

AP[®] Comparative Government and Politics

Syllabus 2

At the conclusion of the AP[®] Comparative Government and Politics course, students should be able to describe common types of governments and cultures in the world, compare and analyze their governments and societies, and describe their interaction in a global environment. [CR13] My approach is thematic (themes correspond with the outline in the Course Planner below), and I use the following countries for the basis of our comparisons: the UK, Russia, China, Mexico, Nigeria, and Iran.

Reading assignments and required projects are listed. In addition to the reading assignments, students will be routinely required to respond in class to free-response type questions similar in format to those on the AP Exam. Students will also have three multiple-choice tests (Units I–II, Unit III, and Units IV–V). Students will take a cumulative exam in class that will be similar in format to the AP Exam. This will be given immediately prior to the AP Exam.

Textbooks

O’Neil, Patrick. *Essentials of Comparative Politics*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2003.

Kesselman, Mark, et al. *Introduction to Comparative Politics*. 3rd ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2004.

Supplemental Readings

Haus, Charles. *Comparative Politics: Domestic Responses to Global Challenges*. 4th ed. Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth/Thomson, 2002.

Soe, Christian, ed. *Annual Editions: Comparative Politics 04/05*. Guilford, Conn.: Dushkin Publishing Group, 2005.

Current Events

Students are required to summarize one current event per week from the *Economist*, *BBC News*, the *Washington Post*, or the *New York Times*. The article must relate either to one of the themes of AP Comparative Government and Politics or one of the core countries. [CR16]

Course Planner

- I. **Introduction to Comparative Politics (2 Weeks)** [CR1] Analysis and interpretation of charts, graphs, and other data [CR14] O’Neil, Chapters 1 (Introduction) and 2 (States); Kesselman, Chapter 1 (Introduction)
- II. **Sovereignty, Authority, and Power (3 Weeks)** [CR2] O’Neil, Chapters 3 (Nations, States, and Society), 4 (Political Economy), and 5 (Authoritarianism) Kesselman, Chapters 2 (UK), [CR8] 8 (Russia), [CR7] and 12 (Iran) [CR9] (selected pages) Haus, Chapter 7 “The European Union” (selected pages)

CR13—The course teaches students to compare and contrast political institutions and processes across countries and to derive generalizations.

CR16—The course includes supplemental readings, including primary source materials and contemporary news analyses, that strengthen student understanding of the curriculum.

CR1—The course provides instruction in introducing students to comparative politics.

CR14—The course introduces students to the analysis and interpretation of data relevant to comparative government and politics.

CR2—The course provides instruction in the topics of sovereignty, authority, and power.

CR8—The course uses concrete examples and discusses contemporary political changes in studying Great Britain.

CR7—The course uses concrete examples and discusses contemporary political changes in studying China.

CR9—The course uses concrete examples and discusses contemporary political changes in studying Iran.

Soe, “A Constitutional Revolution in Britain” [CR7]
 Soe, “Russian Democracy Under Putin” [CR12]
 Soe, “Iran’s Crumbling Revolution” [CR9]
 AP Central briefing paper on Iran

CR7—The course uses concrete examples and discusses contemporary political changes in studying China.

III. Political Institutions (3 Weeks) [CR3]

O’Neil, chapters 6 (Democracy) and 7 (Advanced Democracies)
 Kesselman, Chapters 8 (Russia), 2 (UK), and 10 (Mexico) [CR10] (selected pages)
 Soe, “Women in National Parliaments”
 Soe, “Judicial Review: The Gavel and the Robe”
 AP Central briefing paper on Mexico

CR12—The course uses concrete examples and discusses contemporary political changes in studying Russia.

CR9—The course uses concrete examples and discusses contemporary political changes in studying Iran.

IV. Citizens, Society, and the State (3 Weeks) [CR4]

O’Neil, Chapter 9 (Less Developed and Newly Industrializing Countries)
 Kesselman, Chapters 11 (Nigeria) [CR11] and 13 (China) (selected pages)
 AP Central briefing paper on Nigeria

CR3—The course provides instruction in political institutions.

CR10—The course uses concrete examples and discusses contemporary political changes in studying Mexico.

V. Political and Economic Change (3 Weeks) [CR5]

O’Neil, Chapters 8 (Communism and Post-Communism) and 10 (Globalization)
 Kesselman, Chapters 8 (Russia) and 13 (China) (selected pages)
 Soe, “China the Quiet Revolution”
 Soe, “Jihad vs. McWorld”

CR4—The course provides instruction in the topics of citizens, society, and the state.

VI. Public Policy (3 Weeks) [CR6]

Haus, Chapter 7, “The European Union” (selected pages)

CR11—The course uses concrete examples and discusses contemporary political changes in studying Nigeria.

CR5—The course provides instruction in political and economic change.

CR6—The course provides instruction in public policy.

Teaching Strategies

I combine lecture/text discussion with interactive teaching strategies such as model parliament, debates, and Web site round tables. We discuss news articles from the *Economist* daily. Additionally, I assign my students to country-specific groups, and I ask each group to prepare a website about their country for use by the rest of the class. [CR16]

Student Evaluation

- 1) Five unit tests starting with Unit II (combination of multiple-choice and free-response items).....50%
- 2) Six multiple-choice and free-response quizzes..... 10%
- 3) Two projects:
 - Group website..... 10%
 - Public Policy Research Paper..... 10%
- 4) One exam (using AP Released Exam)20%

CR16—The course includes supplemental readings, including primary source materials and contemporary news analyses, that strengthen student understanding of the curriculum.

Student Activities

Group Website

Students are assigned in groups to create a website on a developing country (China, Mexico, Nigeria, or Iran). Included in the site are comparisons between it and other core countries, analyses of major political issues hampering economic development and extension of human rights, best and worst-case scenario for the next five years, annotated bibliography of at least six sources used in preparation of site information, links to pertinent other information sites, and discussion of bias and credibility. Maps, graphs, and charts must be included in each website. Each group presents the website and makes it available to the rest of the class for the balance of the term.

Individual Public Policy Research Papers

Each student writes a 3–4 page report on a particular public policy as it is exercised in at least three countries studied. For example, “economic and political equality of women” can be researched in terms of its application in Nigeria, Iran, and Mexico. Students receiving top grades must describe the policy in each country, provide background and context for how it is applied and/or enforced, interpret the future changes in this policy, and assess the sources of information used in compiling information of the policy. An annotated bibliography can be used to address this last requirement. [CR15, CR13]

CR15—The course requires students to write analytical and interpretive essays frequently.

CR13—The course teaches students to compare and contrast political institutions and processes across countries and to derive generalizations.