



# GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

**COMPARATIVE**

Course Description

**Effective Fall 2014**

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## **The College Board**

The College Board is a mission-driven not-for-profit organization that connects students to college success and opportunity. Founded in 1900, the College Board was created to expand access to higher education. Today, the membership association is made up of over 6,000 of the world's leading educational institutions and is dedicated to promoting excellence and equity in education. Each year, the College Board helps more than seven million students prepare for a successful transition to college through programs and services in college readiness and college success — including the SAT® and the Advanced Placement Program®. The organization also serves the education community through research and advocacy on behalf of students, educators, and schools. For further information, visit [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org).

## **AP Equity and Access Policy**

The College Board strongly encourages educators to make equitable access a guiding principle for their AP programs by giving all willing and academically prepared students the opportunity to participate in AP. We encourage the elimination of barriers that restrict access to AP for students from ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic groups that have been traditionally underserved. Schools should make every effort to ensure their AP classes reflect the diversity of their student population. The College Board also believes that all students should have access to academically challenging course work before they enroll in AP classes, which can prepare them for AP success. It is only through a commitment to equitable preparation and access that true equity and excellence can be achieved.

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# Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| About AP .....                                   | 1  |
| Offering AP Courses and Enrolling Students ..... | 2  |
| How AP Courses and Exams Are Developed .....     | 2  |
| How AP Exams Are Scored .....                    | 3  |
| Using and Interpreting AP Scores .....           | 3  |
| Additional Resources .....                       | 3  |
| AP Government and Politics .....                 | 4  |
| Introduction .....                               | 4  |
| The Course .....                                 | 4  |
| Teaching AP Government and Politics .....        | 4  |
| Comparative Government and Politics .....        | 6  |
| The Course .....                                 | 6  |
| Course Objectives .....                          | 6  |
| Topics .....                                     | 7  |
| I. Introduction to Comparative Politics .....    | 7  |
| II. Sovereignty, Authority, and Power .....      | 7  |
| III. Political Institutions .....                | 8  |
| IV. Citizens, Society, and the State .....       | 9  |
| V. Political and Economic Change .....           | 10 |
| VI. Public Policy .....                          | 12 |
| Curriculum Outline .....                         | 13 |
| The Exam .....                                   | 15 |
| Sample Multiple-Choice Questions .....           | 15 |
| Answers to Multiple-Choice Questions .....       | 20 |
| Sample Free-Response Questions .....             | 21 |
| Resources for AP Teachers .....                  | 25 |
| AP Central (apcentral.collegeboard.org) .....    | 25 |
| AP Course Audit .....                            | 25 |
| Advances in AP .....                             | 25 |
| AP Teacher Communities .....                     | 25 |
| Higher Ed .....                                  | 25 |
| College Board Store .....                        | 25 |



## About AP<sup>®</sup>

The College Board's Advanced Placement Program<sup>®</sup> (AP<sup>®</sup>) enables students to pursue college-level studies while still in high school. Through more than 30 courses, each culminating in a rigorous exam, AP provides willing and academically prepared students with the opportunity to earn college credit, advanced placement, or both. Taking AP courses also demonstrates to college admission officers that students have sought out the most rigorous course work available to them.

Each AP course is modeled upon a comparable college course, and college and university faculty play a vital role in ensuring that AP courses align with college-level standards. Talented and dedicated AP teachers help AP students in classrooms around the world develop and apply the content knowledge and skills they will need later in college.

Each AP course concludes with a college-level assessment developed and scored by college and university faculty as well as experienced AP teachers. AP Exams are an essential part of the AP experience, enabling students to demonstrate their mastery of college-level course work. Most four-year colleges and universities in the United States and universities in more than 60 countries recognize AP in the admissions process and grant students credit, placement, or both on the basis of successful AP Exam scores. Visit [www.collegeboard.org/ap/creditpolicy](http://www.collegeboard.org/ap/creditpolicy) to view AP credit and placement policies at more than 1,000 colleges and universities.

Performing well on an AP Exam means more than just the successful completion of a course; it is a gateway to success in college. Research consistently shows that students who receive a score of 3 or higher on AP Exams typically experience greater academic success in college and have higher graduation rates than their non-AP peers<sup>1</sup>. Additional AP studies are available at [www.collegeboard.org/research](http://www.collegeboard.org/research).

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<sup>1</sup>See the following research studies for more details:

Linda Hargrove, Donn Godin, and Barbara Dodd, *College Outcomes Comparisons by AP and Non-AP High School Experiences* (New York: The College Board, 2008).

Chrys Dougherty, Lynn Mellor, and Shuling Jian, *The Relationship Between Advanced Placement and College Graduation* (Austin, Texas: National Center for Educational Accountability, 2006).

## Offering AP Courses and Enrolling Students

Each AP course and exam description details the essential information required to understand the objectives and expectations of an AP course. The AP Program unequivocally supports the principle that each school implements its own curriculum that will enable students to develop the content knowledge and skills described here.

Schools wishing to offer AP courses must participate in the AP Course Audit, a process through which AP teachers' syllabi are reviewed by college faculty. The AP Course Audit was created at the request of College Board members who sought a means for the College Board to provide teachers and administrators with clear guidelines on curricular and resource requirements for AP courses and to help colleges and universities validate courses marked "AP" on students' transcripts. This process ensures that AP teachers' syllabi meet or exceed the curricular and resource expectations that college and secondary school faculty have established for college-level courses. For more information on the AP Course Audit, visit [www.collegeboard.org/apcourseaudit](http://www.collegeboard.org/apcourseaudit).

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## How AP Courses and Exams Are Developed

AP courses and exams are designed by committees of college faculty and expert AP teachers who ensure that each AP subject reflects and assesses college-level expectations. To find a list of each subject's current AP Development Committee members, please visit [press.collegeboard.org/ap/committees](http://press.collegeboard.org/ap/committees). AP Development Committees define the scope and expectations of the course, articulating through a curriculum framework what students should know and be able to do upon completion of the AP course. Their work is informed by data collected from a range of colleges and universities to ensure that AP coursework reflects current scholarship and advances in the discipline.

The AP Development Committees are also responsible for drawing clear and well-articulated connections between the AP course and AP Exam — work that includes designing and approving exam specifications and exam questions. The AP Exam development process is a multiyear endeavor; all AP Exams undergo extensive review, revision, piloting, and analysis to ensure that questions are high quality and fair and that there is an appropriate spread of difficulty across the questions.

Throughout AP course and exam development, the College Board gathers feedback from various stakeholders in both secondary schools and higher education institutions. This feedback is carefully considered to ensure that AP courses and exams are able to provide students with a college-level learning experience and the opportunity to demonstrate their qualifications for advanced placement upon college entrance.

## How AP Exams Are Scored

The exam scoring process, like the course and exam development process, relies on the expertise of both AP teachers and college faculty. While multiple-choice questions are scored by machine, the free-response questions are scored by thousands of college faculty and expert AP teachers at the annual AP Reading. AP Exam Readers are thoroughly trained, and their work is monitored throughout the Reading for fairness and consistency. In each subject, a highly respected college faculty member fills the role of Chief Reader, who, with the help of AP Readers in leadership positions, maintains the accuracy of the scoring standards. Scores on the free-response questions are weighted and combined with the results of the computer-scored multiple-choice questions, and this raw score is converted into a composite AP Exam score of 5, 4, 3, 2, or 1.

The score-setting process is both precise and labor intensive, involving numerous psychometric analyses of the results of a specific AP Exam in a specific year and of the particular group of students who took that exam. Additionally, to ensure alignment with college-level standards, part of the score-setting process involves comparing the performance of AP students with the performance of students enrolled in comparable courses in colleges throughout the United States. In general, the AP composite score points are set so that the lowest raw score needed to earn an AP Exam score of 5 is equivalent to the average score among college students earning grades of A in the college course. Similarly, AP Exam scores of 4 are equivalent to college grades of A–, B+, and B. AP Exam scores of 3 are equivalent to college grades of B–, C+, and C.

## Using and Interpreting AP Scores

The extensive work done by college faculty and AP teachers in the development of the course and the exam and throughout the scoring process ensures that AP Exam scores accurately represent students' achievement in the equivalent college course. While colleges and universities are responsible for setting their own credit and placement policies, AP scores signify how qualified students are to receive college credit or placement:

| AP Score | Qualification            |
|----------|--------------------------|
| 5        | Extremely well qualified |
| 4        | Well qualified           |
| 3        | Qualified                |
| 2        | Possibly qualified       |
| 1        | No recommendation        |

## Additional Resources

Visit [apcentral.collegeboard.org](http://apcentral.collegeboard.org) for more information about the AP Program.

# AP Government and Politics

## INTRODUCTION

The Advanced Placement Program (AP) offers two courses and exams in government and politics. Each is intended for qualified students who wish to complete studies in secondary school equivalent to a one-semester college introductory course in *United States* Government and Politics or in *Comparative* Government and Politics. Each exam presumes at least one semester of college-level preparation. This book describes the areas covered by similar college courses.

The material included in this Course Description is not intended as an endorsement by the College Board or ETS of the content, ideas, or values expressed therein. The material has been selected by political scientists who serve as members of the AP Comparative Government and Politics Development Committee. In their judgment, the content reflects important aspects of college courses of study. The exams are representative of these courses and are therefore appropriate tools to measure skills and knowledge in the fields of government and politics.

## THE COURSE

An introductory college course in Comparative Government and Politics is generally one semester in length. In the subject area there is considerable variety among the courses offered by colleges. In terms of content, there is no specific college course curriculum that an AP course in Comparative Government and Politics must follow. Therefore, the aim of an AP course should be to provide the student with a learning experience equivalent to that obtained in most college introductory Comparative Government and Politics courses.

## Teaching AP Government and Politics

There is no prescribed sequence of study, and a school with students taking one of the two exams is not required to have students also taking the other. If, however, a school wishes to prepare students for both AP Government and Politics Exams, there are three possible approaches, each with advantages and disadvantages. The instructor may decide to schedule the AP United States Government and Politics course first because of greater student familiarity with that subject and the consequent ease of introducing political science concepts in the context of familiar institutions and practices. Alternatively, the instructor may prefer to start with Comparative Government and Politics in order to benefit from student interest in a less familiar subject. Also, because the May AP Exam date can constrict a second semester, a teacher may decide to present the Comparative Government and Politics course first. In this case, students will have a longer period in which to prepare for an exam that is bound to include less familiar material. Finally, some AP instructors have successfully used a third alternative: they teach the two courses simultaneously. Teachers can thus emphasize the comparative dimensions, drawing contrasts between political experiences and institutions in the United States and other countries. Schools and instructors should weigh the advantages and disadvantages of each approach.



In addition to basic course information found on AP Central ([apcentral.collegeboard.org](http://apcentral.collegeboard.org)), there is an online Teacher Community (OTC) site for each of the AP Government and Politics courses (<https://apcommunity.collegeboard.org/web/apgopo-us/home> and <https://apcommunity.collegeboard.org/web/apgopo-comp/home>) that offers reviews of textbooks, articles, Websites, and other teaching resources. These OTCs also provide a moderated forum for exchanging ideas, insights, and practices among members of the AP professional community.

# Comparative Government and Politics

## THE COURSE

The AP course in Comparative Government and Politics introduces students to fundamental concepts used by political scientists to study the processes and outcomes of politics in a variety of country settings. The course aims to illustrate the rich diversity of political life, to show available institutional alternatives, to explain differences in processes and policy outcomes, and to communicate to students the importance of global political and economic changes. Comparison assists both in identifying problems and in analyzing policymaking. For example, we only know that a country has a high population growth rate or serious corruption when we compare it to other countries. Careful comparison of political systems produces useful knowledge about the institutions and policies countries have employed to address problems, or, indeed, what they have done to make things worse. We can compare the effectiveness of policy approaches to poverty or overpopulation by examining how different countries solve similar problems. Furthermore, by comparing the political institutions and practices of wealthy and poor countries, we can begin to understand the political consequences of economic well-being. Finally, comparison assists explanation. Why are some countries stable democracies and not others? Why do many democracies have prime ministers instead of presidents?

In addition to covering the major concepts that are used to organize and interpret what we know about political phenomena and relationships, the course should cover specific countries and their governments. Six countries form the core of the AP Comparative Government and Politics course: China, Great Britain, Iran, Mexico, Nigeria, and Russia.<sup>1</sup> By using these six countries, the course can move the discussion of concepts from abstract definition to concrete example, noting that not all concepts will be equally useful in all country settings. The following sections provide general descriptions of the major themes and concepts of the course.

## Course Objectives

Students successfully completing this course will be able to:

- define and describe major comparative political concepts
- support generalizations with relevant factual information pertaining to the governments and politics of China, Great Britain, Iran, Mexico, Nigeria, and Russia
- analyze typical patterns of political processes and behavior and their consequences
- compare and contrast political institutions and processes across countries
- analyze and interpret basic data relevant to comparative government and politics

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1. We recognize that the official names of these countries are People's Republic of China, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Islamic Republic of Iran, United Mexican States, Federal Republic of Nigeria, and Russian Federation, respectively. However, for purposes of the AP Comparative Government and Politics Exam, we use the commonly known forms of these names.

## Topics

### I. Introduction to Comparative Politics

The beginning of a college comparative politics course and the beginning of most textbooks in comparative politics introduce students to the study of politics by explaining how political scientists study politics and why it is important for students to be informed about politics abroad. It is useful to distinguish between normative, or value-related, questions and empirical or factual questions at this early stage, and to emphasize that political scientists are interested in both sorts of questions. In explaining how political scientists divide up their field of study, it is important to make clear what comparative inquiry has to offer.

We live in an interdependent world: what happens in Mexico, for example, impacts the United States. This point provides a good opportunity to introduce the theme of globalization and the general political and economic permeability of national borders. It is here that teachers will want to contrast the concepts of state, nation, regime, and government — a lesson inevitably leading to discussions about legitimacy, authority, and bases of political power, as well as the differences between these concepts. Thus, students might learn that the “state” is generally used to refer to the political power exercised over a defined geographic territory through a set of public institutions, in contrast to the “nation,” which is often understood as a human community with a shared culture and history. This course treats governments as collections of individuals who occupy political office or exercise state power, whereas regimes are treated as the sets of rules and institutions that control access to, and exercise of, political power and that typically endure from government to government. Regime change occurs when these rules and institutions are replaced.

Students will need to grasp the conceptual differences between and similarities among types of political systems. Despite vast differences between economies and regime types, most countries face similar challenges, including those presented by the natural environment, social and ethnic diversity, economic performance, and the delivery of health care to citizens.

### II. Sovereignty, Authority, and Power

The study of politics requires an understanding of power. Comparative politics recognizes that power is territorially organized into states, or countries, that more or less control what happens within their borders, which is to say that they exercise sovereignty. At the same time, it is important that students recognize that there has not always been a system of states. The modern nation-state first emerged in Europe in the seventeenth century. Today there are some challenges to the sovereignty of the nation-state in the form of supranational systems of governance, such as the emerging European Union (EU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). It is also important to emphasize that sovereignty can be affected by internal divisions over power and its distribution.

Across national borders, the sources of power that are the foundation for politics vary in importance, and these different sources have an effect on the construction of the rules of politics. These rules — which generally take the form of constitutions —

## Comparative Government and Politics

need to be understood in this context. Constitutions define both the role and constituent parts of a government and the limits and obligations of government with respect to the rights of citizens. Studying different types of political regimes, from forms of democracy to the various nondemocratic forms, enables students to gain a clearer picture of how states strike a balance between citizen rights and government power. The exercise of power requires justification, and political scientists use the concept of legitimacy to refer to the popularly accepted use of power by a government. Students must conceptualize the different ways in which political legitimacy is expressed in states, as well as recognize when legitimacy has been lost.

State power is exercised within the context of specific economic systems. The course should introduce students to the scope and role of government in the economy. Students also should be familiar with belief systems that might form the foundation for claims to legitimacy. Ultimately both the belief systems that strengthen the legitimacy of the political system and the structures of the economy will have an impact on governmental effectiveness, capacity, and control over state resources. Students should seek to understand the basics of the relationship between sources of authority, political power, and governance.

Political scientists are interested in political culture, core values, and beliefs, and how these values are fostered and disseminated through the process of political socialization. Such values are often organized in specific ideologies that influence the direction of the exercise of power. Students should be encouraged to explore the differences in political values and beliefs. For instance, in some countries religious belief systems play this important political role. In other countries more overt political agendas and ideologies perform this role.

### III. Political Institutions

The study of political institutions should include the formal structure and workings of states and governments. In this introductory course, this means that students should master knowledge about different authority systems and government structures. A deep level of detail is not expected; rather, students should become familiar with the more general descriptions of major political institutions. Determining what levels to focus on should be driven by the contextual environment in each of the six countries. Thus, for example, every state has multiple levels of authority, though the powers that correspond to each vary widely. Some countries keep most policymaking at the national level, while others distribute powers more widely to regions and localities. Depending on the country, some authority is now passing to supranational organizations such as the European Union (EU) as well.

It is important that students are familiar with the branches of government in the countries they study and understand how these branches relate to one another. Students should understand different arrangements of executive power, different legislative structures, and the different models of executive–legislative relations. Beyond basic concepts such as parliamentary and presidential systems, or separation and fusion of power, students should be able to characterize the advantages and drawbacks of different institutional arrangements and understand how executive and legislative policymakers interact with other branches of the state apparatus. Some

countries, such as Great Britain, have independent court systems, while China and others do not. Often, these judicial features depend on the roots of the legal system — whether the system uses code or common law, ideology, custom and traditional authority, or religious codes. Students should understand the implications of whether a country has judicial review and whether it operates through an independent national court system, theocratic oversight, or supranational courts.

Note, however, that the course curriculum must take students beyond constitutional arrangements. Since politics has both formal and informal components, students need to understand formal constitutional patterns as well as procedures that are more informal. In this context, comparing institutions in different political and country settings will be very helpful. For instance, students should understand how political elites are recruited and how political preferences are aggregated. The countries studied offer examples of the major electoral systems, as well as cases of one-party systems (China); dominant-party systems (Mexico under the Institutional Revolutionary Party [PRI]); two-party systems (Great Britain); and multiparty systems (Russia, contemporary Mexico, Nigeria, and Iran since the late 1990s). The number of parties in a particular country is usually connected to the country's social cleavages as well as the electoral system. Students should also explore how interest groups exercise political influence and be able to apply the concepts of corporatism and pluralism.

The six countries covered in the AP course provide good examples of how the exercise of real political power often does not correspond to the model implied by formal political structures. For China, Nigeria, and Mexico before the PRI's decline, revealing contrasts can be drawn between written constitutions and informal political realities. The composition and recruitment of political elites and how they are linked to other elites in society reveal much about informal political power.

The bureaucracy is a crucial part of the political system. Technical experts advise and administer policy that, in principle, is fashioned by political leaders. The ideological sympathies and traditions (e.g., professionalism) of the bureaucracy and its channels of recruitment influence its political role. The military also affects politics in many countries through informal pressure, as in China and Russia, or through periodic seizures of power, as in Nigeria. The professional or political role of the armed forces and the nature of civilian control over them varies across countries and time. The intelligence community or secret police can be an additional locus of coercion. Similarly, the judiciary plays a variety of roles in the six countries; in some places it exhibits important levels of autonomy, and in other countries it is used to establish religious or ideological domination. Students should become familiar with the ways in which the judiciary does or does not exercise independent power and how it shapes public policies and political practices of citizens as well as of the state.

#### **IV. Citizens, Society, and the State**

Ultimately, politics hinges on the interactions between state and society. Therefore, the course should not be confined to the internal workings or the institutional underpinnings of states. Through country cases, students can learn how certain kinds of cleavages such as ethnicity, religion, or class become politically relevant. Some regimes like China and Iran have formal arrangements for representing social groups such as ethnic or religious minorities. A country's political patterns are influenced by

## **Comparative Government and Politics**

the characteristics and demands of its population. Institutions can blunt or exacerbate cleavages in society. The countries studied in this course provide ample evidence for pursuing questions about how states manage and respond to deeply held divisions among their citizens.

Gaining an understanding of civil society both conceptually and within countries gives students useful tools to explore the ways in which state power is mediated and the power of citizens may be enhanced. Much of politics is affected by the extent and nature of citizen organization independent of the state. Interest groups and social networks assist in the generation of social capital and mobilize political forces. The interaction between type of regime and patterns in civil society is often crucial. Students should explore the range of ways that a citizenry can act politically, through both traditional means such as voting and more forceful political action such as strikes and insurgencies. Events in some of the covered countries, such as Iran's 1979 revolution, China's 1989 Tiananmen crisis, and Mexico's 1994 Chiapas revolt, provide examples of extraordinary political pressures. The emergence of global civil society, such as transnational networks of human rights and environmental groups, is also having a significant effect on government–citizen relations.

The media have also played an important role, not only within countries but as purveyors of global culture. Students should consider the relations between the various media and the state, as well as the ways the media influence and shape public perceptions, beliefs, and practices.

Citizens participate in politics in a variety of ways. A significant form of political behavior in most societies is political participation. Students should learn how to define the concept and be able to describe the ways in which political participation can both support and undermine a political system. Since participation can take a variety of forms and be either voluntary or coerced, students will need to discuss the different ways that citizens in China, for instance, participate and contrast those methods with methods used by citizens in other countries. In this process, students should be exposed to the continuum of participation, ranging from behavior supportive of a regime to behavior that seeks to change or overthrow it.

Participation takes both individual and group forms. In political science, citizen participation is often framed by social movements as well as by more organized interest groups. Contemporary social movements — ranging from antiglobalization to environmental issues, civil rights, and enfranchisement claims — have specific forms and particular methods. While it would be impossible to cover all the social movements in each of the countries, the curriculum should enable students to gain some insight into major social movements. In this process, students will need to grapple with the connection between social movements, interest groups, and representation, especially since this is often the most basic claim put forward by groups demanding the attention of their states.

### **V. Political and Economic Change**

Much of the cross-case coverage will inevitably deal with processes of change, since this has been a primary theme of politics. One way to introduce students to the notion of change is to explore the interaction between political and economic trends. The

countries studied will provide illustrative examples of this interaction, which can take the form of political and economic reform, revolutions, and even coups d'état. Students should be able to distinguish among these types of political and economic change.

Since the end of the Cold War, a wave of democratization has occurred throughout much of the developing world and in the former Communist bloc. Comparing Russia, Mexico, and Nigeria in light of their democratic transitions offers an interesting study in contrasts. The study of democratization should include examination of the preconditions, processes, and outcomes of these transitions. The success of democratization can be compared across countries, just as contrasts can be drawn with countries like China in which democratization has barely begun or has foundered. Democratic consolidation often requires new elite pacts, constitutional arrangements to minimize conflict, and acceptance of democracy by key social groups. The economic preconditions and effects of stable democracy will provide a useful counterpoint to studies of countries facing the upheavals of political change. In addition to democratization, students should reflect on the conditions that lead to breakdowns of authoritarianism. Cleavages within a regime, breakdowns in state capacity, international pressure, and a substantial degree of mobilization by opponents are all frequently associated with regime change.

All six countries studied in the AP course have undergone significant economic policy shifts over the past 25 years. Students should investigate the consequences of economic reform packages. Not only should students understand the basic economic policies, but they also need to understand the interaction between domestic economic reforms and their political effects. For instance, countries such as China and Mexico have revised fundamental national “bargains,” changing the relationship between capital and labor that dates back half a century or more. Students should be encouraged to trace outcomes such as income gaps, rising standards of living, or differential access to social services and education to economic policies and their impact. Within the context of economic change, the course should address issues such as corruption and economic inequality.

Students should be introduced to a variety of approaches to development, such as dependency, import substitution industrialization, export-led growth, and globalization, given that political and economic interdependence among countries has become increasingly important. How do global and domestic forces interact in such a context? Certain previously domestic economic policy responsibilities have been pooled by participating states in supranational organizations such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the EU. Additionally, some attention should be given to the dynamics of globalization. Students should evaluate how these dynamics bear on themes such as sovereignty and the ideal of the nation-state. Some responses to globalization reaffirm the sovereignty of the modern state, while others transcend it by taking religious, cultural, or ethnic identities as a reference point. Furthermore, the cultural aspects of globalization must be examined. Fragmentation and the interplay between a worldwide consumer culture and class, gender, ethnic, and religious identities are important aspects to consider.

### VI. Public Policy

Public policy will require analysis within each country as well as comparatively. Policy issues need to be approached both as domestic and as global policy matters, since there are broad and enduring policy areas common to most countries: How to ensure successful economic performance where poverty is widespread? How to provide for social welfare needs for citizens? How to extend and protect individual liberties and freedoms? In every state, the approach to these problems will be different, but in all states, these recurring puzzles demand the attention of the state's policymakers.

Policymaking is influenced by a broad range of factors. First, consideration must be given to formal and informal institutional influences on policymaking. Interest groups, political parties, and executive, judicial, and legislative branches all participate in the creation of policy. For many of the systems studied, changes in the economic substructure have been the result of policy changes as well as causal factors in policy development. For example, privatization in Mexico has resulted in changing policy needs. Often, conservative economic trends that move away from the traditional social welfare state and its benefits also have an impact on liberal/left party politics, as has happened in the Labour Party of Great Britain. Interest groups make different demands on government, with different consequences for public policy.

Second, development strategies have changed over time and resulted in numerous shifts and alterations in policy requirements. Thus, as the Chinese economy has transformed to a market socialist system, policymakers have been confronted with unintended consequences in noneconomic areas such as population and education. Likewise, Russian economic structural changes since 1990 have caused a wide range of policy challenges in the areas of civil rights, environmental concerns, and so on.

Third, global pressures are exerted on policymakers in both developed and developing systems. International agreements and organizations such as the WTO, the World Bank, the EU, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) push for policy changes in all six of the systems studied. Many of the countries have witnessed considerable policy debates over such issues as sovereignty and the conflicting interests of world and domestic policy needs. Globalization creates considerable tension in areas such as environmental policy, income distribution, taxation policy, and the like. Very often, global considerations have produced a divergence among different interest groups within the system itself.

Policy concerns are broad and may differ from country to country. Issues may include social welfare policy (including education, pension policy, poverty issues); civil liberties, rights, and freedoms; the environment; control and management of natural resources; economic performance (including employment, inflation, monetary policy in general, income distribution); and population and migration policies. Gender and ethnicity are also critical concerns to policymakers in all systems. Students should be able to discuss and analyze policy differences in a comparative context, exploring how different systems create different solutions to domestic and global problems.

Throughout the course, students should develop the ability to move back and forth between conceptualizing political problems and the practice of politics in the different countries. The emphasis should be on broad trends that allow comparison, rather than on details that are unrelated to larger trends and concepts.



## Curriculum Outline

Below is an outline of the major content areas covered by the AP Exam in Comparative Government and Politics. The multiple-choice portion of the exam is devoted to each content area in the approximate percentages indicated. The free-response portion of the exam will test students in some combination of the six major categories outlined below. The outline is a guide and is by no means an exhaustive list of topics or the preferred order of topics.

**All percentages are +/- 5%.**

| <i>Content Area</i>   | <i>Percentage Goals for Exam<br/>(multiple-choice section)</i> |
|---|--|
| I. Introduction to Comparative Politics. . . . .  | 5%   |
| A. Purpose and methods of comparison and classification   |  |
| 1. Ways to organize government  |  |
| 2. Normative and empirical questions  |  |
| B. Concepts (state, nation, regime, government)   |  |
| C. Process and policy (what is politics; purpose of government;<br>what are political science and comparative politics; common policy challenges) |  |
| II. Sovereignty, Authority, and Power . . . . .   | 20%  |
| A. Political culture, communication, and socialization  |  |
| B. Nations and states   |  |
| C. Supranational governance (e.g., European Union)  |  |
| D. Sources of power   |  |
| E. Constitutions (forms, purposes, application)   |  |
| F. Regime types   |  |
| G. Types of economic systems  |  |
| H. State building, legitimacy, and stability  |  |
| I. Belief systems as sources of legitimacy  |  |
| 1. Religion   |  |
| 2. Ideology (liberalism, communism, socialism, conservatism,<br>fascism)  |  |
| J. Governance and accountability  |  |
| III. Political Institutions. . . . .  | 35%  |
| A. Levels of government   |  |
| 1. Supranational/national/regional/local  |  |
| 2. Unitary/federal  |  |
| 3. Centralization/decentralization  |  |
| B. Executives (head of state, head of government, cabinets)   |  |
| 1. Single or dual   |  |
| 2. President  |  |
| 3. Prime Minister   |  |

## Comparative Government and Politics

| <i>Content Area</i>   | <i>Percentage Goals for Exam<br/>(multiple-choice section)</i> |
|---|--|
| C. Legislatures   |  |
| 1. Unicameral/bicameral (symmetric/asymmetric)  |  |
| 2. Organization   |  |
| 3. Membership (representation)  |  |
| D. Parliamentary and presidential systems   |  |
| 1. Institutional relations  |  |
| E. Elections  |  |
| 1. Presidential   |  |
| 2. Parliamentary  |  |
| 3. Referendums  |  |
| 4. Noncompetitive   |  |
| F. Electoral systems  |  |
| 1. Proportional representation  |  |
| 2. Single member district (plurality, majority runoff)                                      |  |
| G. Political parties (organization, membership, institutionalization, ideological position) |  |
| H. Party systems  |  |
| I. Leadership and elite recruitment   |  |
| J. Interest groups and interest group systems   |  |
| K. Bureaucracies  |  |
| L. Military and other coercive institutions   |  |
| M. Judiciaries  |  |
| 1. Degrees of autonomy  |  |
| 2. Judicial review (including European Union in relation to states, citizens)               |  |
| 3. Types of law   |  |
| IV. Citizens, Society, and the State . . . . .  | 15%  |
| A. Cleavages and politics (ethnic, racial, class, gender, religious, regional)              |  |
| B. Civil society and social capital   |  |
| C. Media roles  |  |
| D. Political participation (forms/modes/trends) including political violence                |  |
| E. Social movements   |  |
| F. Citizenship and representation   |  |
| V. Political and Economic Change . . . . .  | 15%  |
| A. Revolution, coups, and war   |  |
| B. Trends and types of political change (including democratization)                         |  |
| 1. Components   |  |
| 2. Promoting or inhibiting factors  |  |
| 3. Consequences   |  |
| C. Trends and types of economic change (including privatization)                            |  |
| 1. Components   |  |
| 2. Promoting or inhibiting factors  |  |
| 3. Consequences   |  |

| <i>Content Area</i>   | <i>Percentage Goals for Exam<br/>(multiple-choice section)</i> |
|---|--|
| D. Relationship between political and economic change   |  |
| E. Globalization and fragmentation: interlinked economies, global culture, reactions against globalization, regionalism |  |
| F. Approaches to development  |  |
| <b>VI. Public Policy</b> . . . . .  | <b>10%</b>   |
| A. Common policy issues   |  |
| 1. Economic performance   |  |
| 2. Social welfare (e.g., education, health, poverty)  |  |
| 3. Civil liberties, rights, and freedoms  |  |
| 4. Environment  |  |
| 5. Population and migration   |  |
| 6. Economic development   |  |
| B. Factors influencing public policymaking and implementation   |  |
| 1. Domestic   |  |
| 2. International  |  |

## **T H E E X A M**

The AP Comparative Government and Politics Exam is 2 hours and 25 minutes long. It includes a 45-minute multiple-choice section consisting of 55 questions and a 100-minute free-response section consisting of 5 short-answer concept questions, 1 conceptual-analysis question, and 2 country-context questions. The two sections are designed to complement each other and to measure a wide range of skills and knowledge.

## **Sample Multiple-Choice Questions**

The following sample questions reflect both the topics and the levels of difficulty in questions found in the actual exam. All six countries may be covered in this section.

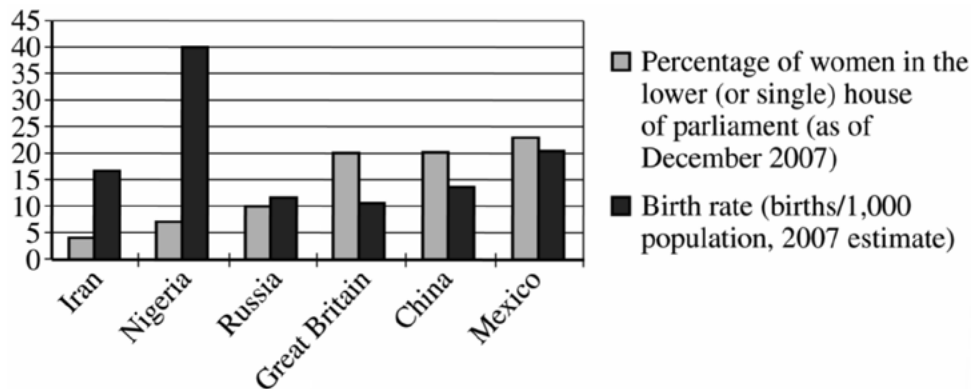
Your total score on the multiple-choice section is based only on the number of questions answered correctly. Points are not deducted for incorrect answers or unanswered questions. An answer key to the sample multiple-choice questions is on page 20.

- In the developed and developing worlds, respectively, the greatest demographic pressures on policy come from which of the following?

| <u>Developed</u>      | <u>Developing</u> |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| (A) Gender imbalances | Aging             |
| (B) Aging             | Overpopulation    |
| (C) Emigration        | Immigration       |
| (D) Overpopulation    | High death rates  |
| (E) High birth rates  | Emigration        |

2. An illiberal democracy would typically be characterized by
  - (A) high voter turnout in single-party elections
  - (B) military rule coupled with political freedoms
  - (C) colonial rule and a procedure-based legal system
  - (D) market-based economic arrangements and limited suffrage
  - (E) elections coupled with restrictions on individual civil liberties
  
3. In relations with the European Union, the two British parties that have had the most uniformly stable and favorable attitudes are
  - (A) Labour and Liberal Democrats
  - (B) Liberal Democrats and Conservatives
  - (C) Labour and Conservatives
  - (D) Conservatives and Scottish Nationalists
  - (E) Liberal Democrats and Scottish Nationalists
  
4. Compared to parties in a proportional-representation system, parties in a single-member-district system are typically
  - (A) less centrist
  - (B) less ideological and less class-based
  - (C) more region-specific
  - (D) more likely to have their own social networks
  - (E) more tightly linked to specific cultural identities
  
5. The political systems of Mexico, Nigeria, and Russia all have
  - (A) common-law legal systems
  - (B) two-ballot systems for presidential selection
  - (C) effective independent judiciaries with judicial review
  - (D) unitary systems with strong states and a weak central government
  - (E) bicameral legislatures based partly on regions and partly on population
  
6. Which of the following is typically a function of the head of state in a parliamentary system?
  - (A) Making foreign policy
  - (B) Greeting new foreign ambassadors
  - (C) Giving final rulings in judicial appeals
  - (D) Approving a comprehensive annual budget
  - (E) Assembling a majority coalition in the legislature
  
7. The major motivation for neoliberal economic reforms in Mexico and Nigeria has come from which of the following?
  - (A) Political uprising by the urban poor
  - (B) Collapse of longstanding labor unions
  - (C) Widespread opposition to globalization
  - (D) Debt burdens and pressures from international lenders
  - (E) The need to expand the economic base for military modernization

8. In its effort to reduce the problem of ethnonationalism, the 1999 Nigerian Constitution
- (A) established the National Youth Service Corps
  - (B) abolished the quota system for bureaucratic recruitment
  - (C) adopted the three major Nigerian languages as official languages
  - (D) encouraged families to adopt children from regions other than their own
  - (E) encouraged the formation of ethnically neutral political parties
9. In British politics, which of the following has created the most conflict over the European Union?
- (A) Tax policy
  - (B) Health policy
  - (C) Defense policy
  - (D) Regional policy
  - (E) Monetary policy
10. Which of the following political blocs would be most likely to favor nationalization of large industrial enterprises?
- (A) Liberals
  - (B) Islamists
  - (C) Socialists
  - (D) Libertarians
  - (E) Conservatives



11. A political scientist investigating the relationship between birth rate and the number of women in parliament compiles data into the bar graph shown above, which suggests that
- (A) Mexico, Great Britain and China have the highest percentage of women in parliament
  - (B) Russia and Iran have the highest birth rates
  - (C) women in Nigeria are more likely to be in parliament than to have babies
  - (D) Mexico has the highest birth rate and the highest percentage of women in parliament
  - (E) Iran has the highest percentage of women in parliament

12. Which of the following is true of the bureaucracy in Mexico?
- (A) It is a major source of employment within Mexico.
  - (B) The National Action Party (PAN) has effectively cut back on bureaucratic corruption.
  - (C) Oil is no longer controlled by the government bureaucracy.
  - (D) The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) has caused an increase in bureaucratic inefficiency.
  - (E) It has become smaller since the increase in microcredit programs.
13. Which of the following is an achievement of the Maoist period that has been overturned by economic reforms in China?
- (A) Guaranteed employment
  - (B) Extensive female employment
  - (C) Effective environmental policies
  - (D) Competitive educational opportunities
  - (E) State subsidies for defense industries
14. In which of the following pairs of countries does the press enjoy the greatest freedom?
- (A) China and Great Britain
  - (B) China and Iran
  - (C) Great Britain and Nigeria
  - (D) Iran and Nigeria
  - (E) Russia and Iran
15. In the twentieth century, the greatest social cleavage manifested in British politics was
- (A) class
  - (B) gender
  - (C) religion
  - (D) urban versus rural
  - (E) native versus immigrant
16. Which of the following statements is true about Iranian domestic policy?
- (A) The government does not allow foreign investment.
  - (B) Women are forbidden to attend university.
  - (C) The government argues that environmental policies are against Shari'ah law.
  - (D) The predominant interpretation of Shari'ah law allows for birth control.
  - (E) The government has forbidden the production of nuclear energy.
17. Nigeria's multistate structure was primarily designed to
- (A) promote economic development
  - (B) reduce loyalty to the previous military regime
  - (C) splinter the power of its main ethnic groups
  - (D) mobilize higher voter turnout in local elections
  - (E) allocate resources from the federal government more directly

18. A pluralist interest group system is best characterized by
- (A) high levels of control by business elites in policymaking
  - (B) competition among multiple associational groups
  - (C) negotiations among groups with government support
  - (D) a system wherein only the interests of the government are considered
  - (E) the inclusion of only a few corporations during the public policymaking process
19. A theocracy is best described as a political system based on
- (A) military authority
  - (B) maternal authority
  - (C) clerical authority
  - (D) popular sovereignty
  - (E) major party dominance
20. One of the chief criticisms of corporatism is that it
- (A) encourages labor unrest
  - (B) creates too many groups
  - (C) often limits representative processes
  - (D) involves too little government participation
  - (E) involves too little interest group participation
21. Cleavages that split a society into different groups with regard to different issues are referred to as
- (A) stabilizing
  - (B) coinciding
  - (C) corporatist
  - (D) subordinate
  - (E) crosscutting
22. Nigeria has significantly increased its importance as a regional power through its leadership in which of the following organizations?
- (A) Organization of Islamic States
  - (B) Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)
  - (C) United Nations Security Council
  - (D) International Monetary Fund (IMF)
  - (E) Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)
23. Who selects the head of the British government?
- (A) The departing prime minister
  - (B) The House of Lords
  - (C) A committee comprised of the majority and minority party MPs
  - (D) The electorate
  - (E) The majority party in the House of Commons

24. The most persistent political challenge facing Nigeria since independence has been
- (A) border disagreements
  - (B) the weakness of its military
  - (C) ideologically driven insurgencies
  - (D) regional and ethno-religious cleavages
  - (E) its lack of resources and foreign exchange
25. Which of the following is a core principle of the present-day Islamist regime in Iran?
- (A) Promotion of social justice through class struggle
  - (B) Violent conflict with the West to promote religious conversions
  - (C) Closer connection of Islam with its pre-Islamic Persian identity
  - (D) Accommodation of Islam to a constitutional framework
  - (E) Nonmembership in the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) because of non-Muslim OPEC members

**Answers to Multiple-Choice Questions**

|     |      |      |      |      |
|-----|------|------|------|------|
| 1-B | 6-B  | 11-A | 16-D | 21-E |
| 2-E | 7-D  | 12-A | 17-C | 22-E |
| 3-E | 8-A  | 13-A | 18-B | 23-E |
| 4-B | 9-E  | 14-C | 19-C | 24-D |
| 5-E | 10-C | 15-A | 20-C | 25-D |



## **Sample Free-Response Questions** **(50% of exam score)**

Type: Short-Answer Concepts

Time: 30 minutes

Weight: 25% of free-response grade

Students will provide brief definitions or descriptions of five concepts or terms, noting their significance. Students may be asked to provide an example of the concept in one or more of the countries studied or to contrast concepts.

1. Identify the two parties that formed the coalition government in Great Britain following the 2010 parliamentary elections. Explain one reason why they formed a coalition. Describe a domestic policy issue that has threatened the coalition.

2. Statement X: The rate of population growth has decreased in Iran since the 1990s.

Statement Y: Developing countries should adopt population growth policies similar to Iran's.

Identify the empirical statement above. Identify the normative statement above. Explain the difference between a normative and an empirical statement.

3. Describe one major difference between a revolution and a coup d'état. Identify a country in the AP Comparative Government and Politics course where there have been several successful coups d'état in the past 50 years. Describe a political consequence of the coups d'état in the country you identified.
4. Define political legitimacy. Describe one source of political legitimacy for the office of the president in Russia. Describe a different source of political legitimacy for the office of the supreme leader in Iran.
5. Define the concept of supranational organization. Identify a supranational organization and name a country studied in the AP Comparative Government and Politics course that is a member of the organization. Identify another supranational organization and name a country studied in the AP Comparative Government and Politics course that is a member of the organization.

Type: Conceptual Analysis

Time: 30 minutes

Weight: 25% of free-response grade

This question requires students to use major concepts from comparative politics, identify and explain important relationships, and, where appropriate, discuss the causes and implications of politics and policy.

6. Political economy involves the study of the relationship between states and markets.
  - (a) Define economic liberalization.
  - (b) Describe the actions governments take in pursuing a policy of economic liberalization regarding TWO of the following:
    - Subsidies
    - Tariffs
    - Ownership of companies and firms
    - Foreign direct investment
  - (c) Identify one international organization that promotes economic liberalization.
  - (d) Explain one reason for pursuing economic liberalization.
  - (e) Explain one reason for resisting economic liberalization.

Type: Country Context

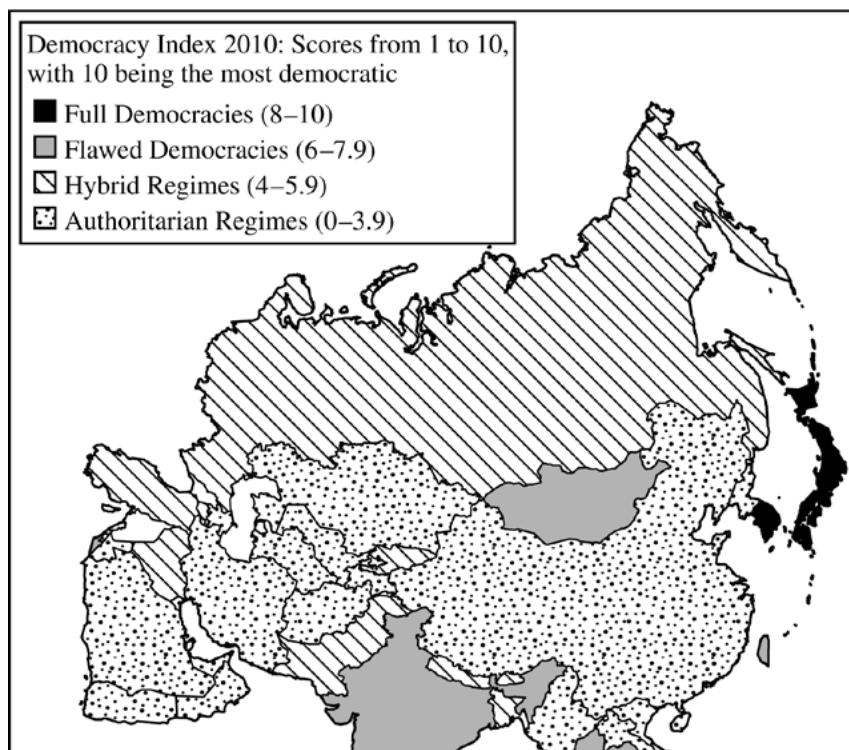
Time: 40 minutes (20 minutes each for two questions)

Weight: 50% of free-response grade (two questions at 25% per question)

Two questions will require students to use core concepts in an analysis of one or more of the countries studied. For example, students might be asked to discuss a concept and then apply this concept in a comparative context.

7. Refer to the following map and indicators of democracy from the Economist Intelligence Unit.

REGIME CLASSIFICATION OF ASIA, 2010



Source: [http://graphics.eiu.com/PDF/Democracy\\_Index\\_2010\\_web.pdf](http://graphics.eiu.com/PDF/Democracy_Index_2010_web.pdf)

- (a) Define the concept of a hybrid regime.
- (b) Using the map above, identify the type of regime in Russia AND identify the type of regime in China.
- (c) Describe the characteristics of TWO of the following elements of Russia's political system. Explain how these characteristics contribute to the regime designation of Russia.
  - Electoral competition
  - Civil society
  - Media
- (d) Describe the characteristics of TWO of the following elements of China's political system. Explain how these characteristics contribute to the regime designation of China.
  - Electoral competition
  - Civil society
  - Media

8. Ethnicity plays a role in politics in Mexico and Nigeria.
  - (a) Describe a significant ethnic division in Mexico.
  - (b) Identify an ethnic movement that emerged in Mexico after 1990 and explain one reason why the movement arose.
  - (c) Describe a significant ethnic division in Nigeria.
  - (d) Identify an ethnic movement that emerged in Nigeria after 1990 and explain one reason why the movement arose.
  - (e) Explain one reason why ethnicity has played a more significant role in Nigerian than in Mexican politics.

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