



## AP<sup>®</sup> Comparative Government and Politics: Sample Syllabus 1

Syllabus 886973v1

Scoring Components	Page(s)
<b>SC1</b> The course provides instruction on an introduction to Comparative Politics.	1
<b>SC2</b> The course provides instruction in Sovereignty, Authority, and Power.	2
<b>SC3</b> The course provides instruction in State and Nation.	2
<b>SC4</b> The course provides instruction in Citizens and Society and the State.	2
<b>SC5</b> The course provides instruction in Political Institutions.	2
<b>SC6</b> The course provides instruction in Political and Economic Change.	2
<b>SC7</b> The course provides instruction in Public Policy.	2
<b>SC8</b> The course uses concrete examples from China, Great Britain, Iran, Mexico, Nigeria, and Russia including contemporary political changes, to illustrate the six major content areas of the course.	2, 3, 4
<b>SC9</b> The course teaches students to compare and contrast political institutions and processes across countries to derive generalizations.	1
<b>SC10</b> The course introduces students to the interpretation and analysis of data relevant to comparative government and politics.	2
<b>SC11</b> The course requires students to write analytical and interpretive essays.	4
<b>SC12</b> The course includes supplemental readings that contain contemporary news analyses, thereby strengthening the students' understanding of the curriculum.	1, 4

## Overview

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 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 one full academic year, with Comparative Government taught in the fall and United States Government in the spring semester. Only about 18 weeks of instruction are available for the Comparative portion of the course.

## Textbooks

- Mark Kesselman, et al. *Introduction to Comparative Politics*, 4th ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2007.

This 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.

- Patrick O'Neil. *Essentials of Comparative Politics*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2004.

This text takes a theoretical approach, and is used at the beginning of the course and at the beginning of each unit.

- Christian Soe, ed. *Annual Editions: Comparative Politics, 2004–2005 ed.* McGraw-Hill Dushkin, 2005.

This reader provides recent articles from magazines and newspapers about both theory and specific countries.

- Current articles are used throughout the course, most frequently from *The Economist* and the *New York Times*. **[SC12]**

This comparative government and politics design takes a country-by-country approach, but with a heavy emphasis on cross-country conceptual comparisons. The curriculum in the first three weeks focuses on concepts and theory, and the same theoretical framework is used to analyze each of the six countries. **[SC1]** 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. **[SC9]**

**SC 12** The course includes supplemental readings that contain contemporary news analyses, thereby strengthening the students' understanding of the curriculum.

**SC 1** The course provides instruction on an introduction to Comparative Politics.

**SC 9** The course teaches students to compare and contrast political institutions and processes across countries to derive generalizations.

## Weeks 1–3: Unit I: Introduction: Conceptual Introduction to Comparative Government and Politics

- Sovereignty, Authority, and Power **[SC2]**
- Political and Economic Change **[SC6]**
- Citizens, Society, and the State **[SC4]**
- Political Institutions **[SC5]**
- Public Policy **[SC7]**
- Nations, States, and Nation-States **[SC3]**

### The Comparative Method; Sources and Analysis of Data

#### Readings:

- CIA World Factbook ([www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html](http://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html)). Look at the maps and data for each of our countries. Data activities (maps, graphs, and charts) will occur throughout the semester and be included on tests and quizzes. **[SC10]**
- Kesselman, Chapter 1, “Introducing Comparative Politics”
- O’Neill, Chapter 10, “Globalization”
- Soe: Readings from Unit 5: Comparative Politics: Some Trends, Issues, and Prospects
- “The Global State of Democracy,” Larry Diamond
- “Cultural Explanations: The Man in the Baghdad Café ”
- “Jihad vs. McWorld,” Benjamin Barber
- “Women in National Parliaments,” Inter-Parliamentary Union

In weeks 4-18 we will cover the political institutions and frameworks for each of the following: China, Great Britain, Iran, Mexico, Nigeria, and Russia **[SC8]**

## Weeks 4 –7: Unit II: Advanced Democracies: Britain and the European Union

Reading: O’Neil, Chapter 7, “Advanced Democracies”

### Government and Politics in Britain **[SC8]**

#### Readings:

- Kesselman: Chapter 2, “Britain”
- Soe: From Unit 1: “Pluralist Democracies: Country Studies”
- “A Constitutional Revolution in Britain,” Donley Studlar

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**SC 5** The course provides instruction in Political Institutions.

**SC 7** The course provides instruction in Public Policy.

**SC 3** The course provides instruction in State and Nation.

**SC 10** The course introduces students to the interpretation and analysis of data relevant to comparative government and politics.

**SC 8** The course uses concrete examples from China, Great Britain, Iran, Mexico, Nigeria, and Russia including contemporary political changes, to illustrate the six major content areas of the course.

## The European Union

Readings:

- *AP Comparative Government and Politics: A Study Guide, 2nd edition*, by Ethel Wood, pp. 69–74.
- Soe: From Unit 3, Part A: “The European Union”
- “When East Meets West,” Robert Cotrell
- Updated reading from *The Economist* and the *New York Times* regarding the EU Constitution

## Weeks 8-12: Unit III: “Communist and Post-Communist Countries”

Reading: O’Neil, Chapter 8, “Communism and Post-Communism”

### Government and Politics in Russia [SC8]

Readings:

- Kesselman: Chapter 8, “Russia”
- Soe: From Unit 3, Section D: “Democracy in Russia”
- “Ten Myths About Russia: Understanding and Dealing with Russia’s Complexity and Ambiguity,” David Foglesong and Gordon M. Hahn

### Government and Politics in China [SC8]

Readings:

- Kesselman: Chapter 13: “China”
- Soe: Unit 4, Section D: “China”
- “China: the Quiet Revolution,” Doug Guthrie

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## Weeks 13-18: Unit IV: Developing and Less-Developed Countries

Reading: O’Neil, Chapter 9, “Less Developed and Newly Industrializing Countries”

### Government and Politics in Mexico [SC8]

Readings:

- Kesselman: Chapter 10
- Soe: “Mexico at an Impasse,” M. Delal Baer

### Government and Politics in Nigeria [SC8]

Readings:

- Kesselman: Chapter 11
- Current articles on Nigerian issues

**Government and Politics in Iran [SC8]**

## Readings:

- Kesselman: Chapter 12
- Current articles on conservative shifts within the Iranian government
- Nuclear issues

**Teaching Strategies**

The most commonly used strategy is lecture/discussion, with ample opportunity for the latter. Because students generally don't have as much knowledge about comparative politics as they do about politics in the United States, I assign several short research projects 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.

**Student Evaluation**

Students are evaluated in several ways:

- 1) Two Multiple-choice tests ..... 20%
- 2) Four Free-Response Essays. **[SC11]**..... 20%
- 3) Four short research papers assigned: one each on the European Union, Mexico, Iran, and Nigeria **[SC8]** ..... 40%
- 4) Written homework assignments: questions assigned on readings **[SC8]**..... 20%

**Resources**

- *The New York Times*
- *The Economist*
- “Mrs. Wood’s classes”: website for student use and study. <http://athena.prs.k12.nj.us/users/ewood/>
- Question Hour: Taped sessions of the British House of Commons, as aired on CSPAN.
- Ethel Wood. *AP Comparative Government and Politics*. 2nd ed. Reading, Pa.:Woodyard Publications, 2005. **[SC12]**

**Free Response Essays**

These 4 exams will each entail interpretive and analytical essays testing conceptual definitions, theories, and country-specific content. Students will be required to demonstrate specific knowledge about each of the countries covered, demonstrating the ability to apply the concepts and theories to new cases and countries.

**Research Papers****Specific Requirements for the European Nation**

For the paper on the European Union you may choose to write on how the EU has changed economic conditions regionally and internationally or you may

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choose to specialize on how a specific country has responded to the issues presented by the evolving currency and trade policies. In either case you should attempt to draw upon several sources with different perspectives. The paper should be between two and three typed pages (double-spaced) with an annotated bibliography of at least four references. The paper and/or the annotated bibliography should include a critique of each source in terms of credibility and bias.

### **Specific Requirements for the Last Three Countries**

For each of the last three countries that we study—Mexico, Iran, and Nigeria—I assign the students a brief research paper that they bring to class for the last two or three days that we discuss the country. The main purpose is to get the students involved in discussion so that they can contribute as “mini-experts” on some aspect of the country’s major issues. There is some duplication of topics, but that generally works well because students can interact with one another as they share their research. The Iran assignment is included below; the Nigeria and Mexico assignments are similar, with overlapping but different topics.

For each of the three remaining countries, you will research and write a brief paper (a total of three papers) about one important issue that the respective governments currently face. Each paper should address these three aspects of the issue:

- 1) Explanation of why the situation may be defined as an “issue.” Include here what is problematic, and the different points of view.
- 2) Reactions that the government has had to the issue. This may be inaction, or may include specific policy remedies.
- 3) Future prospects: What is the likelihood that the issue will be resolved? Explain your answer. Discuss how the situation both impacts and is impacted by world opinion. How have media and interest groups outside the country influenced the issue’s resolution?

The paper should be between two and three typed pages (double-spaced), and you should include an annotated bibliography of a minimum of four references. At least one reference should include data of a quantitative nature. The annotated bibliography should include a critique of each source in terms of credibility and bias.

### **Sample Research Topics for Iranian Paper**

The third paper will focus on issues in Iran, and the paper will be due on Wednesday, January 18. Possible issues include:

- Political/economic corruption
- Recent elections/prospects for future elections
- Political participation of women in Iran
- Current-day reformist movements
- The nuclear issue
- Connections (or lack thereof) to international terrorism
- Ethnic/religious conflicts
- National debt/economic instability

- Education issues (religious versus secular, role of universities)
- Religious leadership: Does a theocracy work for Iran?
- Relationship to supranatural organizations (United Nations, OPEC, WTO, others)

You may choose other issues, but if you choose off the list, just be sure to double check your topic with me before the paper is due.