

SAMPLE SYLLABUS #1

AP[®] Comparative Government and Politics

Curricular Requirements

CR1	The teacher and students have access to a college-level comparative government and politics textbook and news media sources from multiple perspectives.	<i>See page:</i> 2
CR2	The course is structured to incorporate the big ideas and required content, including the six selected countries, outlined in each of the units described in the AP Course and Exam Description.	<i>See page:</i> 2
CR3	The course provides opportunities for students to develop the skills in Disciplinary Practice 1: Concept Application and make connections to at least one big idea.	<i>See pages:</i> 5, 8
CR4	The course provides opportunities for students to develop the skills in Disciplinary Practice 2: Country Comparison and make connections to at least one big idea.	<i>See pages:</i> 4, 5
CR5	The course provides opportunities for students to develop the skills in Disciplinary Practice 3: Data Analysis and make connections to at least one big idea.	<i>See pages:</i> 4, 8
CR6	The course provides opportunities for students to develop the skills in Disciplinary Practice 4: Source Analysis and make connections to at least one big idea.	<i>See page:</i> 7
CR7	The course provides opportunities for students to develop the skills in Disciplinary Practice 5: Argumentation and make connections to at least one big idea.	<i>See pages:</i> 4, 5, 6

Advanced Placement Comparative Government and Politics Sample Syllabus #1

AP® Comparative Government and Politics is offered as a semester class that will meet every other day for 90 minutes. The course is 18 weeks, with a total of 45 days of in-class instruction. In this class, students will explore both fundamental political concepts and apply them across six countries: China, Iran, Mexico, Nigeria, Russia, and the United Kingdom.

Required Readings: The following text will be provided to you by the school:

McCormick, John, Rod Hague, and Martin Harrop, *Comparative Government and Politics: An Introduction*, 11th edition (2019, Red Globe Press) (hereafter referred to as MHH). **CR1**

In addition, students will be required to read articles from a variety of sources, including BBC, CNN, *The Economist* (school-based subscription), *Pravda*, Xinhuanet, Al Jazeera, and *The Guardian*. **CR1**

Finally, there are additional online sources, many of which are tied to assignments. These include Fragile State Index, CIA Factbook, Freedom House, United Nations, Transparency International, the World Bank, and videos from YouTube and PBS Frontline.

AP Comparative Government and Politics: Course Outline **CR2**

This course will be approached thematically. Accordingly, students will be required to examine systemic themes among the six main countries of study: China, Iran, Mexico, Nigeria, Russia, and the United Kingdom. As we move through each unit, material on each of the six AP countries will be introduced via lectures, activities, and handouts and news articles.

Students are encouraged to keep a notebook for all six AP countries, adding to the notebook as we explore the themes throughout the semester.

The course is organized around the five units and required content in the *AP Comparative Government and Politics Course and Exam Description*. These are:

- Political Systems, Regimes, and Governments
- Political Institutions
- Political Culture and Participation
- Party and Electoral Systems and Citizen Organizations
- Political and Economic Changes and Development

In addition, AP Comparative Government and Politics has five big ideas that drive instruction throughout the course: Power and Authority (PAU); Legitimacy and Stability (LEG); Democratization (DEM); Internal/External Forces (IEF); and Methods of Political Analysis (MPA). These big ideas will be taught explicitly across multiple units and will be revisited continually during instruction to make meaningful connections among course concepts.

CR1

The syllabus must cite the title, author, and publication date of a college-level comparative government and politics textbook.

CR1

The syllabus must include examples of news media sources from multiple perspectives.

CR2

The syllabus must include an outline of course content by unit title or topic using any organizational approach to demonstrate the inclusion of required content and associated big idea(s).

All five big ideas and the six selected countries (China, Iran, Mexico, Nigeria, Russia, and the United Kingdom) must be included.

Student Practice

Throughout each unit, Topic Questions will be provided to help students check their understanding. The Topic Questions are especially useful for confirming understanding of difficult or foundational topics before moving on to new content or skills that build upon prior topics. Topic Questions can be assigned before, during, or after a lesson, and as in-class work or homework. Students will get rationales for each Topic Question that will help them understand why an answer is correct or incorrect, and their results will reveal misunderstandings to help them target the content and skills needed for additional practice.

At the end of each unit or at key points within a unit, Personal Progress Checks will be provided in class or as homework assignments in AP Classroom. Students will get a personal report with feedback on every topic, skill, and question that they can use to chart their progress, and their results will come with rationales that explain every question's answer. One to two class periods are set aside to re-teach skills based on the results of the Personal Progress Checks.

Unit 1—Political Systems, Regimes, and Governments (Big Ideas: PAU, LEG, DEM, MPA)

Unit 1 Topic Skill Pairings:

	Topics	Skills
1.1	The Practice of Political Scientists	3.B
1.2	Defining Political Organizations	1.A
1.3	Democracy vs. Authoritarianism	2.A
1.4	Democratization	1.D
1.5	Sources of Power and Authority	2.B
1.6	Change in Power and Authority	4.A
1.7	Federal and Unitary Systems	4.B
1.8	Political Legitimacy	3.C
1.9	Sustaining Legitimacy	1.E
1.10	Political Stability	3.D

Assigned Text Readings: MHH, Chapters 1–6, plus handouts on each country

Activities:

- Students will research Fragile States Index—Comparative Analysis and select two of the six AP countries. For the two countries, students will compare them in five categories: Cohesion Indicators, Economic Indicators, Political Indicators, Social Indicators, and Cross-Cutting Indicators. Students will need to define the indicators and then report the data they see in a table.

Students will then write a 2–3 page paper answering these questions:

- Which country appears to be more stable or “less fragile?” Cite three pieces of quantitative data to justify your view.
- Choose one indicator for one country. What changes over time do you see?
- Considering above, what is one possible policy implication based on what you observed?

- Choose another indicator for the other country. What patterns do you see? What are two possible explanations for the pattern(s) you see?
- What question do you have that the data doesn't seem to answer? Pose the question and discuss the limitation of the data in answering your question.

(Disciplinary Practice 3, Big Ideas: PAU, MPA) **CR5**

2. Students will consult data from the UN Human Development Report and Freedom House as well as the supporting narrative from Freedom House's *Freedom in the World Report* for each of the six course countries. After assessing sources, students will:

- Compose a chart that shows comparative data on selected economic, social, and political data for each country
- Note, from Freedom House, whether each country can be classified as "Free," "Partly Free," or "Unfree"
- Choosing two countries that are classified as "Partly Free" or "Unfree," write a two page paper comparing political, social, and economic challenges in each
- Debate/discuss, in class, prospects for democracy in these countries

(Disciplinary Practice 2, Big Ideas: DEM, PAU) **CR4**

- Complete **Personal Progress Check MCQ** for Unit 1.
- Complete **Personal Progress Check FRQ** for Unit 1.

Unit 2—Political Institutions (Big Ideas: PAU, LEG, DEM)

Unit 2 Topic/Skill Pairings:

	Topics	Skills
2.1	Parliamentary, Presidential, and Semi-Presidential Systems	1.B
2.2	Comparing Parliamentary, Presidential, and Semi-Presidential Systems	2.C
2.3	Executive Systems	1.D
2.4	Executive Term Limits	5.A
2.5	Removal of Executives	4.B
2.6	Legislative Systems	2.A
2.7	Independent Legislatures	4.C
2.8	Judicial Systems	1.E
2.9	Independent Judiciaries	5.B

Assigned Text Readings: MHH, Chapters 7–11

Activities:

1. After discussion of a parliamentary system as seen in the United Kingdom and a presidential system as seen in Mexico and Russia, students will write a two page argument essay assessing the pros and cons of each form of government and develop an argument as to which one better contributes to stability and governance. (Disciplinary Practice 5, Big Ideas: LEG, DEM) **CR7**
2. Students will make a T-chart examining the pros and cons of executive term limits. Students are to include examples and exclusions from all six AP countries. After the chart is completed, students are to write an essay that makes a defensible claim or thesis and establishes a line of reasoning on this question: "Do executive term limits

CR5

The syllabus must provide a brief description of one or more instructional approaches (e.g., activity or assignment) in which students analyze and interpret quantitative data represented in tables, charts, graphs, maps, and/or infographics.

The syllabus must identify the source of the data used for the activity. The description(s) must be labeled with Disciplinary Practice 3 and the corresponding big idea(s).

CR4

The syllabus must provide a brief description of one or more instructional approaches (e.g., activity or assignment) in which students compare political concepts and processes between two or more course countries (China, Iran, Mexico, Nigeria, Russia, and the United Kingdom). The description(s) must be labeled with Disciplinary Practice 2 and the corresponding big idea(s).

CR7

The syllabus must provide a brief description of two or more activities (including at least one argument essay) in which students develop an argument about political systems, principles, institutions, processes, policies, and/or behaviors.

The description(s) must be labeled with Disciplinary Practice 5 and the corresponding big idea(s).

help a country establish a stronger rule of law?” Their claim or thesis should be based on the stronger evidence from their T-chart. (Disciplinary Practice 5, Big Idea: PAU) **CR7**

3. Separation of Powers & Checks and Balances: As the study of each country’s political institutions concludes, students will make a diagram of each institution and the relationship that it has with others, noting what powers and checks each has. After the diagram for each country is complete, students will analyze the relationships among institutions and rank them according to how much power each can exercise. The class will debate to a consensus as to why that institution is the most powerful in the country of study. (Disciplinary Practice 1, Big Idea: PAU) **CR3**

- Complete **Personal Progress Check MCQ** for Unit 2.
- Complete **Personal Progress Check FRQ Part A** for Unit 2.
- Complete **Personal Progress Check FRQ Part B** for Unit 2.

Unit 3—Political Culture and Participation (Big Ideas: LEG, IEF, DEM, MPA)

Unit 3 Topic/Skill Pairings:

	Topics	Skills
3.1	Civil Society	1.E
3.2	Political Culture	2.C
3.3	Political Ideologies	1.C
3.4	Political Values and Beliefs	3.C
3.5	Nature and Role of Political Participation	3.D
3.6	Forces that Impact Political Participation	5.B
3.7	Civil Rights and Civil Liberties	4.A
3.8	Political and Social Cleavages	2.A
3.9	Challenges from Political and Social Cleavages	5.C

Assigned Text Readings: MHH Chapters 12–14

Activities:

1. Students will examine social movements in a selected AP course country. For example, students can trace the evolving social movement in Iran from the student movement in 1999 to the Green Movement in 2009 to the decentralized protests of 2018-19. In a two page essay, students will then discuss this claim: “Examining social movements in my country, it is clear that the country has been responsive to popular mass social movements.” The essay should both describe what the government has done and assess why it has/has not responded to the social movement. (Disciplinary Practice 1, Big Ideas: LEG, IEF) **CR3**
2. Voter Turnout Comparison
Students will research voter turnout in each of the AP course countries for national elections since 1990. A useful source is the IDEA online database. Students will make a spreadsheet with the data. Students will then write a two page essay suggesting why some countries may have higher turnout than others. We will discuss these in class, as well as discussing the importance of voter turnout for the stability and legitimacy of democracy. (Disciplinary Practice 2, Big Ideas: MPA, DEM) **CR4**

CR3

The syllabus must provide a brief description of one or more instructional approaches (e.g., activity or assignment) in which students apply political concepts and processes in authentic contexts.

The description(s) must be labeled with Disciplinary Practice 1 and the corresponding big idea(s).

- Complete **Personal Progress Check MCQ** for Unit 3.
- Complete **Personal Progress Check FRQ Part A** for Unit 3.
- Complete **Personal Progress Check FRQ Part B** for Unit 3.
- Complete **Personal Progress Check FRQ Part C** for Unit 3.

Unit 4—Party and Electoral Systems and Citizen Organizations (Big Ideas: LEG, DEM)

Unit 4 Topic/Skill Pairings:

	Topics	Skills
4.1	Electoral Systems and Rules	2.A
4.2	Objectives of Election Rules	4.B
4.3	Political Party Systems	3.B
4.4	Role of Political Party Systems	2.C
4.5	Impact of Social Movements and Interest Groups	5.D
4.6	Pluralist and Corporatist Interests	4.C

Assigned Text Readings: MHH, Chapters 15–18

Activities:

- Students will list major electoral reforms since 1980 in Russia, Mexico, Nigeria, and Iran. They will then write an argument essay as to which country has had the greatest advance in democracy since 1980. Class will be split into groups based on country they selected and debate their assertions.

(Disciplinary Practices 2 and 5, Big Ideas: LEG, DEM)

- Election Debate: Among the AP course countries, Mexico and the UK have the most developed multi-party systems. Students will be broken into two groups—one for Mexico and one for the UK—and they will be further subdivided to advocate for a particular party (for Mexico, parties are PRI, PRD, PAN; for UK, parties are Conservatives, Labour, Liberal-Democrats, UKIP, and SNP). In small groups, students will conduct research on their parties. We will then organize a mock election debate on each party, with debaters making arguments advocating for their party and then responding to questions from each other and from the audience. If your country is not the topic of the debate, you will be in the audience and be able to “vote” for the winner, explaining your choice in a one page response. (Disciplinary Practice 5, Big Idea: DEM) **CR7**

- Complete **Personal Progress Check MCQ** for Unit 4.
- Complete **Personal Progress Check FRQ Part A** for Unit 4.
- Complete **Personal Progress Check FRQ Part B** for Unit 4.

Unit 5—Political and Economic Changes and Development (Big Ideas: LEG, IEF, MPA)

Unit 5 Topic/Skill Pairings:

	Topics	Skills
5.1	Impact of Global Economic and Technological Forces	3.A
5.2	Political Responses to Global Market Forces	2.C
5.3	Challenges from Globalization	1.D
5.4	Policies and Economic Liberalization	3.D
5.5	International and Supranational Organizations	4.B
5.6	Adaptation of Social Policies	2.B
5.7	Impact of Industrialization and Economic Development	5.D
5.8	Causes and Effects of Demographic Change	3.E
5.9	Impact of Natural Resources	4.C

Assigned Text Readings: MHH, Chapters 19–21

Activities:

1. **Brexit Exercise:** Students will read the following articles discussing motives for BREXIT and write a three page essay in which they 1) analyze each source in terms of perspective and bias, and—by comparing sources—see what each source may fail to consider in making its points, and 2) outline the main points on each side of the Brexit debate. Students should be prepared to argue, in class, the merits or weaknesses of each side.

- “Eight Reasons Leave Won the UK’s Referendum on the EU,” *BBC News*, June 24, 2016.
- “A Background Guide to ‘Brexit’ from the European Union,” *The Economist*, February 24, 2016.
- Paul Mokuolu, “I Voted to Leave the EU. That Doesn’t Make Me an Idiot or a Xenophobe,” *The Guardian*, June 30, 2016.
- David Frum, “Its Five Minutes to Midnight in the UK: A Short History of Brexit,” *The Atlantic*, March 2019,

(Disciplinary Practice 4, Big Ideas: LEG, IEF) **CR6**

2. Students will examine the economies of China, Nigeria, Iran, and Mexico in respect to:
 - GDP growth rate and GDP by sector of the economy (industry, agriculture, services) (IMF DataMapper International Monetary Fund)
 - Economic equality (World Bank)
 - Unemployment rate (World Bank)
 - Inflation rate (OECD Data)
 - Urbanization, electricity access, educational achievement (World Bank and CIA World Factbook)

Students will report data over a span of a minimum of 15 years, ending with the most recent year available.

CR6

The syllabus must provide a brief description of one or more instructional approaches (e.g., activity or assignment) in which students analyze and interpret information from text-based primary and/or secondary source(s) to explain how the author’s argument or perspective relates to political principles, institutions, processes, or behaviors.

The syllabus must identify the source used for the activity/assignment. The description(s) must be labeled with Disciplinary Practice 4 and the corresponding big idea(s).

Students will then posit what variables may most influence the divergence in data they see. Variables may include:

- Historical factors
- Geographic influences
- Liberalization policies
- Presence of multinational companies within the country
- Trade agreements ratified or cancelled

Based on the above, students will write a two page white paper making three recommendations for any of the countries above. Recommendations must include data points gleaned over time.

(Disciplinary Practice 3, Big Ideas: IEF, MPA) **CR5**

3. Students will watch the YouTube video “Inside Nigeria’s Kidnap Crisis.”

In a two page essay, students will then analyze this problem by applying core concepts we have learned with respect to regimes, legitimacy, power, democratization, and political behavior.

Using the Fishbowl Instructional Strategy, students will respond to this statement: “The kidnap crisis discussed in the video would be solved by the presence of a peacekeeping force, such as the United Nations.”

(Disciplinary Practice 1; Big Ideas: LEG, IEF) **CR3**

- Complete **Personal Progress Check MCQ** for Unit 5.
- Complete **Personal Progress Check FRQ Part A** for Unit 5.
- Complete **Personal Progress Check FRQ Part B** for Unit 5.