

Fall 2017
Comparative Government and Politics
Classroom Location: F3

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Course Description

Comparative government and politics is a critical field of study for young people. The twenty-first century has taught us that we cannot ignore the world around us. Happenings around the globe now directly impact our lives, and social studies teachers and students around the country face the challenge of interpreting many puzzling international events. The AP Comparative Government and Politics course focuses on government and politics course focuses on government and politics in other countries and provides a theoretical framework to compare political systems around the world. It is my hope that my students grasp something of the political complexities of our global environment, and gain some understanding of both commonalities and differences among modern political systems. In today's world, we cannot afford not to know.

Course Planner

The course is taught for a full academic year, and is divided into two parts. The first part of the course will introduce the sub-field of comparative politics and key concepts addressed throughout the course such as, political culture, historical development, interest articulation, interest aggregation, and political parties, government and policy making, and public policy.

The second part of the course will apply the above methods and topics to a survey of the following case studies: Great Britain, Mexico, Nigeria, Russia, Iran and China. Although the course is organized around a country-by-country study, comparative politics is not simply a description of different countries, and, as such, there will be a heavy emphasis on cross-country conceptual comparisons. As the course progresses, students are required to constantly think back to countries studied previously; so that they come to understand each process, institution, and issue within the context of each country's political system, as well as comparatively in terms of other countries' political systems.

Note

This course relies upon a blended learning approach which combines traditional in-class lecture, discussions, and activities with online assignments and discussions via the web. Such approach requires that students become comfortable with online work and have the discipline to

complete the required assignments in a timely fashion. Please make sure to carefully look over the syllabus.

Course Expectations

Students are expected to attend class, stay up-to-date on the readings and regularly participate in discussions. Exam questions will come from both the readings as well as lectures. Students are expected to respect their peers, themselves, and the teacher.

Textbook: Powell, Dalton, & Strom,(2015). *Comparative Politics Today: A World View 11th Edition*. Pearson.

Teaching Strategies

The most commonly used strategy is lecture/discussion, with ample opportunity for the latter. Because students do not usually have as much knowledge about comparative politics as they do about politics in the United States, I will assign a case study to be completed throughout the semester to encourage student participation. In the two days that follow the due date of papers, students discuss the issues that they researched, and classes are more interactive as a result.

Reading Quiz & Class Discussions

At the start of each class there will be a reading quiz the culmination of these quiz grades will result in a test grade at the end of each quarter. It is essential that the students read! Class discussions will also count toward participation points each day.

Case Study

Each student will be assigned a specific country from the text to follow throughout the semester. Students will have various assignments on their country over the course of the semester (including a required rough draft) designed to prepare students for their final essay. The final essay will be 8-10 pages, typed and double spaced and will not only analyze the given country (with the concepts/skills acquired during the course), but also compare said country to two or more of the countries covered in class. (more information on the case study located in the syllabus)

Part I: Introduction to Comparative

Why we Compare..

Learning Objectives:

1. Describe the public and authoritative aspects of political decisions
2. Discuss the challenges of building a national identity for a nonhomogeneous population
3. Explain the processes and challenges of economic development, giving specific examples from various countries
4. Discuss the politics and negative effects of globalization.
5. List five ways that government can help its citizens.
6. List five ways which government can harm or hinder its citizens.

Readings:

1. Ch 1 (pg.1-20)
2. Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History?*
3. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*
4. Joseph E. Stiglitz, *Globalism's Discontents*

Homework:

1. Vocabulary- identify and define each word and use it in a sentence.

Historical Development, Political Culture and Political Socialization/Introduction to the “inputs” of the Political System

Learning Objectives:

1. Describe the three levels of political culture and the factors that make them different.
2. List and describe the different sources of legitimacy for a political system.
3. Discuss how culture norms and political institutions are interrelated.
4. Describe the agents of political socialization and their roles in forming political values.
5. List and describe three current forces that are affecting contemporary political cultures.

Readings:

1. CH 3 (pg. 39-53)
2. Jerry Z. Muller, *Us and Them*

Homework:

1. Vocabulary - identify and define each word and use in a sentence.

ESSAY (quiz grade) : Name the 5 ways in which the American Government both helps and hinders its citizens, and how does globalization play a part?

THE INPUTS OF A POLITICAL SYSTEM: INTEREST ARTICULATION AND AGGREGATION

Interest Articulation

Learning Objectives:

1. Define Interest Articulation, and provide some examples of interest articulation in different societies.
2. Explain three ways in which individuals can participate in the political system.
3. List four types of interest groups and give examples.
4. Describe the characteristics and benefits of a civil society
5. Identify and describe the three main types of interest group systems, and give examples of nations where each is prevalent.
6. Compare and contrast legitimate and coercive channels of political access
7. Describe the factors that contribute to the creation of interest groups.

Readings:

Ch 4: pg.56-72

Homework:

1. Vocabulary- identify and define each word and use in a sentence.

Interest Aggregation and Political Parties

Learning Objectives:

1. Describe patron-client networks
2. Explain how groups can act as interest aggregators.
3. Compare and contrast competitive and authoritarian party systems and their roles in interest aggregation.
4. Discuss the types of electoral systems and their relation to patterns of electoral competition.
5. Describe the features of different competitive party systems.
6. Compare and contrast exclusive and inclusive authoritarian party systems.
7. Describe the range of the military's role as an interest aggregator.

Readings:

Ch 6: pg. 75-93

Homework:

1. Vocabulary- identify and define each word and use in a sentence.

Case Study assignment #1 on history, political culture and political socialization (10 points toward case study final grade)

Government and Policy Making

Learning Objectives:

1. Describe the features of a constitution, focusing on decision rules, and explain why Britain is unusual.
2. Compare and contrast democratic and authoritarian systems.
3. Discuss presidential and parliamentary forms of democratic government, using the United States and Britain, respectively, as example.
4. Define confederal, federal, and unitary divisions of governmental power.
5. Discuss the role of the courts in overseeing democracies and give examples from several countries.
6. List three methods used to remove political leaders from office.
7. Describe varied forms, functions, and compositions of government assemblies.
8. Discuss the ways chief executives are chosen, their powers, and the role played by cabinets.
9. Explain Max Weber's definition of a bureaucracy and describe the forms bureaucracies can take.

Readings:

Ch 6: pg. 96-119

Homework:

1. Vocabulary- identify and define each word and use in a sentence.

Public Policy

Learning Objectives:

1. Distinguish between system goods, process goods, and policy goods.
2. Define the four types of policy outputs and discuss how they are shaped by a nation's level of economic development.
3. Discuss the quality-of-life outcomes sought by domestic government policy, with examples from various countries.
4. Discuss the international economic and security issue addressed by government policies and explain how they are affected by globalization.

Readings:

Ch 7: pg. 122- 145

Homework:

1. Vocabulary- identify and define each word and use in a sentence.

Case Study assignment #2 on interest articulation and aggregation (10 points toward case study)

PART II : CASE STUDIES

For each country, you should know

1. Type of political system- democracy (variations of) vs. authoritarian
2. Historical development-key events, individuals, movements, ect.
3. Current leadership- if applicable, party in power, head of government and/or head of state, current policy challenges.
4. Structure of Government- institutions and functions of these institutions
 - a. Presidential vs. semi-presidential vs. parliamentary
 - b. Federal vs. Unitary
 - c. Power of executive vs. power of legislature
 - d. Role of powers of bureaucracy, judiciary (Is there judicial review?) Economic structure-relationship among state, economy, and civil society. Laissez faire or state involvement in the economy?
 - e. Constitution? Rule of Law?
5. Electoral system/ Selection of government officials (single member district plurality, proportional, mixed, other)
6. Political party structure (one, two, or multi-party systems), key parties, their role in government and society-interest aggregation
7. Levels of participation of citizens and interest groups-interest articulation
8. Policymaking process- which government structure is responsible for policy making?
9. Political culture/political socialization (i.e. attitudes toward democracy, role of media, citizens views toward government, etc)
10. Types of outputs

The United Kingdom

Learning Objectives:

1. Discuss the domestic and international challenges currently facing Britain, focusing on its coalition government and increased globalization.
2. Describe recent changes in British politics, from the development of the welfare state through left/right conflict over Thatcherism to less confrontational government under Tony Blair and David Cameron.
3. Identify the ways in which Britain is a multinational state
4. Explain the structure of British government and list the duties of Cabinet Ministers and Civil Servants
5. Summarize the collectivist and individualist theories of government, using examples from Britain.

6. List 5 main influences on political socialization in Britain.
7. Contrast British citizens' participation in political versus nonpartisan activities.
8. Summarize the roles of laws, money, and personnel in Britain's public policy.
9. Identify the effects of global interdependence on Britain's economy and thus on its political capabilities.

Readings:

Ch 8: pg. 149-191

Homework:

1. Vocabulary- identify and define each word and use in a sentence.

MIDTERM

Politics in Russia

Learning Objectives:

1. Discuss the challenges of Russia's "resource course" and of the country's changing demographics, along with the three main obstacles to their resolution.
2. Briefly describe Russia's political history, from its tsarist roots to the transitions of the twentieth century.
3. Describe the powers of the Russian president in relation to the other branches of government.
4. Discuss the powers of the Russian president in relation to other branches of government.
5. Discuss the contradictions within Russia's current political culture, focusing on the conflict between demographic and traditional Soviet values.
6. Explain the roles of propaganda, the educational system, the church, and the media in political socialization in Russia.
7. Describe avenues of direct and indirect participation in Russian politics.
8. Discuss the formation and activities of interest groups in post-Soviet Russia, with specific examples.
9. Examine the rise of the "party of power" in recent elections.
10. Describe the interplay between political and economic restructuring in contemporary Russia.
11. Discuss Russia's conflicted international relations.

Readings

1. Ch.12- pg. 337-380

Politics in China

Learning Objectives:

1. Discuss the challenges, rooted in its economy, currently faced by China.
2. Briefly distinguish the three main periods of China's political history, from 1949 through the present.
3. Describe China's social conditions, deriving from its size.

4. Describe the structures of the Chinese party-state, providing details on party makeup and elite recruitment.
5. Contrast China's "rule of law" with democratic "rule of law."
6. Describe the government's relationship to mass media and the education system as sources of political socialization.

Politics in Mexico

Learning Objective:

1. List the most serious economic, social, and political challenges currently faced by Mexico.
2. Describe Mexicans' conflicted relationships with their political system.
3. Discuss major sources of political socialization in Mexico.
4. Explain the role of interest groups in Mexico, touching on corporatist and patron-client structures.
5. Discuss the ways that the reform of the Mexican electoral system since the 1990s has affected the political parties.

Politics in Iran

Learning Objective:

1. Identify five internal challenges currently facing Iran.
2. Discuss the interplay of political and religious leadership in Iran.
3. Discuss political parties versus factions as they affect Iranian elections.
4. Describe the sources of Iran's political elite.
5. Compare and contrast the results of Iran's recent policies relating to internal and international issues.

Politics in Nigeria

Learning Objective:

1. Discuss the challenges faced by Nigeria as a new democracy.
2. Describe the fragmentary nature of Nigeria's political structure in precolonial and colonial times
3. List the types of subcultures that exist in Nigeria, and discuss how they affect the political culture.
4. List four agents of political socialization.
5. List five forms of interest articulation and contrast their strength in the north and south of Nigeria.
6. Discuss how factors such as oil and ethnic diversity impact economic performance.