

AP Comparative Government and Politics / 2016-2017

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Today's increasingly interdependent world has made it necessary for students to think globally. It is imperative for young citizens to understand political processes and political events not just from our own country, but from a diversity of countries around the world. To gain understanding of international events we must examine political structures and perspectives of other nations and how they compare, affect, and interact with one another. Comparisons assist both in identifying problems and in analyzing policymaking. We focus on the United States along with six core comparative countries: the United Kingdom, Russia, China, Mexico, Nigeria, and Iran. This course covers topics and a learning format seen in a college course.

GOALS:

- understand major comparative political concepts, themes, and generalizations
- have knowledge of important facts pertaining to the governments and politics of Great Britain, Russia, China, Iran, Nigeria, and Mexico
- understand typical patterns of political processes and behavior and their consequences
- be able to compare and contrast political institutions and processes across countries and to derive generalizations
- be able to analyze and interpret basic data relevant to comparative government and politics

DATA ANALYSIS: Students will examine multiple forms of information including political maps, election results, and public opinion polls, tables, and charts. Students will be tested in each unit on their understanding of quantitative data and visually presented materials.

TEXTS

Mark Kesselman, et al. *Introduction to Comparative Politics*, 6th ed. Boston: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning, 2013.

The text takes a country studies approach and provides a comprehensive study of the political systems of the six main countries studied in the course, as well as several others.

SUPPLEMENTAL TEXTS AND ADDITIONAL AIDS

REQUIRED REVIEW BOOK: Wood, Ethel. *AP Comparative Government and Politics: An Essential Coursebook and Study Guide* 6th edition. Woodyard Publications, 2014. You will be purchasing this text through the school for \$17.50.

Instructor assigned articles from: the BBC, the *Economist*, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, *The Atlantic*, *Journal of Democracy*, *Foreign Policy*, *Foreign Affairs*, and others as appropriate.

CURRENT EVENTS: Students are responsible for keeping up with the daily events in global news. Each student will be expected to present information from 2 articles per week relating to one of the six countries that will be compared over the course.

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ASSESSMENTS, PROJECTS, AND ESSAYS: Tests (30%) will be given at the end of each unit. Tests will be comprised of multiple choice questions, free-response questions, and comparative essays. Quizzes (30%) will be given throughout a unit to check the mastery of vocabulary, key concepts, and relative information. This evaluation will typically use free-response style questions. Projects (30%) will cover multiple units and occur periodically throughout the semester. In-class activities and essay writings (10%) will assess student mastery of readings, information from political maps, election results, public opinion polls, data tables, and charts. Students will be tested in each unit on their understanding of quantitative data and visually presented materials. Analytical essays will be conducted for each unit to analytically compare the current country unit with the previous country unit.

CLASS EXPECTATIONS

You are expected to know my class policies and follow by class expectations. - <http://www.gmsdk12.org/BrockWilliam.aspx>

IMPORTANT DATES: THURSDAY, MAY 12th, 2016 – AP COMPARATIVE GOVERNMENT EXAM

ALL STUDENTS TAKING THE AP COURSE ARE REQUIRED TO TAKE THE EXAM, AS UNDERSTOOD FROM THE SIGNED AP COURSE ENROLLING FORM. A FEE OF \$95 PER EXAM WILL BE PAID ONLINE, WITH MORE INFORMATION GIVEN OUT LATER IN THE SEMESTER.

SYLLABUS

Unit 1: Introduction to Comparative Politics

Content Standards:

- Reasons for Comparison
- Methods of Comparison
 1. Normative/empirical, direct/inverse relationships, correlation/causation
 2. Issues to compare
 - Land, Population,
 3. Democracy/Authoritarian, Unitary/Federal, Presidential/Parliamentary
 4. SMD/Proportional, Pluralism/Corporatism, Merit/Patronage, OECD/LDC, Modernization/Globalization/Fragmentation, Judicial Autonomy
 5. Sources of Authority and Power & Political Institutions
 - Nation, State, and Nation-States, regimes, and governments

Key Questions: *What does it mean to compare things? What are two examples of how a comparison can bring to light features that might otherwise have been overlooked? What do we mean by globalization? How does increased cross-border contact among countries and peoples affect political, social, and cultural life? What are the themes presented for comparative analysis? What are the difficult problems involved in establishing a useful way of classifying political systems? Describe and explain the differences between a nation, state, regimes, and government.*

Readings: Kesselman. Chapter 1

Wood: Introduction

Time allotted: 3 weeks

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Unit 2: Consolidated Democracy – Great Britain and The European Union

Content Standards:

- Great Britain:

1. Historical Foundations: Constitutionalism, Legitimacy, Nation/State, Liberal Democracy
2. British Citizens, Society, and the State: Demographics, Cleavages, Civil Society
3. Political Institutions: Political Parties/Elections, Westminster Model
4. Role of the European Union: Sovereignty and Structure
5. Public Policy: Thatcherism, Northern Ireland, Role of the NHS, Immigration, Terrorism
6. Political and Economic Change: Democratization/Privatization/Globalization

Key Questions: *How does the geography and history of empire still shape British politics today? What did an electoral system designed to produce a stable single-party majority result in a coalition government in 2010? What are the greatest challenges facing Britain today? What are the similarities and differences in the political parties approaches to governing the economy to that of previous governing eras? What are the key elements of the new governments approach to economic management in the recent era? What are the strengths and weakness of parliamentary democracy? Compare the structure of government with that of the United States. What is the role of the UK Supreme Court? How has the devolution of powers from the UK parliament to Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland changed both the organizing principles of the state and politics in the UK? Explain the political legitimacy of the UK government. What are the political—and the constitutional—implications of the new coalition government? What are the tensions over national identity? How well is Britain’s traditional political system adjusting to contemporary challenges?*

Readings: Kesselman – Britain

Wood – Britain

Time allotted: 2 weeks

Unit 3: Transitional Democracies – Russia, Mexico, and Nigeria

Content Standards:

- Russia:

1. Historical Foundations: 1917 Revolution, Soviet Union, Russia, Glasnost, Post-Cold War
2. Russian Citizens, Society, and the State: Demographics, Cleavages, Civil Society
3. Political Institutions: President/Prime Minister, Illiberal Democracy, Succession Issues
4. Public Policy: G8, Chechnya, Media limits
5. Political and Economic Change: Oil, Oligarchs, Shock Therapy

Key Questions: *What are three crucial junctures in Russian history that were a reaction to a recurring problem in Russian history? What were the principal challenges in the 1990s and how have they changed since the millennium? What are Russia’s most difficult problems in moving from a command economy toward a market economy? What the advantages and disadvantages of each form of economy? How have social policies changed in Russia since the collapse of the Soviet system? As Russia has become more closely tied to the world economy, what economic adjustments has Russia had to make? Why has Russian leadership viewed centralization as necessary and what centralizing measures have been taken since 2000? How have the military, judiciary, and subnational governments evolved since the fall of the Soviet Union? How have they gained or lost importance? What is the relationship between the prime minister and the president of Russia? How have the particular individuals who have filled these posts helped to shape this relationship? What political parties have been able to gain a dominant position within the short periods of time? To what extent are elections an effective vehicle for the Russian public to make their leaders accountable? What social movements have become prominent since the fall of the Soviet Union, and the degree the social movements influence political decisions? What are three of the most important political challenges now facing the Russian state? How does terrorism affect Russia’s democratization processes? What kind of international role is Russia seeking for itself, and how have Russia’s leaders tried to establish this role?*

Readings: Hauss - Russia

Kesselman – Russia

Wood - Russia

Time allotted: 2 weeks

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- Mexico:

1. Historical Foundations: Revolution and the Constitution
2. Mexican Citizens, Society, and the State: Demographics, Cleavages, Civil Society
3. Political Institutions: Camarillas, Corporatism, Legitimate Elections
4. Public Policy: NAFTA, Chiapas, Immigration, Structural Adjustment
5. Political and Economic Change: Monetary Policy, role of the PRI

Key Questions: *In what ways have the critical junctures of Mexican history grown out of the country's relations with other countries? How did the Revolution of 1910 shape Mexico's development and how is it relevant today? What were the bases of political stability in Mexico through most of the 20th century? How has drug-related violence in Mexico affected the country's politics? In what ways have the various theories of economic development affected government policies in Mexico? Which economic developments in Mexico have most greatly affected social progress, for better or worse? What accounts for the Mexican government's decision to seek greater integration into the global economy? What ways does the actual exercise of state power differ from the model outlined in the Constitution? What ways do officeholders exercise power in addition to the powers formally granted to them by law? How is federalism a reality in Mexico today? How is power divided between administrations at the national, state, and local levels? Are state institutions like the military and the judiciary truly independent of the executive branch of government? How has the balance of power shifted between the legislative and executive branches of government? What are the power bases of the main political parties in the Mexican politics? Why have Mexican elections, at all levels, generally become fairer and more contentious? What are the essential rules of the game in Mexican political life? Why has the notion of accommodation played such an important role in Mexican political life? In what ways is economic integration with the rest of the world affecting political and social changes in Mexico? What challenges does the process of globalization pose to Mexicans' strong sense of national identity? How successful has Mexico been in confronting the legacy of authoritarian rule? To what extent have recent administrations been able to make the government more accountable and transparent?*

Readings: Kesselman – Mexico

Wood - Mexico

Time allotted: 2 weeks

- Nigeria:

1. Historical Foundations: 1960 Independence, Legacy of Colonialism
2. Nigerian Citizens, Society, and the State: Demographics, Cleavages, Civil Society, Religion
3. Political Institutions: Presidential Power, role of the Legislature, role of the military
4. Public Policy: MEND and the Niger Delta, International Corporations, Media, Shari 'a Law
5. Political and Economic Change: Oil, growth, infrastructure

Key Questions: *What are some of the key impacts that colonialism and military rule left on the development of the Nigerian state? What role has ethnicity played in the development of Nigeria's political parties, and in the collapse of the first Republic and descent into civil war? How have clientelism and corruption continued to undermine political development in the Fourth Republic? What were some of the key impacts of the oil boom on Nigeria's political economy? What efforts has Nigeria made to try to address poverty and spur development? What is the "National Question," and how have Nigerians tried to resolve it? What is prebendalism, and how has the "Big Man" problem played out in the civilian governments since 1999? What have been some of the challenges and/or the benefits for Nigeria in having parallel shari'a courts alongside the secular legal system? What accounts for the weakness of legislatures in Nigeria since independence? What have been the benefits and costs of the move from ethnic parties under the early republics to the multiethnic parties of the Fourth Republic? What role has civil society played in resisting military rule and voicing the public interest under civilian government? What role can political opposition and civil society play in reversing prebendalism and the politics of the "Big Man"? What other reforms can help to settle the National Question and harness the strong democratic yearnings of the Nigerian public?*

Readings: Hauss – Nigeria

Kesselman – Nigeria

Wood - Nigeria

Time allotted: 2 weeks

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Unit 4: Authoritarian Regimes – China and Iran

Content Standards:

- Iran:

1. Historical Foundations: 1979 Revolution, The role of the Shah, political change
2. Iranian Citizens, Society, and the State: Globalization/Fragmentation, uprisings
3. Political Institutions: Theocracy, Role of Islam, The Guardian Council, the Basij
4. Public Policy: Nuclear Weapons, Media, reactions to the West
5. Political and Economic Change: Oil, Petropolitics, Rentier Economy, Conservative/Reformer

Key Questions: *To what extent does language, history, and religion give Iran a distinct identity? How did the current leader come to power, and what role did the United States play in supporting him? What led to the Islamic Revolution of 1979? Who was the most influential religious leader and what influence did he have on the Islamic Republic of Iran? What are some of the ways in which the oil industry has advanced or distorted development in Iran? What impact did the shah's economic policies have on Iranian society? How has life improved for most people in the Islamic Republic? What role do oil revenues play in integrating Iran into the global economy? In what ways do the clergy have extraordinary power in Iran? How does the clergy control the government of the Islamic Republic? What elements of democracy are in Iran's theocratic political system? What are the powers and limitations of Iran's parliament? What role do political parties and elections play within Iran's theocratic state? What social groups are most likely and least likely to support the Islamic Republic? Do discontent and protest necessarily have to take a revolutionary rather than a reform course in the Islamic Republic? What are the most important political challenges that now face Iran? What are some of the ways in which Iran is different from other developing countries?*

Readings: Kesselman – Iran

Wood - Iran

Time allotted: 2 weeks

- China:

1. Historical Foundations: 1949 Revolution, Cultural Revolution, Economic Modernization
2. Chinese Citizens, Society, and the State: East/West Divide, Rich/Poor Cleavages, Civil Society
3. Political Institutions: Guanxi, Corruption, Mass Line, Democratic Centralism, Communist Party
4. Public Policy: Privatization, Google and the internet, Falun Gong and Religion, Taiwan and Tibet
5. Political and Economic Change: Tiananmen Square, Soviet example, Succession Issues

Key Questions: *Why did China's ancient imperial system collapse in the early twentieth century? How did the Chinese Communist Party come to power in China? What impact did the last two great leaders have on China's political and economic development? In what ways might China be compared to other countries? What were the major differences between the last two great leaders approach to governing the economy? What have been major social consequences of China's rapid economic growth over the last three decades? In what ways has China's economy become globalized? What are the most important features of a communist party-state as a type of political system? What is the difference between the government of the People's Republic of China and the Chinese Communist Party? How does the party control the government? What are the functions and limitations on the power of China's National People's Congress? How has the membership of the Chinese Communist Party changed over time, and what does this reflect about political changes in the PRC? How does the CCP monitor and control the way in which citizens express their interests? What kinds of protests have been increasing in China? What are the major economic and political challenges facing the CCP? What factors will influence the future of the democratic idea of China? Why has the Chinese communist party state been more durable than other regimes of its type?*

Readings: Kesselman – China

Wood - China

Time allotted: 2 weeks

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Unit 5: Final Comparison

Content Standards:

- Review over all six units by writing free-responses to questions from previous Advanced Placement Comparative Government exam. Review will also consist of analytical essays for country by country government formation, and current issues, policies, and state responses.

Time allotted: 1.5 weeks