

2026



AP[®] Comparative Government and Politics

Scoring Guidelines

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Question 1: Conceptual Analysis**4 points**

A Describe political socialization. **1 point**
Examples of acceptable responses may include the following:

- Political socialization is the process that shapes a person’s political beliefs, values, opinions, or attitudes.
- Political culture is transmitted through the process of political socialization.
- Political socialization is shaped by agents/influences such as
 - Family members
 - Schools
 - Peers
 - Government
 - Media
 - Religious institutions
 - Civic organizations

B Describe the relationship between political socialization and political ideology. **1 point**
Examples of acceptable responses may include the following:

- Political socialization is the process through which individuals develop their specific set of beliefs they hold about government and politics.
- If a person grew up in a family that held a certain political ideology, they are likely to continue to hold those same beliefs about the government into adulthood.
- Agents of political socialization (family, school, media, etc.) can influence the formation of a person’s values and beliefs about politics.

C Explain how the state can influence political socialization. **1 point**
Examples of acceptable responses may include the following:

- A state could influence political socialization through schools or education by mandating the teaching of certain ideologies and/or excluding others.
- A state could influence political socialization through the control of the media by preventing or allowing citizens to have access to multiple viewpoints.
- A state could inhibit access to candidate choice and competitive elections, influencing political socialization by limiting opposition voices.

D Explain why authoritarian regimes are often more involved in the process of political socialization than democratic regimes are. **1 point**
Examples of acceptable responses may include the following:

- Because authoritarian regimes limit individual rights, they often play a larger role in political socialization to build legitimacy.
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- Authoritarian regimes are more involved in the process of political socialization than democratic regimes to maintain stability, since controlling beliefs and information helps prevent protests or organized resistance.
 - Authoritarian regimes apply more governmental pressure in the socialization of citizens than democratic regimes to ensure conforming beliefs.
 - Democratic regimes are often less involved in political socialization than authoritarian regimes because they already gain legitimacy through free, competitive elections rather than needing to actively shape public loyalty.
 - Democratic regimes are more likely to have fewer controls over agents of socialization, like the media, to promote democratic ideals such as freedom of the press. They are therefore less involved in the process of political socialization compared to authoritarian regimes.
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Question 2: Quantitative Analysis**5 points**

A Using the data in the graph, identify the country that was the second most fragile in 2016. **1 point**

Acceptable Identification:

- Iran

B Using the data in the graph, describe the differences between the trends of the Fragile States Index scores in Russia and Iran from 2020 to 2024. **1 point**

Examples of acceptable responses may include the following:

- Between 2020 and 2024, Russia’s fragility increased whereas Iran’s remained about the same.
- Between 2022 and 2024, Russia’s score increased, but Iran’s score was relatively stable/showed a slight decrease.
- Between 2020 and 2022, Russia’s fragility score remained relatively the same, while Iran’s fragility score slightly increased.
- Russia’s fragility increased after 2023, while Iran’s fragility decreased after 2023.

C Describe a characteristic of a political party system. **1 point**

Examples of acceptable responses may include the following:

- A characteristic of a political party system is
 - the number of political parties that are competitive in elections.
 - the number of political parties with power at a given time.
 - different parties representing different ideologies in the government.
- Political party systems can include dominant party systems, which are characterized by one party that controls the government, though smaller parties are allowed to exist.
- Political party systems can include one-party systems, in which only a single party is allowed to control the government.
- Political party systems can include two-party systems, in which two major parties compete for control of the government.
- Political party systems can include multiparty systems, which have many parties that can competitively run candidates for office.

D Using the data in the graph and your knowledge of course concepts, draw a conclusion about political stability in Nigeria between 2014 and 2024. **1 point**

Examples of acceptable responses may include the following:

- Nigeria has become more stable over time as it has continued
 - the process of democratization.
 - improving its economy.
 - reducing corruption in government.
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- Overall, Nigeria has consistently had the highest amount of fragility of the four states shown on the graph. This is likely due to Nigeria's significant social cleavages, which have presented challenges to the country's political stability.
 - Nigeria had the highest amount of fragility of the four states shown. As a federal state, Nigeria gives a degree of autonomy to states, which can lead to different regions having more power, contributing to overall political instability.
 - Political stability increased between 2016 and 2024 in Nigeria due to peaceful transitions of power following federal elections.
 - The Nigerian government has reduced political instability during this period by addressing issues related to ethnic/religious cleavages.
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E Explain what the data illustrate about the relationship between a country's political party system and its Fragile State Index score. **1 point**

Examples of acceptable responses may include the following:

- China's one-party system allows the Communist Party of China to control all governing power, leading to more stability.
 - The Chinese Communist Party, while controlling government power, has allowed other parties to exist and broadened discussion and consultation, leading to greater stability over the time period shown.
 - Nigeria has a multiparty system with dozens of political parties, but with the least amount of stability of all four countries. This shows that having so many parties can prevent the government from effectively ruling.
 - Russia's party system has become increasingly dominated by one political party, which uses its power to silence dissent from opposition candidates and/or the media. These tactics could help explain why Russia has the second to lowest score for most of the time period shown.
 - United Russia's control of the political party system in Russia has been met with increasing resistance, which could explain its recent rise in fragility.
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Question 3: Comparative Analysis**5 points****A** Describe a characteristic of a social movement. **1 point****Examples of acceptable responses may include the following:**

- Social movements involve large groups of people pushing for significant political or social change.
- Social movements represent multiple groups and individuals advocating for broad social change.
- Social movements are organized to enact political, economic, or social change.

B Describe one way that governments protect or restrict civil liberties for each of two different course countries. **2 points****Examples of acceptable responses may include the following:****China**

- The government in China has cracked down on protests that challenge the regime.
- In China, the government uses the Great Firewall to limit political criticism on social media.
- China's government monitors and restricts citizens' use of media.
- The government in China has restricted the formation of nongovernmental organizations that do not align with the goals of the regime.

Iran

- The government in Iran has cracked down on protests that challenged the regime.
- In Iran, the government suspends or revokes media licenses to limit information that it deems detrimental to the national interest.
- The government in Iran suppressed the Green Movement that protested electoral corruption.
- Iran's government monitors and restricts citizens' use of media.
- The government in Iran has promoted rallies in support of the regime's policies.

Mexico

- Mexico's government protects civil liberties through specific provisions in its constitution.
- The judicial system in Mexico upholds the rule of law to protect civil liberties.
- The government in Mexico has allowed protests for policy reform until they turned violent and then they were suppressed.

Nigeria

- In Nigeria, there is an independent judiciary that upholds rule of law, which helps protect civil liberties.
- The government in Nigeria has repressed social movements that have protested the unjust methods of extraction and distribution of oil in the Niger Delta.
- The constitution of Nigeria guarantees specific protections of civil liberties like freedom of speech and freedom of assembly.

- Nigeria’s government has allowed protests for policy reform to occur until they turned violent and then they were suppressed.

Russia

- The government in Russia has nationalized most broadcast media to control the flow of information to citizens.
- The government in Russia has cracked down on protests that threaten the regime.
- Russia’s government monitors and restricts citizens’ use of media.

The United Kingdom

- The judiciary in the United Kingdom uses common law to enforce the rule of law and protect civil liberties.
- The government in the United Kingdom has allowed protests for policy reform to occur until they turned violent and then they were suppressed.
- In the United Kingdom, the government passed the Human Rights Act to respect and protect civil liberties.

C	Explain how government protections or restrictions of civil liberties affect social movements for each of the two course countries described in part B.	2 points
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Examples of acceptable responses may include the following:

China

- The Chinese Communist Party’s use of the Great Firewall to limit public criticism on social media makes it difficult for social movements to organize and communicate with members.
- The Chinese government’s limitations on mass protests have effectively shut down the organization of social movements in the country.
- China’s government has implemented strict limitations on nongovernmental organizations that operate in the country, which has limited the rise of any social movements that may have grown out of those groups.
- Although China’s constitution lists freedoms like speech and assembly, these rights are heavily restricted in practice through laws that prioritize social stability. As a result, independent social movements struggle to organize openly.

Iran

- In Iran, civil liberties like freedom of assembly are restricted by law, which makes it hard for social movements to organize openly or become long-lasting.
- Iranian court’s suspension or revocation of media licenses prevents free flow of information that social movements need to organize.
- The Iranian government shuts down access to the internet when significant protests occur making it difficult for social movements to organize effectively.
- In Iran, arrests of protestors who attempt to support social movements that challenge the regime can effectively silence the opposition.

Mexico

- As a democratic state, freedom of the press and freedom to organize are officially protected by the Mexican constitution, giving social movements the ability to organize and articulate their concerns.

- While civil liberties are protected in Mexico, social movements are not able to attract supporters for fear of reprisals from non-state actors that are not effectively constrained by the state.

Nigeria

- Nigeria has a constitution that formally protects the right to organize, which allows social movements to mobilize and voice their concerns.
- To address violence perpetrated by interest groups associated with social movements such as MEND, the Nigerian government has instituted repressive tactics against those associated with the movements.
- In Nigeria, the National Human Rights Commission protects the right of citizens to organize and has therefore made it easier for social movements to form.

Russia

- In Russia, weak protection of civil liberties raises the risks of organizing, which makes it harder for social movements to grow and last.
- The Russian government has nationalized most broadcast media and tightly restricts opposition news segments, limiting the ability of social movements to articulate their concerns.
- In Russia, there are laws that criminalize certain forms of protest and speech, and the enforcement of these measures has significantly discouraged social movements from mobilizing.
- Laws that restrict nongovernmental organizations from operating freely and without government surveillance in Russia effectively suppress the social movements from organizing.
- In Russia, increased restriction on the internet and social media makes it difficult for social movements to effectively organize.

The United Kingdom

- In the United Kingdom, civil liberties like freedom of expression and assembly are protected, which has allowed social movements to organize and/or articulate their concerns.
 - In the United Kingdom, recent protest laws have expanded police powers and increased penalties for disruptive demonstrations. This has raised the risks of protesting and may discourage citizen participation in social movements.
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Question 4: Argument Essay

5 points

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row A Claim/Thesis (0–1 points)	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Responds to the prompt with a defensible claim or thesis that establishes a line of reasoning.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	Responses that do not earn this point: - Only restate the prompt. - Do not make a claim that responds to the prompt.	Responses that earn this point: - Respond to the prompt rather than restating or rephrasing the prompt and establish a line of reasoning. - Provide a defensible claim or thesis that establishes a line of reasoning as to whether having an independent legislative branch promotes or discourages corruption in a country using one or more of the provided course concepts: separation of powers, transparency, accountability.
	Examples that do not earn this point: Restate the prompt <i>“A strong independent legislative branch can discourage corruption because of accountability.”</i> <i>“A strong independent legislative branch can encourage corruption despite separation of powers.”</i> Do not respond to the prompt <i>“Independent legislatures are found in democracies.”</i> <i>“Corruption reduces political legitimacy.”</i>	Examples that earn this point: <i>“An independent legislative branch can use its power to discourage corruption as a government system with separation of powers creates checks from one branch of government to another.”</i> <i>“An independent legislature can encourage corruption if the separation of powers is weak, because the other branches cannot exercise effective oversight.”</i> <i>“An independent legislative branch can discourage corruption by increasing transparency, as open proceedings and/or public access to information allow citizens and the media to expose corrupt actions.”</i> <i>“Having an independent legislative branch may promote corruption in a country because the lack of constitutional checks from the other branches of government may decrease pressure for government transparency.”</i> <i>“A country with an independent legislative branch can decrease corruption if there are specific expectations of accountability from the other branches.”</i> <i>“Independent legislatures can lead to an increase in corruption if there is a lack of accountability, because without effective safeguards, legislators may act without consequences.”</i>
Additional Notes: - The claim or thesis must consist of one or more sentences that may be located anywhere in the response. - A claim or thesis that meets the criteria can be awarded the point whether or not the rest of the response successfully supports that line of reasoning.		

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria		
Row B Evidence (0–2 points)	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Provides <u>one</u> piece of specific and relevant evidence from a course country relevant to one of the course concepts in the prompt.	2 points Provides <u>two</u> pieces of specific and relevant evidence from one or more course countries relevant to one or more of the course concepts in the prompt.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes		
	Responses that do not earn points: - Do not provide any accurate evidence. - Provide evidence that is not relevant to the course concepts in the prompt.	Responses that earn 1 or 2 points: Provide specific and relevant evidence from required course countries relevant to the course concepts in the prompt.	
	Examples that do not earn points: Provide evidence that is not specific “Mexico has an independent legislature.” Provide evidence that is not relevant to course concepts in the prompt “Mexico and Nigeria have bicameral legislatures.”	Examples of acceptable specific and relevant evidence (one example is one piece of evidence): “In Mexico and Nigeria, independent legislatures were formed during the process of democratization to become a true separate branch with a true check on the executive.” “China and Iran have limited separation of powers, leading to the executive branch effectively controlling the legislative branch.” “In Russia, the legislative branch is constitutionally independent, but in practice, the legislature is under the control of the president, diminishing transparency to the citizens.” “In Mexico and Nigeria, independent legislatures were formed during the process of democratization which has led to greater transparency in government.” “In Mexico and Nigeria, the independent legislative branch has the power to make laws creating accountability to the people.” “In China, the legislature is controlled by the Chinese Communist Party and lacks accountability to citizens.” “In Mexico, Nigeria, and the United Kingdom, citizens can hold the legislative branch accountable by voting in regularly held elections.” “In the United Kingdom, the prime minister is held accountable by the legislature through Prime Minister’s Questions or a vote of no confidence.”	
	Additional Notes - A response does not need to earn the point in Row A to earn points in Row B. - A response does not need to explain the relationship between the evidence and the claim or thesis to earn points in Row B. (That explanation is evaluated in Row C.)		

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row C Reasoning	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Explains how or why the evidence supports the claim or thesis
(0–1 points)	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	Responses that do not earn this point: • Include evidence but offer no reasoning to connect the evidence to the claim or thesis. • Restate the prompt without explaining how the evidence supports the claim or thesis.	Responses that earn this point: • Explain the relationship between the evidence provided and the claim or thesis.
	Examples that do not earn points: • <i>“Iran’s legislature is constrained by the Supreme Leader.”</i> • <i>“Independent legislatures are related to corruption.”</i>	Examples of reasoning that explain how evidence supports the claim or thesis: • <i>“Legislatures that are separate from other branches can discourage corruption because a system of checks and balances can help keep the branches accountable to citizens.”</i> • <i>“The lack of an independent legislature can lead to an absence of transparency, as policymaking is allowed to happen behind closed doors, promoting corruption.”</i> • <i>“Independent legislatures hold policymakers accountable through elections, which discourages corruption, as citizens are less likely to keep these politicians in office.”</i> • <i>“Independent legislatures without effective legal safeguards in place can promote corruption by exploiting the separation of powers and lack of oversight from the other branches.”</i>
	Additional Notes: • To earn this point, the response must have a defensible claim or thesis (earned the point in Row A). • The explanation of the relationship between one piece of evidence and the claim or thesis is sufficient to earn this point.	

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row D Responds to Alternate Perspectives	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Responds to an opposing or alternate perspective using refutation, concession, or rebuttal.
(0–1 points)	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	Responses that do not earn this point: - Restate the opposite of the claim or thesis. - May identify or describe an alternate perspective but do not refute, concede, or rebut that perspective.	Responses that earn this point: Must describe an alternate perspective AND refute, concede, or rebut that perspective.
	Examples of responses that do not earn the point: Restate the opposite of the claim or thesis <i>“Some say that an independent legislature promotes corruption.”</i> Describe an alternate perspective but do not refute, concede, or rebut that perspective <i>“Many scholars argue that a legislature that is independent can prevent corruption because it is an effective check on the executive.”</i>	Examples of acceptable responses to an alternate perspective may include: <i>“While some may argue that an independent legislature prevents corruption because there are checks on the executive with the separation of powers, this perspective is incorrect because these checks are not always guaranteed. It may actually be easier for corruption to flourish if there is no incentive for the legislature to maintain effective oversight over the executive branch.”</i> <i>“Some political scientists claim that an independent legislature promotes corruption because the legislature is free from being influenced by another branch and can be less transparent in policymaking. However, an independent legislature is free to pass legislation that shines a light on corruption, thus increasing transparency.”</i> <i>“Others might argue that independent legislatures can increase corruption in the government because the absence of checks can signal a lack of accountability to other branches. However, if accountability checks from other branches are built into the system of government, this can actually keep corruption in check.”</i>
	Additional Notes - To earn this point, the response must have a defensible claim or thesis (earned the point in Row A). - Responses that demonstrate an incorrect understanding of the alternate perspective do not earn this point.	