

COURSE DESCRIPTION

ADVANCED PLACEMENT/HONORS COMPARATIVE GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

This course is a college-level introduction to political institutions and processes across the globe. It is designed to fulfill state educational requirements and to prepare students for the Advanced Placement examination in Comparative Government and Politics. **This course has been authorized by the College Board to use the “AP” designation for the 2018-2019 school year.**

Students are taught to analyze and explain patterns within countries’ political atmospheres through a political, economic, and social lens. They compare and contrast government processes and institutions abroad as well as deepen their understanding of leadership strategies. After completing the course, students will be able to use the skills they’ve learned in this course to explore current affairs and real-world issues. This course is aimed at allowing students to discover the intricacies of politics outside of the United States of America.

Summer School students in this course take a midterm examination and participate in a researched, multi-period final simulation demonstrating their understanding of comparative politics. Faculty closely supervises all student research. Participation in classroom simulations, exercises, presentations, and discussion also contributes significantly to a student’s grade.

The course is offered for high school credit and is equivalent to a one-semester Advanced Placement course in Comparative Government and Politics. For students from high schools that do not offer Advanced Placement courses, this class also duplicates an Honors Comparative Government course. Classes are held six days a week. Students accumulate over 85 classroom hours in the program.

The assigned college-level textbook for the course is:

ONeil, P. H. (2018). *Essentials of comparative politics*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

Additionally, depending on their section assignment, students are assigned readings from a collection of scholarly articles, national journals, and selected chapters from outstanding works in political science.

*****Please note that that is a SAMPLE syllabus based on one from previous years and the syllabi for this summer will vary, including specific topics covered, daily readings, expected exam dates and paper due dates, *****

(AP) U.S. Comparative Government and Politics
Junior Statesmen of America
Summer Session 2018
Syllabus

Course description and objectives: Have you ever asked yourself: do I live under the best government or do I get a fair deal by being a citizen of my country? This question is simple and endlessly complex at the same time. That is, you may have a ready answer right away or you may embark on an analytical journey trying to answer it. In any case, your answer(s) will be inherently comparative predicated on your reference point. This course will enable you to critically assess your position on the above question through comparative examination of distinct political systems around the world. The course will not answer the question for you, but will provide you with critical information to widen your reference point so you can evaluate it from multiple perspectives.

To get there, we will deal with such questions as: Why are some countries democratic while others are authoritarian? Why do democracies differ in the wealth and well-being of their citizens? What is the difference between parliamentary and presidential forms of government? Is there a link between economic prosperity and the type of political system? We will even question whether democracy is the 'best' form of government and find out why the United States has only two viable political parties. To address these and many other questions we will focus on such topics as political contestation & participation, types of government, forms of electoral systems, models of democracy & processes of democratization, political economy and many others. Our goal is to examine the underlying reasons for the differences in domestic politics across different countries. We will try to understand how cultural, institutional, and economic settings shape distinct types of political systems. If you choose comparative politics as your study concentration this class will provide you with basic preparation for advanced level courses in the field.

Required reading:

Essentials of Comparative Politics by Patrick O'Neil (W.W. Norton, 6th Edition,)

Additional readings in the form of journal articles, book chapters as well as newspaper and magazine pieces may be distributed during classes. The lectures and readings will be complementary, but will **not** simply repeat each other. In other words, **both** readings and lectures are essential for good performance in this class.

In addition, students are encouraged to follow the current events around the world through domestic and international media outlets such as: www.bbcnews.com; www.nytimes.com; www.aljazeera.com; www.washingtonpost.com and others.

Grading:

• **Participation (15%):** Each student will be graded for participation in class discussions. Note that the grade is given not merely for attendance. Those who consistently participate actively and constructively will receive full credit. Your active participation is required to make our class meetings a success. You are expected to complete the required readings before class and to come with reactions and questions. This does not mean that you have to have complete understanding or fully formed opinions about everything covered in the course material. You will not be penalized for being wrong or uncertain but it should be clear that you have done the reading and that you are trying to master the course material.

• **Quizzes (20%):** There will be five announced quizzes throughout the semester. The dates for the quizzes are indicated below in course schedule outline. These will be a combination of ID and True/False questions. ID questions would ask you to match a definition with a concept covered in class or vice-versa ask to provide a definition of a concept.

• **Group project (15%):** Form groups of 2-3 persons and prepare a project to be presented in class toward the end of semester on a topic of your choice related to the course. Project topics are limitless and may range from theoretical to case studies. The goal is to collectively research a topic/issue and contribute to our learning by presenting the findings in class. Feel free to consult with me when choosing a topic. As an example your project topic may come from such themes as (but you are not limited to just these!):

- Emergence of states as the dominant political entity
- Pros and cons of presidential/parliamentary form of democracy
- Effects of electoral system on government
- Decline of authoritarianism in Latin America

- Causes and effects of the Arab Spring
- Sources of economic success in south-east Asia
- Popularity of left socialist political ideology in the developing world
- ...and many others...

Students are responsible for negotiating the distribution of tasks for the group presentation. One grade will be assigned to the entire group.

• **Exam 1 & 2 (15% each; total 30%):** The exams will consist of multiple-choice, ID, and True/False questions. In answering ID questions try to be clear on terms and concepts you are defining and examples supplying. The final exam is cumulative and will cover the material for the entire course.

• **Final Paper (20%):** Students are required to write a final paper for this course of about 2500-3000 words excluding bibliography. A proper citation format must be used and stay consistent throughout the paper. The topic of the paper is free to choose. However, it should relate to the content and topics covered in class. A good substantial paper goes beyond just discussion of events and attempts to explain, discern patterns, and analyze implications of the phenomenon under study. The paper can be either theoretical in nature or a case study of a topic related to a country. You may consult with me in choosing a topic.

There are three important dates with regard to the paper: **July 4, 2018**—paper topics are due; let me know by this date (via e-mail or in class) what you will be researching about. **July 11, 2018**—annotated bibliography is due; submit via e-mail or hand in a hard copy during class or leave in mailbox outside my office or mail room. **July 20, 2018 (7pm!)**—final paper due by 5pm; submit your work by end of the day via Canvas.

Note on academic dishonesty: Academic dishonesty can include plagiarism or cheating. Plagiarism, a serious form of academic dishonesty, is the use of ideas and phrases in the writings of others as one's own without crediting the source. All materials used or paraphrased must be cited and credited. Cheating refers to both the giving and the receiving of unauthorized assistance in the taking of examinations or in the creation of assigned and/or graded class work. Students who assist other students in, or contribute to, acts of academic dishonesty are subject to the appropriate penalties.

(!) Any act of academic dishonesty will result in a course grade of F. Additional penalties, including loss of scholarships, suspension or expulsion from the university may be imposed by school officials. **It is not worth the risk. DO NOT plagiarize**

or cheat! If you have any questions or concerns about conforming to these regulations please speak with me before submitting your work for confidential assistance.

Note on academic accommodation: Any student who has a need of special accommodations in this class due to a documented disability should speak with me as soon as possible, preferably within the first two weeks of class. I will work with you to help you in your efforts to master the course content in an effective and appropriate way.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

Class 1, Mon,

9:45—11:45 am **Introduction**

Initial activity:

- Class organization, policy overview, discussion of the syllabus.

Key concepts and questions:

- What is Comparative Politics and why do we need a Government?

Readings:

- O'Neil, Chapter 1;
- Mark I. Lichbach and Alan S. Zuckerman, *Research Traditions and Theory in Comparative Politics: An Introduction from Comparative Politics*

Roundtable:

- What is the most effective form of government?

1:00—4:00 pm **The State and Institutions**

Key concepts and questions:

- What is the State and why is it the dominant form of political organization?

- Why do states come in different forms, shapes, and are not equal in power?

Readings:

- O'Neil, Chapter 2
- Francis Fukuyama, *The Necessity of Politics, from The Origins of Political Order*; Max Weber, *Politics as a Vocation*

Roundtable:

- Why are some states more powerful than others?

Class 2, Tue,

8:45—11:45 am **Nations and Nationalism**

Key concepts and questions:

- Politics of Ethnicity, Ethnic Conflicts and Civil Wars;
- Ethnic and National Identity; Concept of Citizenship

Readings:

- O'Neil, Chapter 3

Roundtable:

- Politics of ethnicity (or lack thereof) in America—What can US teach or learn from the rest of the world on this subject

Quiz 1

1:00—4:00 pm **Nations and Nationalism (cont.)—Case Study: The Syrian War**

Key concepts and questions:

- What European colonization and decolonization of a century ago have to do with current conflict in the region?
- Nation-building in post-colonial Middle East: Creation of Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Israel and other countries in the region

Roundtable:

- Origins of and possible solutions to the Syrian war—
Mock negotiations on crisis settlement

Class 3, Wed

8:45—11:45 am **Democracies: Definition and Models**

Key concepts and questions:

- Definition and Origins of Democracy;
- Forms (models) and Institutions of Democracy

Readings:

- O’Neil, Chapter 5, pp. 126-146
- Fareed Zakaria, *A Brief History of Human Liberty, from The Future of Freedom*
- Philippe C. Schmitter and Terry Lynn Karl, *What Democracy Is...and Is Not*

Roundtable:

- Presidential or Parliamentary form of democracy?

1:00—4:00 pm **Democracies: Parties and Electoral Systems**

Key concepts and questions:

- Why do we have political parties and how are they different from other forms of associations?
- Types of electoral systems and how they shape political systems in democracies?
- Why does US have only two major political parties?

Readings:

- O’Neil, Chapter 5, pp. 147-160
- Alfred Stepan, Juan J. Linz, and Yogendra Yadav, *The Rise of “State-Nations”*
- Robert D. Putnam, *Tuning In, Tuning Out: The Strange Disappearance of Social Capital in America*

Roundtable:

- Gerrymandering and the reform of American electoral system

Quiz 2

Class 4, Thu

8:45—11:45 am **Advanced Democracies**

Key concepts and questions:

- What are the current challenges to democracy?
- What is there a democratic deficit in the European Union (are our allies not democratic)?
- How has democracy been evolving, what will it look like in the future

Readings:

- O'Neil, Chapter 8
- Arend Lijphart, *Constitutional Choices for New Democracies*

Roundtable:

- How old is American democracy?

1:00—4:00 pm **Authoritarianism**

Key concepts and questions:

- What is authoritarianism—origins and sources of nondemocratic rule
- Forms of authoritarian rule
- Is authoritarianism always negative?
- Democratization or how does one become democratic? *Readings:*
 - O'Neil, Chapter 6
 - Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Modern Nondemocratic Regimes, from Problems of Democratic Transition and*

Consolidation

Roundtable:

- Backsliding on democracy?: Illiberal, gray and other forms of semi-democratic regimes as cover for authoritarianism.

Quiz 3

Class 5, Fri

2:00—5:00 pm **The Arab Spring**

Key concepts and questions:

- What is the Arab Spring and (why) has it failed?
- (How) can the Middle East be democratized?

Readings:

- Ivan Krastev, *Paradoxes of the New Authoritarianism*

Roundtable:

- *PBS Documentary: Revolution in Cairo. Part 1 & 2*
Discussion

Class 6, Sat

8:45—11:45 am Midterm

Class 7, Wed

8:45—11:45 am **Communist Regimes and Post-Communism**

Key concepts and questions:

- Karl Marx and the fundamentals of communist ideology
- Cases of Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, China...

Readings:

- O'Neil, Chapter 9
- Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*
- Larry Diamond, *The Rule of Law Versus the Big Man*
- Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way, *The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism*

Roundtable:

- Post-communist transition: was the process an attempt at genuine democratization?
- Cases of recent tilt toward authoritarianism in Eastern Europe: Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Romania and others

1:00—4:00 pm **Revolutions and Violence**

Key concepts and questions:

- Why do masses rebel?
- Why are revolutions largely rare events?
- How to solve or contain political violence?

Readings:

- O'Neil, Chapter 7
- Theda Skocpol, *France, Russia, China: A Structural Analysis of Social Revolutions*
- Martha Crenshaw, *The Causes of Terrorism*

Roundtable:

- Can a revolution happen in modern United States?

Quiz

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Class 8, Thu

8:45—11:45 am **Politics of Development**

Key concepts and questions:

- Why are some nations rich and others are poor? I.e. Norway or Nigeria?
- Colonization and its effect on current state of development in the world
- Two dominant schools of thought on development: Modernization and Dependency

Readings:

- O'Neil, Chapter 10
- William Easterly, *To Help the Poor, from The Elusive Quest for Growth*

Roundtable:

- Critical view of the relationship between developed (West) and developing world. Can the gap be reduced?

1:00—4:00 pm Project presentations

Class 9, Fri

8:45—11:45 am **Politics of Development (cont.)**

Key concepts and questions:

- Wealth discrepancy within the developing world
- Contemporary challenges of development
- Sustainable development

Roundtable:

- Which comes first: development or democracy?

Class 10, Sat

8:45—11:45 am **Political Economy**

Key concepts and questions:

- What is public good and social spending?
- Taxation: more or less?
- Money, inflation and economic growth

Readings:

- O'Neil, Chapter 4

Roundtable:

- Origins and consequences of the 2008 financial crisis: who's to blame and how to prevent it in the future

Quiz

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Class 11

8:45—11:45 am **Political Economy (cont.)**

Key concepts and questions:

- Political-economic systems: Liberalism, Social Democracy and Socialist forms of economic management
- Wealth discrepancy among developed nations: why the world's biggest economy does not have the wealthiest citizens?

Readings:

- Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*
- Douglass C. North, *Institutions*

1:00—4:00 pm Project presentations

Class 12, Wed

8:45—11:45 am **Globalization**

Key concepts and questions:

- What is Globalization and is it good?
- Political, economic, and societal globalization

Readings:

- O'Neil, Chapter 11;
- Dani Rodrik, *Is Global Governance Feasible? Is It Desirable?*
- The Economist, *Leviathan Stirs Again*

Roundtable:

- Trade wars—US 'retreat' from globalization

1:00—4:00 pm Wrap up and review session

Final Exam

Fri, July 20

7:00pm **Final Paper Due!**