

AP[®] U.S. Government and Politics

Syllabus 3

Note: This syllabus presents an example of how to teach the AP[®] Comparative Government and Politics course and the AP United States Government and Politics course as one yearlong course in Government and Politics.

This yearlong, college-level course prepares students to take two AP exams: United States Government and Comparative Government and Politics. The course is designed to teach students to understand and be able to critically analyze important concepts in both U.S. and comparative politics through the study of six core countries from AP Comparative Government (the United Kingdom, Mexico, Nigeria, Iran, Russia, and China) and more in-depth study of American government and politics. As a college-level course, it is rigorous and demanding. It requires that students put forth their best effort on a daily basis, both in class and in reading and listening to the news outside of class. I welcome all students who are willing to work hard, but encourage students to consider another course if they are not willing to read 10 to 15 pages a night, enhance their understanding of concepts by listening to or reading the news, spend time outside of class experiencing politics and government in action, and coming to class consistently.

Texts and Materials

1. George C. Edwards, Martin P. Wattenburg, and Robert L. Linesberry. *Government in America: People, Politics, and Policy*, 10th ed. New York: Addison Wesley Educational Publishers, Inc., 2002.
2. Supplementary articles from the *Christian Science Monitor* (CSM), the *New York Times* (NYT), and the *Economist* [CR8]
3. Charles Hauss. *Comparative Politics Domestic Responses to Global Challenges*, 5th ed. Boston: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 2005.

CR8—The course includes supplemental readings, including primary source materials (such as *The Federalist Papers*) and contemporary news analyses.

Homework and Daily Quizzes

Students have nightly homework assignments, primarily out of the textbook and from selected articles from the *New York Times*, the BBC, the *Christian Science Monitor* and the *Economist*.

Sample Assignments and Assessments

Students are asked to:

- Research statistics from CIA fact book and apply of comparative approach based on “Comparative Politics Made Simple”

- Conduct field research (volunteer in local elections or attend local political events)
- Attend lectures by guest speakers from local political parties
- Research and prepare presentation for a part of a comparative chart (which compares six comparative countries and the U.S.)
- Write answers to College Board analytical FROs (Free-response Questions) at least every other week [CR9]
- Compare 2006 election stats with stats on 2005 UK election; compare election financing in UK with United States (use “Wanna Argument?” site: <http://www.bized.ac.uk/current/argument/arg17-1.htm>)
- Compare written U.S. Constitution with unwritten constitution of UK (see BBC website)
- Compare effects of federal and unitary systems by examining education systems
- Compare specific leadership transitions in China, Iran, Mexico, U.S., UK
- Have students determine ideology with “Ideolog” site and assess how that impacts their beliefs in the purpose of governments
- Research sites like Freedom House and Transparency International; present/discuss findings
- Have students discuss what makes human rights a reality and look at Mexico pre-and post-2000 to evaluate
- Examine exit poll data from U.S. and predict how it will impact 2006 elections then see how it does after the election [CR7]
- Compare U.S. presidential election in 2000 with Mexico Presidential election in 2006
- Discuss cleavages in comparative countries and how they impact political systems and compare to U.S.
- Learn about referendums in core countries and evaluate as a means of participation
- Identify students’ own agents of socialization and see how they would differ if raised in comparative countries
- Research statistics on women in parliament and analyze reasons behind them
- Look at public opinion polls in U.S. and UK and compare [CR7]
- Show elected and nonelected institutions in Iran (use BBC site) and discuss how citizens participate
- List forms of political participation and find examples from U.S., UK, and Mexico, then compare to Nigeria and Iran
- Create definition of authoritarian system and see how it applies to Iran, China, Russia
- Examine civil society (draw spheres) and compare
- Learn concepts such as rule of law and transparency by examining their lack in China
- Compare media control by reading about Putin’s crackdown in Russia, China’s crackdown on the Internet, and discuss the effect based on reading about the impact of media in the U.S.

CR9—The course requires students to answer analytical and interpretive free-response questions on a frequent basis.

CR7—The course provides students with practice in analyzing and interpreting data and other information relevant to U.S. government and politics.

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- Examine the role of parties in democracies and consider how it is the same and different in Russia and China
- Conduct Concord budget simulation[CR7]
- Research one act in each of the policy areas and present
- Participate in “Mock Congress,” designing bills based on research into policies in comparative countries
- Create “How a Bill Becomes a Law” charts for each comparative country and to compare to the U.S.
- Watch CNN’s *Question Hour* to compare relations between institutions
- Examine arguments about “imperial Congress” or “imperial presidency” in contexts of definitions created earlier for concepts like democracy and authoritarian
- Define and compare judicial review in different legal systems
- Examine role of bureaucracies in the U.S. and compare/contrast to democracies and nondemocracies
- Link political culture to different institutional structures

CR7—The course provides students with practice in analyzing and interpreting data and other information relevant to U.S. government and politics.

Connections

Throughout each unit you must keep track of connections you make between things you hear about outside of class that are connected to things we are studying in class. Every time you hear something that reminds you of an issue, event, or idea that we have studied in class, write it down or clip it out (your list can include pictures, cartoons, articles from magazines, etc.). You must be explicit in your connections. On each due date (see homework sheet) you must turn in 5 incredibly well-explained or 10 clearly explained connections. Details of this component are given out in class.

Course Plan

This course is organized thematically, using the six comparative countries and the United States as case studies to understand concepts covered in the AP Topic Outline for both AP U.S. Government and AP Comparative Government.

Unit One: Intro to Comparative Method and Liberal Democracies

Dates: September 5–October 12 (27 class days)

Comp. Gov.:

- Introduction to Comparative Politics (purpose and methods of comparison and classification; concepts of state, nation, regime, and government; process and policy; what is politics; purpose of government; what is political science/comparative; common policy challenges)
- Sovereignty, Authority, and Power (constitutions: forms, purposes, application; regime types)

- Political Institutions (levels of government; executives, legislatures, parliamentary and presidential systems; institutional relations; elections, electoral systems; parties, party systems, leadership and elite recruitment; bureaucracies; military; judiciaries)
- Country focus: Great Britain

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- Constitutional Underpinnings of U. S. Government (considerations that influenced the formulation and adoption of the U.S. Constitution; separation of powers; federalism; theories of democratic government) [CR1]
- Civil Liberties and Civil Rights (development of civil liberties and civil rights by judicial interpretation; knowledge of substantive rights and liberties; impact of the Fourteenth Amendment on the constitutional development of rights and liberties) [CR6]

CR1—The course provides instruction in the constitutional underpinnings of the U.S. government.

CR6—The course provides instruction in civil rights and civil liberties.

Readings

Haus: Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 16

Edwards, et al.: Chapters 2, 3: “The Constitution,” “Federalism”

Additional Readings: U.S. Constitution; John Locke (Second Treatise excerpts), *Federalist Papers* 10 and 51; [CR8]

Democratization Briefing Paper (AP Central®); Jean-Germain Gros, “Comparative Politics Made Simple” (AP Central); Donley Studlar, “The British General Election of 2005” (AP Central); Henry Hale, “Russia’s Elections and “Managed Democracy” (AP Central); Kristen Parris, “Elite Transformation and Institutional Change: The Recent Party Congresses in China” (AP Central); selected articles from the *New York Times*, the *BBC*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, and the *Economist*

CR8—The course includes supplemental readings, including primary source materials (such as *The Federalist Papers*) and contemporary news analyses.

Unit Two: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

Dates: October 13–November 2 (16 class days)

Comp. Gov.:

- Sovereignty, Authority, and Power (constitutions: forms, purposes, application; regime types)
- Public Policy (civil liberties, rights, and freedoms)
- Country focus: Mexico

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- Civil Liberties and Civil Rights (development of civil liberties and civil rights by judicial interpretation; knowledge of substantive rights and liberties; the impact of the Fourteenth

Amendment on the constitutional development of rights and liberties)

Readings

Hauss: Chapter 16

Edwards, et al.: Chapters 4, 5: "Civil Liberties and Public Policy, "Civil Rights and Public Policy"

Additional Readings: U.S. Bill of Rights; excerpts from selected U.S. Supreme Court cases; [CR8]

Freedom House ratings; selected articles from the *New York Times*, the *BBC*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, and the *Economist*

CR8—The course includes supplemental readings, including primary source materials (such as *The Federalist Papers*) and contemporary news analyses.

Unit Three: Political Culture and Participation

Dates: November 3–December 1 (18 school days)

Comp. Gov.:

- Sovereignty, Authority, and Power (political culture, communication, and socialization; state building, legitimacy, and stability; belief-systems as sources of legitimacy)
- Citizens, Society, and the State (cleavages and politics; civil society; political participation [forms/modes/trends] including political violence, social movements, citizenship, and social representation)
- Country focuses: Iran, Nigeria

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- Political beliefs and behaviors of individuals (beliefs that citizens hold about their government and its leaders; processes by which citizens learn about politics; nature, sources, and consequences of public opinion; ways in which citizens vote and otherwise participate in political life, factors that influence citizens to differ from one another in terms of political beliefs and behaviors) [CR2]

CR2—The course provides instruction in political beliefs and political behaviors.

Readings:

Hauss: Chapters 13, 15

Edwards, et al.: Chapters 6, 10, "Public Opinion and Political Action" and "Elections and Voting Behavior"

Additional Readings: selected articles from the *New York Times*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, the *BBC*, and the *Economist*; sample readings from O'Neill text to evaluate for adoption

Unit Four: Linkage Institutions and Change; Authoritarian vs. Democratic Systems

Dates: December 4–January 22 (24 school days)

Comp. Gov.

- Sovereignty, Authority, and Power (regime types)
- Political Institutions (elections; political parties [organization, membership, institutionalization, ideological position]; party systems, leadership, and elite recruitment; interest groups and interest group systems)
- Citizens, Society, and the State (civil society)
- Political and economic change (revolution, coups, and war; trends and types of political change, including democratization; trends and types of economic change, including privatization; relationship between political and economic change; globalization and fragmentation: interlinked economies, global culture, and reactions against globalization; regionalism)
- Country focus: Russia, China

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- Political parties, interest groups, and mass media: mechanisms that facilitate the communication of interests and preferences by like-minded citizens (political parties and elections; interest groups [including PACs], mass media) **[CR3]**

CR3—The course provides instruction in political parties, interest groups, and mass media.

Readings

Haus: Chapters 8, 9, 10

Edwards, et al.: Chapters 7, 8, 9, 11: “The Mass Media and the Political Agenda” “Political Parties,” “Nominations and Campaigns,” “Interest Groups”

Additional Readings: selected articles from the *New York Times*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, the *BBC*, and the *Economist*; Neil Mitchell, “Illiberal Democracy and Vladimir Putin’s Russia” (AP Central); Jack Bielasiak, “Electoral Systems and Political Parties” (AP Central).

Unit Five: Institutions in the U.S. (with a review of Comparative Institutions)

Dates: January 30–February 26 (18 school days)

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- Institutions of National Government: The Congress, the presidency, the bureaucracy, and the federal courts (the major formal and informal institutional arrangements of powers, relationships among these four institutions and varying balances of power, links between these institutions and the following: public opinion and voters, interest groups, political parties, the media, subnational governments) **[CR4]**

Comp. Gov.

- Political Institutions (levels of government, executives, legislatures, parliamentary and presidential systems, institutional relations, elections, electoral systems, parties, party systems, leadership and elite recruitment, bureaucracies, military, judiciaries)
- Country focus: UK, Mexico, Nigeria, Iran, Russia, China (in review)

Readings

Edwards, et al.: Chapters 12, 13, 15, 16: “Congress,” “The Presidency,” “The Federal Bureaucracy,” “The Federal Courts”

Additional Readings: selected articles from the *New York Times*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, the *BBC*, and the *Economist*

- The Ins and Outs of the Committee System
<http://www.uua.org/uuawo/new/article.php?id=533>
- “Congressional Leadership Information”
http://www.congresslink.org/print_basics_leadershippositions.htm
- Readings associated with YLI “Mock Congress”

Unit Six: Public Policy

Dates: February 26–March 30 (26 school days)

Comp. Gov.

- Sovereignty, Authority, and Power (types of economic systems)
- Political and economic change (trends and types of political change, including democratization; trends and types of economic change, including privatization; relationship between political and economic change; globalization and fragmentation: interlinked economies, global culture, reactions against globalization, regionalism)
- Public Policy (common policy issues, factors influencing public policymaking and implementation)

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- Public policy (policy making in a federal system, the formation of policy agenda, the role of institutions in the enactment of policy, the role of the bureaucracy and the courts in policy implementation and interpretation, linkages) **[CR5]**

Readings

Haus: Chapters 7 and 11

Edwards, et al.: Chapters 14, 17, 18, 19, 20: “The Congress, the President and the Budget: the Politics of Taxing and Spending,” “Economic Policymaking,” “Policymaking for Healthcare and the Environment: “Foreign and Defense Policymaking”

Additional Readings: selected articles from the *New York Times*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, the *BBC*, and the *Economist*; Globalization Briefing Paper (AP Central)

Unit Seven: Review for AP Exams and Final Exams for Course

Dates: April 9–May 4 (20 days)

Review for each AP Exam by Course Description units, vocabulary tests covering several units, and comprehensive final exams in each subject. Students prepare themes and concepts review packets

Unit Eight: Life Beyond the Exam

Dates: May 7–June 16 (26 school days)

Senior projects paper and presentation; movie reviews; current events discussions