

Department: History

Course Name: Advanced Placement Comparative Government and Politics

Course Description:

AP Comparative Government and Politics introduces students to the rich diversity of political life outside the United States. The course uses a comparative approach to examine the political structures, policies, and the political, economic, and social challenges among six selected countries: Great Britain, Mexico, Russia, Iran, China, and Nigeria. Additionally, students examine how different governments solve similar problems by comparing the effectiveness of approaches to many global issues.

Content:

Source of legitimacy, power, authority

Political culture and socialization – sources, agents of socialization

Social cleavages – cumulative and crosscutting cleavages

Political participation – electoral and non-electoral

Economic policy/system – connections between the political systems and economic policies
(marketization, structural adjustment, import substitution)

Public policy – current government policies related to agriculture, education, energy, crime, corruption, foreign relations, political dissent, devolution, the environment, etc.

Constitutions – written and unwritten

Legislature – structures, functions, modes of election, relationship with legislative

Executive – structures, functions, modes of election, relationship with executive

Judiciary – role in legal and constitutional issues (judicial review)

Bureaucracy – mode of appointment, level of professionalism, relationship to executive

Political Parties – relation of party system to electoral system, major parties

Supranational organizations – membership, level of influence

Political change – slow or rapid change, revolution

Economic change – trends in economic policy, economic output

Role of religion/ideology – relationship to political structures

Globalization and fragmentation – how each has affected the country

Skills:

Develop a critical perspective of government and politics in the six included countries

Analyze selected abstracts, data, and opinions for analysis as a means of interpreting and understanding modern politics

Interpret primary sources, political cartoons, graphs, and charts

Develop the ability to draw conclusions, make inferences, solve problems, and think critically

Text and Materials:

O’Neil, Patrick, Essentials of Comparative Politics with Cases (5th AP Edition, 2014)

Barron’s AP Comparative Government and Politics

Newspaper articles and televised news reports

Various videos

Recorded radio programs like NPR

Methods of Instruction:

Lecture

Discussion

Group inquiry

Simulations
Paideia seminars

Methods of Evaluation:

Participation, including formal debates and informal (routine) discussion

Homework

Daily reading quizzes

Research-based and creative projects

Unit tests

AP examination in May

