

Mrs. Elke N. Gannon

Course Description: 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. 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, Mexico, Nigeria, and Russia are all regularly covered in college-level introductory comparative politics courses. The inclusion of Iran adds a political system from a very important region of the world and one that is subject to distinctive political and cultural dynamics. By using these six core 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.

Course Objectives:

1. Understand major comparative political concepts, themes, and generalizations.
2. Have knowledge of important facts pertaining to the governments and politics of China, Great Britain, Iran, Mexico, Nigeria and Russia.
3. Understand typical patterns of political processes and behavior and their consequences.
4. Be able to compare and contrast political institutions and processes across countries and derive generalizations.
5. Be able to analyze and interpret basic data relevant to comparative government and politics.

Course Outline: Students will study these topics:

Section 1 Introduction to Comparative Politics

Purpose and Methods of Comparison and Classification•Concepts•Process and Policy

Section 2 Sovereignty, Authority and Power

Political Culture, Communication, and Socialization•Nations and States•Supranational Governance•Sources of Power•Constitutions•Regime Types•Types of Economic Systems•State Building, Legitimacy, and Stability•Governance and Accountability

Section 3 Political Institutions

Levels of Government•Executives•Legislatures•Parliamentary and Presidential Systems•Elections•Electoral Systems•Political Parties•Party Systems•Leadership and Elite Recruitment•Interest Groups and Interest Group Systems•Bureaucracies•Military and Other Coercive Institutions•Judiciaries

Section 4 Citizens, Society, and the State

Cleavages and Politics•Civil and Social Capital •Media Roles• Political Participation• Social Movements
•Citizenship and Representation

Section 5 Political and Economics Change

Revolution, Coups, and War•Trends and Types of Political Change•Trends and Types of Economics Change•Relationship Between Political and Economic Change•Globalization and Fragmentation • Approaches to Development

Section 6 Public Policy

Common Policy Issues•Factors Influencing Public Policy Making and Implementation

It is a course requirement that students take the AP Comparative Government and Politics Exam in May 2010.

Text/ Additional Readings: Mark Kesselman, et.al. *Introduction to Comparative Politics*, 4th ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2007.

Christian Soe, Ed. *Annual Editions: Comparative Politics 08/09*, Dubuque, IA: McGraw-Hill Contemporary Learning Series, 2008/2009

Outside readings will be provided and assigned from *The Economist*, *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *BBC News*.

Materials Needed: Loose-leaf paper and blue or black ink pens. All materials should, preferably, be kept in a 1-inch three-ring binder.

Mrs. Gannon's Assessment Structure:

60% Cumulative Unit Tests- (Multiple Choice and Free Response Questions)

20% Free Response Questions from previous AP Exams/Projects

20% Classwork/Homework/Quizzes

Throughout the course, students will have multiple opportunities to achieve success in each of the three assessment categories.

Cumulative Unit Tests will be given approximately every three weeks. An unexcused absence on the day of a test will result in failure.

Students will receive accompanying rubrics for the free response questions and projects.

Classwork and homework will be assessed using an Effort Rubric. Classwork and homework will not be accepted late. In the case of an excused absence homework will be accepted on the day the student returns to class.

Attendance is required through June.

Communication: Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns or to schedule an appointment. I may be reached daily, by telephone, written note or e-mail between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.

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