AP Comparative Government

This course is intended to give the participating students an overview of the AP Comparative course. Much of the work for the class is to be completed outside the regularly scheduled class meetings. The only way this class works is if all involved do all the assigned readings and participate in discussions.

At the conclusion of the AP Comparative Government and Politics course, students will describe common types of governments and cultures in the world, compare and analyze their governments and societies, and describe their interaction in a global environment.

We discuss news articles from the Economist daily. In addition to the reading assignments, students will be routinely required to respond in class to free response type questions similar in format to those on the AP Exam.

Much of our discussion will be “Best guess” based on historical information, current situations, readings, and videos. There really are no wrong answers as long as the discussion/opinion is based on historical/contemporary factual analysis.

Mandatory reading:
- Wood, Ethel. AP Comparative Government and Politics: An Essential Coursebook and Study Guide

Other Resources:
- CIA Factbook: Must review each country
- The Economist: It is an excellent resource on current international affairs,
- Al Jazeera: A Middle Eastern perspective on world events.
- RealClearWorld: compilation of the world’s leading news articles
- BBC Online:
- Moscow Times:
- China Daily USA
Course essential question/s:

What is legitimacy? Does it matter?
How has/is technology changed/ing the world?

Part I: What is Comparative Government? - Approx. 1 week
1. What is the Comparative Method? Analysis and interpretation of charts, graphs, and other data
2. From where does Sovereignty, Authority and Power come?
3. Political and economic change: Why?
4. What is the role of the citizen, society, and state?
5. Political Institutions: What they are what they do?
6. Public Policy: How formed within the context various political structures?

Part II: Political theory/philosophy of government - Approx. 1 week
- Order v. Liberty
- Hobbes *Leviathan* v. Rousseau *Social Contract*

- Efficiency v. Equity
- Adam Smith *The Wealth of Nations* v. Marx *Communist Manifesto*

Part III: Country Studies:
EU, UK, Russia, China, Mexico Iran, Nigeria - Approx. 2 weeks/country
- Each country is studied using the following format:
  1. From where does Sovereignty, Authority and Power come?
  2. Political and economic change: Why?
  3. What is the role of the citizen, society, and state?
  4. Political Institutions: stability and influence?
  5. Public Policy: Proactive or reactive?

Assessment:
75% Projects/simulations/writings
Students may rewrite any paper.
25% Homework

Semester long project: Individual Public Policy Research Papers:
Each student writes a 3–4 page report on a particular public policy as it is exercised in at least three countries studied. For example, “economic
and political equality of women” can be researched in terms of its application in Nigeria, Iran, and Mexico. Students must describe the policy in each country, provide background and context for how it is applied and/or enforced, interpret the future changes in this policy, and assess the sources of information used in compiling information of the policy.

Semester long book project: Students will read either Breakout Nations: In Pursuit of the Next Economic Miracles by Ruchir Sharma or The J Curve by Ian Bremer and write a reaction/analysis paper on the reading.

Final project: 3 weeks
Students will act as a UN delegation from one of the AP countries and respond to an international crisis. Delegations will:
- study the crisis and its impact on their nation as well as the international implications.
- write position papers representing their nations response to the crisis
- participate in large group and small group country discussions/debates on the crisis.
- vote according their understanding of the crisis as it relates to the nation they represent