum of 4 analytical writings throughout the course of the semester.

- f. Final Project (Developing a Stable Democracy or Creating a Dictatorship): Working in teams, students are given a fictional country from which they will propose a plan for one of the two scenarios. Throughout the process, students will need to address each of the five arenas of democracy. Students will also need to take into account history, ethnic groups, religion, urban vs. rural populations, interest groups, etc. when developing their transition plan. These plans will be presented in a Donald Trump style meeting during the month of May. Along with their presentations, students will also be required submit a written essay that outlines the students' plan and assessment for how their plan will promote democracy/dictatorship. Your instructor, a representative of the people, will be hiring one group to lead the transition team for the country. All groups will be graded on completion of project requirements. The team that gets hired will win extra credit points.

VII. The Advance Placement Examination

The AP Exam is based on college-level course content. Students are to demonstrate knowledge of the political systems of the United States Government

The exam is divided into 2 sections:

Part I: Multiple Choice (45 minutes)

55 questions

Part II: Free Response Questions (100 Minutes)

Five Short Answer questions

One Conceptual Analysis Question

Two Country-Context Questions

Topic	Percent
Basics of Comparative Politics	5%
Sovereignty, Authority, and Power	20%
Political Institutions	35%
Citizens, Society, and the State	15%
Political and Economic Change	15%
Public Policy	10%