

AP COMPARATIVE GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

A.J. Dimond High School—Mr. Lem Wheelles—Spring 2016

Course Description: Welcome to A.P. Comparative Government and Politics. This course is designed to give the student a basic understanding of political science and the comparative method, emphasizing the world's diverse political structures and practices. The course encompasses the study of specific nations and general concepts interpreting key political relationships in national polities. The course is designed to provide the tools for mastery of the A.P. Comparative Government & Politics examination in the spring. We will be studying six nations: the United Kingdom, Nigeria, Russia, China, Mexico, and Iran. We will explore the following substantive topics and questions in comparative politics.

- I. Introduction to Comparative Politics
- II. Sovereignty, Authority, and Power
- III. Citizens, Society, and the State
- IV. Political Institutions
- V. Public Policy
- VI. Political and Economic Change

Class Expectations: This course is taught at the same level as a first year college class. The academia is anticipated to be rigorous. Your level of preparedness for each class will determine your level of preparedness come exam time. Therefore, you are expected to keep up on current events to assist relating theory to real world practice. Most class sessions will involve discussion; it is imperative that you complete all readings and class assignments done on time. Failure to do either may result in grade sanctions. No late work will be accepted for credit.

Course Credit: Successful completion of this course will earn the student a semester social studies elective credit. Students are expected to take the AP Comparative Government and Politics exam in the spring; students can earn college credit based on their exam score.

Grading: This class will be primarily assessed through examinations, coursework, participation, and a major research paper and project. The breakdown of points will be as follows:

30% Examinations

30% Class Assignments

20% Research Project

10% Activities

5% Current Events

5% Class Participation/Attendance/Preparedness

Examinations: All examinations in this class will be made to emulate the AP exam in the spring. As such, each will have a multiple-choice section and a free-response section. Each section is worth half of the exam. Exams will focus on the units most recently covered, but may also include questions concerning previous units of study.

Research Paper/Project: You will be assigned a nation-state from among those covered on the AP Comparative Government Exam. You are to write a 5-7 page paper about your nation-state. The paper is to include a brief history, current governmental situation, contemporary problems, and a brief discussion of possible solutions to current issues, as well as an analysis from the perspective of our six topics. You will be assigned a nation-state during the second week of class. Your research paper will be due on **Monday, March 28**. In addition, you will work with the other students assigned to your respective nation to prepare a briefing on your assigned

nation-state. You will present this briefing to the class during the first day of our study of that nation-state (presentation will last the whole class period). Additional details and a scoring rubric will be provided when nation-states are assigned.

Readings: You will be issued the textbook *Comparative Politics Today: A World View* (11th ed.) by Powell, Dalton, and Strøm (New York: Pearson, 2015). You are expected to complete weekly readings (see Course Outline) from the textbook and from other sources as provided in class. In addition, you should stay current on events in the assigned nations by reading the newspaper and online journals. You can access online journals such as the *Economist*, *Foreign Affairs*, and the *New York Times* using EBSCOhost. Login information is available through the Dimond Library.

Current Events: On Tuesdays and Thursdays we will start class with a current events presentation by a member of the class. One student will be assigned to present each day; a schedule of presentations will be provided during the first week of class along with detailed directions on what you will need to share during your presentation. The presentations should focus on news from one of our case study nations.

Academic Honesty: As this is a college-level course, students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty. All writing that uses ideas or quotations from other sources should be cited appropriately using MLA format; plagiarism will result in a zero on the assignment and repeated offenses may result in failure of the course.

Submitting Assignments: All homework assignments will be submitted electronically on TurnItIn.com, by 11:59 PM of the due date, unless indicated otherwise in class. Definitions are always due on the 3rd day of the unit. Other assignments listed in the syllabus are due the final day of the unit.

Course Outline: The following is a tentative schedule of readings, topics of study, assignments, and exams. Readings are expected to be completed by the third day of the unit.

This schedule is subject to change.

I. Introduction to Comparative Politics (Week 1: January 4-8)

- Course overview, syllabus, expectations
- **Lecture topics:** Political science, nation-states
- **Read:** *CPT*¹ Chapter 1: Issues in Comparative Politics
CPT Chapter on your assigned case-study nation
- **Define:** politics, government, nation, state, nation-state, regime, political cleavages, direct democracy, representative democracy, republic, monarchy, oligarchy, dictatorship, autocracy, theocracy, totalitarianism
- **Assignment 1:** Evaluate your case-study subject under criteria of being a nation, a state, and a nation-state. Identify the current regime of your case study subject.
- **Activity 1:** Nation-state exploration/research proposal.

¹ Almond, Gabriel A., Russell J. Dalton, Kaare Strøm, G. Bingham Powell. *Comparative Politics Today: A World View* (8th ed.). New York: Longman, 2004.

II. Sovereignty, Authority, and Power (Week 2: January 11-15)

- **Lecture topics:** Political philosophy, comparative method, political systems
- **Read:** CPT Chapter 2: Comparing Political Systems
CPT Chapter on your assigned case-study nation
- **Define:** sovereignty, legitimacy, authority, power, coercion, social contract, political system, inputs, outputs, structures, functions, environments, feedback, domestic, foreign, outcomes
- **Assignment 2:** Create an outline of your case-study nation-state's constitution (2 page maximum).
- **Activity 2:** Comparative analysis of national constitutions as social contracts.
- **Exam:** Units I and II

III. Citizens, Society, and the State (Week 3: January 19-22)

- **Lecture topics:** Civic participation, political ideology
- **Read:** CPT Chapter 3: Political Culture and Political Socialization
CPT Chapter 4: Interest Articulation
- **Define:** political socialization, democratization, ethnicity, fundamentalism, interest groups, interest articulation, mass media
- **Assignment 3a:** Identify and describe the 3 most significant elements of political culture in your case-study nation. Evaluate each for its contribution to or detracting from the stability of the political system.
- **Assignment 3b:** Identify and describe the four types of interest groups. Give a specific example of each (can be current or historical); all examples should be from one of the case study nations.

IV. Political Institutions (Week 4: January 25-29)

- **Lecture topics:** Types of governments, branches of government, political party systems
- **Read:** CPT Chapter 5: Interest Aggregation and Political Parties
CPT Chapter 6: Government and Policymaking
- **Define:** political party, majority-coalition system, proportional representation, single-member districts, patron-client network, executive branch, legislative branch, judicial branch, bureaucracy, parliamentary regime, separation of powers, federal system, rule of law, judicial review
- **Assignment 4a:** Discuss the party system in each of the assigned nations in one detailed paragraph each.
- **Assignment 4b:** Analyze the difference between presidential and parliamentary systems.
- **Activity 4:** Class debate: presidential vs. parliamentary systems.
- **Exam:** Units III and IV

V. Public Policy (Week 5: February 1-5)

- **Lecture topics:** Domestic policymaking vs. foreign policymaking, influences on policymaking, policy implementation
- **Read:** CPT Chapter 7: Public Policy

- **Define:** direct taxes, distribution, extraction, indirect taxes, nightwatchman state, opportunity cost, outcomes, outputs, police state, policy goods, political goods, process goods, public goods, public policies, regulation, regulatory state, technocratic, welfare state
- **Assignment 5:** Write an analysis paper about public policymaking in your assigned nation-state. Be sure to address the three policy functions. Evaluate the effectiveness of your nation-state in making sound policy decisions.
- **Activity 5:** Roundtable discussion of policy issues in various nation-states.

VI. Political and Economic Change (Week 6: February 8-12)

- **Lecture topics:** The United Nations, Intergovernmental Organizations, and Globalization
- **Read:** *Concepts and Issues in Comparative Politics*² Chapter 12: The Politics of Change
“Democratization Briefing Paper” from AP Central
“Globalization Briefing Paper” from AP Central
- **Define:** United Nations, European Union, World Trade Organization, International Court of Justice, International Criminal Court, World Bank, revolution, coup d’état, corruption, democratic responsiveness, economic development level, waves of democratization, intergovernmental organization, non-governmental organization, multinational corporation, interdependence, foreign direct investment, privatization
- **Assignment 6:** Create a timeline of political and economic change in your assigned nation-state throughout its existence (include periods spent as a colony or under another regime; i.e. Russia as the Soviet Union).
- **Activity 6:** As a class, create a chart comparing our case study nation-states using multiple indicators of economic development. The class will then discuss the relative strengths and weaknesses of each nation-state and give an overall classification to each nation-state on a development continuum.
- **Exam:** Units V and VI

Note on Case Studies: Each case study will last 7-8 class days; consequently the week numbers will overlap. Details for the nation-state summaries will be provided in class.

VII. Case Study: Great Britain (Weeks 7-8: February 16-24)

- **Lecture topics:** Politics in Great Britain, Parliamentary Systems
- **Presentation:** Great Britain Research Group
- **Read:** *CPT* Chapter 8: Politics in Britain
- **Define:** centralization, Conservative Party, Crown, Downing Street, first-past-the-post, insularity, Labour Party, Liberal Democrats, Magna Carta, mixed economy, multiparty system, New Labour Party, prime minister, quangos, trusteeship theory of government, unwritten constitution, vote of confidence, devolution

² Wilson, Frank L. *Concepts and Issues in Comparative Politics: An Introduction to Comparative Analysis* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2002.

- **Assignment 7a:** Great Britain summary paper.
- **Assignment 7b:** Explain the structural difference and intent between federal and centralized or unitary systems and give 2 examples of each.
- **Assignment 7c:** Summarize the views of the major political parties in Great Britain. Compare and contrast their positions on current policy issues (to be discussed in class). Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of a multiparty system.
- **Activity 7:** Prime Minister's Question Hour (clips from CSPAN). Write a 1-page summary of the topics discussed and your general impressions.
- **Exam:** Great Britain

VIII. Case Study: Nigeria (Weeks 8-9: February 25-March 4)

- **Lecture topics:** Politics in Nigeria, Democratization, Corruption
- **Presentation:** Nigeria Research Group
- **Read:** CPT Chapter 18: Politics in Nigeria
"Nigeria Briefing Paper" from AP Central
- **Define:** Igbo, Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba, neocolonial, urbanization, clientelism, National Election Commission, National Assembly, NUPENG, Kaduna Mafia, People's Democratic Party, All Nigeria People's Party, Alliance for Democracy, Structural Adjustment Program, OPEC
- **Assignment 8a:** Nigeria summary paper.
- **Assignment 8b:** Read articles provided in class on the most recent Nigerian elections then respond to the following question: Why are Nigerian elections regularly surrounded by corruption, violence, and unrest?
- **Activity 8a:** Analyze recent and historical election data to identify trends.
- **Activity 8b:** Roundtable discussion of the future of Nigeria.
- **Exam:** Nigeria

March 14-18: Spring Break

IX. Case Study: Russia (Weeks 10-11: March 7-March 23)

- **Lecture topics:** Politics in Russia, Communism
- **Presentation:** Russia Research Group
- **Read:** CPT Chapter 12: Politics in Russia
- **Define:** Communism, socialism, Communist Party, Constitutional Court, duma, Federation Council, *glasnost*, *nomenklatura*, *perestroika*, Mikhail Gorbachev, Vladimir Lenin, Vladimir Putin, Joseph Stalin, Boris Yeltsin, shock therapy, parties of power, Chechnya
- **Assignment 9a:** Russia summary paper.
- **Assignment 9b:** Discuss Russia's transitions from socialism to democracy and a market economy. Which has been more successful? Why?
- **Activity 9:** Class debate: Which has been more successful at transitioning to democracy: Russia or Nigeria?

Research Paper Due Monday, March 28

- X. Case Study: China (Weeks 11-12: March 24-April 1)
- **Lecture topics:** Politics in China, Privatization, World Trade Organization
 - **Presentation:** China Research Group
 - **Read:** CPT Chapter 13: Politics in China
China Reading Packet (provided in class)
 - **Define:** Central Committee, Chinese Communist Party, Confucianism, Cultural Revolution, democratic centralism, Deng Xiaoping, Great Leap Forward, guardianship, Hong Kong, Hu Jintao, Mao Zedong, National Party Congress, National People's Congress, People's Liberation Army, Politburo, Taiwan, Tiananmen massacre
 - **Assignment 10a:** China summary paper.
 - **Assignment 10b:** Respond to questions provided with China Reading Packet.
 - **Activity 10:** Class discussion: Impacts and success (or failure) of socialism on China and Russia.
 - **Exam:** Russia & China
- XI. Case Study: Mexico (Weeks 13-14: April 4-12)
- **Lecture topics:** Politics in Mexico, Election of 2006
 - **Presentation:** Mexico Research Group
 - **Read:** CPT Chapter 14: Politics in Mexico
"Mexico Briefing Paper" from AP Central
 - **Define:** PRI, PAN, PRD, corporatism, hegemony, *municipio*, patron-client relationship, *técnico*, Porfirio Díaz, Carlos Salinas, Ernesto Zedillo, Vicente Fox, Felipe Calderón, Enrique Peña Nieto
 - **Assignment 11a:** Mexico summary paper.
 - **Assignment 11b:** Research corruption in the Mexican government. Write an essay detailing why corruption is prevalent in Mexico and suggest possible remedies.
 - **Activity 11:** Analyze economic indicators about Mexico and compare to similar data for Nigeria, China, and the United States.
- XII. Case Study: Iran (Weeks 14-15: April 13-22)
- **Lecture topics:** Politics in Iran, Middle East Conflicts
 - **Presentation:** Iran Research Group
 - **Read:** CPT Chapter 16: Politics in Iran
*Global Studies*³ "Iran Country Report"
"Iran Briefing Paper" from AP Central
"Iran in Iraq's Shadow," *Parameters* Autumn 2004
 - **Define:** Assembly of Religious Experts, ayatollah, Cultural Revolution, Expediency Council, imam, jihad, Majles, Quran, rentier state, shah, supreme leader, Supreme National Security Council, Ruhollah Khomeini, Mohammad, Ali Hoseini-Khamenei, Mahmud Ahmadi-Nejad, Hassan Rouhani

³ Spencer, William J. *Global Studies: The Middle East (11th ed.)*. Dubuque, IA: McGraw-Hill/Contemporary Learning Series, 2007.

- **Assignment 12a:** Iran summary paper.
- **Assignment 12b:** Respond to the following questions, defending each response with evidence: Does Iran operate under a theocracy? Should Iran be allowed to develop nuclear weapons?
- **Activity 12:** As a class, create a chart showing the role of religion in society and government in all case study nation-states. Assess political stability in each nation and include in chart. Discuss possible correlations between the role of religion and political stability.
- **Exam:** Mexico & Iran

XIII. Review (Weeks 16-17: April 25-May 6)

- **Read:** *A Civics Mosaic* Lesson 6: Is Democracy a Universal Ideal?⁴
- **Assignment:** Respond to the following questions, based on *Civics Mosaic* reading:
 - What is a democratic regime?
 - Describe the characteristics of a democratic nation-state.
 - What is an illiberal democracy?
 - Is the United States democratic? Justify your response.
 - Is your case-study nation democratic? Justify your response
 - Is democracy a universal ideal? Justify your response.
- **Activity:** World summit simulation between case study nation-states. The class will select several current global issues to be addressed at the summit. Students will represent the nation-state they were assigned for the research project.
- **Activity:** Prepare a detailed chart that compares case study nation-states in the areas of government, economy, cleavages, and political stability.
- **Exam:** In-Class Cumulative Final Exam
OR
AP Exam on Thursday, May 12

⁴ Branson, Margaret. *A Civics Mosaic: The Study of Political Systems in Comparative Perspective*. Manuscript in preparation, Troy, NY: Russell Sage College.