

## APCPS – Advanced Placement Comparative Political Systems

### Overview

This course is designed to provide students with the conceptual tools necessary to develop an understanding of some of the world's diverse political structures and practices. We will examine six countries in detail: China, Great Britain, Russia, Mexico, Nigeria, and Iran. These countries are taught because they are excellent examples of the six core topics of a comparative course. These topics include methodology, power, institutional structure, civil society, political/economic change and public policy. [SC8]

### Course Materials:

#### **Assigned Textbooks:**

Haus, Charles. *Comparative Politics: Domestic Responses to Global Challenges, 9<sup>th</sup>/AP ed.* Stamford, CT: Cengage Learning, 2015.

Kesselman, Mark. *Readings in Comparative Politics, 2nd ed.* Boston, MA: Wadsworth/Thompson Learning, 2015.

Instructor assigned articles from: the BBC, the *Economist*, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, *The Atlantic*, *Journal of Democracy*, *Foreign Policy*, *Foreign Affairs*, and others as appropriate. [SC12]

### Course Outline

The following is a listing of topics/sample readings. Please consult your assignment calendar and class web site for specific due dates of actual assignments.

#### I. Introduction to Comparative Politics (Weeks 1–2) [SC1]

- A. Reasons for Comparison
- B. Methods of Comparison
  1. Normative/empirical, direct/inverse relationships, correlation/causation
  2. Issues to Compare
  3. Democracy/authoritarian, unitary/federal, presidential/parliamentary
  4. SMD/proportional, pluralism/corporatism, merit/patronage, OECD/LDC, modernization/globalization/fragmentation, judicial autonomy
  5. Sources of Sovereignty, Authority and Power [SC2]

#### Readings

- Haus: Chapter 1: Seeing with New Eyes (voc), Chapter 2: Industrialized Democracies (voc)
- Kesselman: Chapter 1: Introduction (1.1, 1.2, 1.4)
- Democratization Briefing Paper with questions Comparison/Democracy Reading Packet with questions
- "The Mountain Man and the Surgeon", *Economist* 12/20/05
- "Democracy as a Universal Value", *Journal of Democracy*, 7/99

#### Activities

1. Using the CIA World Factbook, Freedom House website, and the *Economist* website, construct a comparison chart featuring population, territory, HDI, GDP, PPP, Economic, and Political/Civil Liberty Freedom figures. Analyze relationships between the various figures.
2. Using the textbook, complete a chart comparing six countries and United States on issues. [SC10]

Assessment: Test: 50 multiple-choice questions, short answers, and interpretive essay [SC11]

## II. Democratic v. Authoritarian Regimes (Weeks 3-6)

### A. Great Britain

1. Historical Foundations: constitutionalism, Legitimacy, Nation/State, Liberal Democracy [SC3]
2. British citizens, Society, and the state: Demographics, Cleavages, Civil Society [SC4]
3. Political Institutions: Political Parties/Elections, Westminster Model [SC5]
4. Role of E.U.: Sovereignty
5. Public Policy: Thatcherism, N. Ireland, Role of NHS, Immigration, Terrorism

#### Readings

- Hauss: Chapter 4: The United Kingdom (voc)
- Kesselman: Chapter 2: States and Regimes (2.4, 2.5) and Chapter 4: The Challenge of Democracy (4.1)
- British Election of 2005 briefing paper with questions
- Great Britain reading packet with questions
- "Brown Speech Promotes Britishness," BBC 1/19/06
- "Blair to Push Ahead With Reforms", BBC 2/1/06

#### Activities

1. Watch current Prime Minister's Question Hour (C-SPAN)
2. PM *Question Time* Simulation: Party and Topic to be assigned.
3. Analyze recent election returns for trends.

Assessment: Test: 50 multiple-choice questions and short-answer (ID and interpretive essay)

### B. Iran

1. Historical Foundations: Revolution (Political Change)
2. Iranian Citizens, Society, and the State: Globalization/Fragmentation
3. Political Institutions: Role of Islam, Theocracy [SC5]
4. Policy: Petropolitics, Nuclear Weapons, Iraq

#### Readings

- Hauss: Chapter 13: Iran (voc)
- Iran briefing paper with questions
- Globalization briefing paper with questions
- Iran reading packet with questions
- "Victory for a Religious Hardliner in Iran," *Economist* 6/27/05
- "As Iran Presses Its Ambitions, Its Young See Theirs Denied," *Washington Post* 4/24/06

#### Activities

1. Watch movie on Iranian Revolution (PBS)
2. Complete comparison chart for Great Britain and Iran.
3. Class Debate: "Should Iran develop nuclear weapons?"
4. Analyze recent election returns for trends.
5. Evaluate economic indicators.

Assessment: Test: 60 multiple-choice questions and short answer (ID and essay) [SC11]

## III. The Crisis of Communism (Weeks 6-10)

### A. Russia

1. Historical Foundations: Soviet Union/Russia, glasnost, post-Cold War
2. Russian Citizens, Society, and the State

3. Political Institutions: President/PM, Illiberal Democracy [SC9]
4. Policy: G8, Chechnya

#### Readings

- Hauss: Chapter 8: Current and Former Communist Regimes (voc), Chapter 9: Russia (voc)
- Kesselman: Chapter 4: The Challenge of Democracy (4.5)
- Russia's Elections Briefing Paper with questions
- Illiberal Democracy and Russia Briefing paper with questions
- Russia Reading Packet with questions
- "Still Calling for Help (Chechnya)", *Economist* 1/13/05
- "The Shock of the Old", *Economist* 1/20/05
- "The Kremlin's Control Freak", *Economist* 9/16/04
- "Vladimir Who?", *Economist* 2/9/06

#### Activities

1. Watch movie on Russian Revolution (People's Century).
2. Watch movie on Gorbachev coup attempt (ABC special).
3. Complete comparison chart of institutions/policies between USSR/Russia.
4. Complete comparison chart of Russia/Iran/Great Britain.
5. Class Debate: "Should Russia be in the G8?"
6. Analyze recent election results for trends.
7. Evaluate economic indicators.

Assessment: Test: 60 multiple-choice questions and short-answer questions (ID and interpretive essay) [SC11]

#### B. China

1. Historical Foundations: Revolution, Cultural Revolution, Economic Modernization [SC6]
2. Chinese Society: Rich/Poor Cleavages
3. Political Institutions: Guanxi, Corruption, Mass Line, Democratic Centralism
4. Policy: Privatization, Google, Falun Gong, Taiwan and Tibet [SC7]

#### Readings

- Hauss: Chapter 10: China (voc)
- Kesselman: Chapter 3: Governing the Economy (3.5)
- "Great Leap Forward," *Economist* 9/30/04
- Briefing Paper on China with questions
- China Reading Packet with questions
- "Country Profile: China." BBC
- "China's Intolerance of Dissent," BBC 3/8/05
- "Worried in Beijing," *Economist* 8/5/99

#### Activities

1. Watch movie on Chinese Revolution (People's Century)
2. Watch movie on Tiananmen Square (ABC special)
3. Watch movie on China's economy (Wall Street Journal)
4. Create comparison chart for China/Russia/Iran/GB
5. Class Simulation: CCP leading small group economic proposals
6. Analyze and evaluate economic indicator data Assessment

Assessment: Test: 60 multiple-choice and short-answer questions (ID and essay)

#### IV. Emerging Economies (Weeks 11-14)

##### A. Mexico

1. Historical Foundations
2. Mexican Citizens, Society, and the State
3. Political Institutions: Camarilla, Corporatism, Legitimate Elections
4. Public Policy: NAFTA, Chiapas, Immigration, Structural Adjustment

##### Readings

- Hauss: Chapter 11: The Global South (voc) Chapter 15: Mexico (voc)
- Kesselman: Chapter 3: Governing the Economy (3.1, 3.5), and Chapter 7: Political Challenges and Changing Agendas (7.7)
- Briefing paper on Mexico with questions
- Mexico reading Packet with questions
- "Redrawing the Federal Map", *Economist* 3/27/03
- "Putting The Brakes on Change", *Economist* 7/10/03
- "At Least I'm No Dictator, says Mr. Fox", *Economist* 9/8/05
- "The Sinking of a Flagship", *Economist* 2/23/06
- "The War on the Border Streets," *Economist* 6/30/05
- "A Few Shots at Power", *Economist* 9/18/03

##### Activities

1. Watch movie on Mexican economy (*Wall Street Journal*).
2. Create comparison chart for Mexico/China/Russia/Iran/Great Britain.
3. Simulation: Brown Choices Exercise: Mexico at the Crossroads.
4. Analyze recent political election data for trends.
5. Evaluate economic indicator data.

Assessment: Test: 60 multiple-choice with short answers (ID and essay)

##### B. Nigeria

1. Historical Foundations: Colonialism, Military Coups, Authority
2. Nigerian Citizens, Society, and the State
3. Political Institutions
4. Public Policy: Corruption, Terrorism, Poverty, Oil

##### Readings

- Hauss: Chapter 14: Nigeria (voc)
- "Guns, Boats, and Oil", *Economist* 5/12/05
- "A Spectre of Turmoil and Conflict", *Economist* 2/23/06
- Briefing Paper on Nigeria with questions
- Nigeria Reading Packet with questions
- "Nigeria's Country Controversy, " BBC 4/5/06
- "The Bumpy Road to Democracy, " *Economist* 4/23/03
- "Reforming the Nearly Unreformable, " *Economist* 8/5/04
- "When the Cops are Robbers, " *Economist* 8/18/05
- "The Fat of the Land, " *Economist* 8/27/05

##### Activities

1. Create comparison chart with Mexico/China/Russia/Iran/Great Britain.
2. Class Debate: "Future of Nigeria."
3. Analyze recent political election data.
4. Evaluate economic indicator trends.

Assessment: Test: 60 multiple-choice questions and short answers (ID and essay) [SC11]

V. Final Comparisons (Weeks 15–16)

- A. Compare six comparative government countries and United States to review for AP Exam Activities
  - 1. Country Group presentations/discussion
  - 2. Complete final comparison charts
- B. AP Test Review

**Assessment**

Final Exam: To be taken before the national AP Comparative Government and Politics Exam scheduled in May.

**Current Events**

Students will bring in a current news event to share with the class each day. Each student will be assigned a country and a group with which to work. Each of the six countries that we are studying will be represented. Each week, a different country/topic will present their articles – based on which country we are focusing on for that week. These will form the basis for the current events discussion each day.

When it is your turn to present, write the name of the news event on the board and be ready to present it to the class for their full understanding as soon as attendance is taken. Don't wait to be invited up by the instructor. Presentations will follow the order posted in class. When the person in front of you has given their news event, you know that it's your turn the following day. It will be each student's responsibility to know when he or she is presenting. Each presentation earns 10 points. If you forget, etc., you lose the points. No make-ups allowed on this assignment except from an excused absence.