**AP Comparative Government & Politics**

Chattahoochee High School

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“The 21st century has taught us that we cannot ignore the world around us. Happenings around the globe now directly impact our lives, and social studies teachers and students around the country face the challenge of interpreting complex, puzzling events. The AP comparative course focuses on government and politics in other countries and provides a theoretical framework to compare political systems around the world.” ~Ethel Wood

This semester long course is designed to give students an analytical perspective on global politics. Students will focus on the governments and the diverse political structures of the United Kingdom, Mexico, Nigeria, Russia, China, and Iran. Comparisons will be made in terms of power structures, political institutions, citizen participation, political and economic change, and public policy. Students will be exposed to different theoretical and practical frameworks that are the foundation for a variety of political systems.

**Course Objectives: By the end of this course, students will:**

1. Define and describe major comparative political concepts, themes, and generalizations, including: a. An introduction to comparative government (5% of the exam)

b. Sovereignty, authority, and power (20% of the exam)

c. Political institutions (35% of the exam)

d. Citizens, society, and the state (15% of the exam)

e. Political and economic change (15% of the exam)

f. Public Policy (10% of the exam)

2. Support generalizations with relevant factual information pertaining to the governments and politics of China, Great Britain, Iran, Mexico, Nigeria, and Russia

3. Analyze typical patterns of political processes and behavior and their consequences

4. Compare and contrast political institutions and processes across countries and to derive generalizations

5. Analyze and interpret basic data relevant to comparative government and politics

Summative assessment for each unit is through an AP-style multiple choice exam, immediately

followed by at least one Free Response Question (FRQ). There will be a thorough review and

practice for the AP Comparative Government & Politics Exam in April, followed by the AP exam

on Thursday, May 17th, 2019 at 7:30AM.

Materials: Required materials for this course include the textbook, binder/folder with paper, writing utensils, highlighter, and a positive attitude toward success.

Primary Readings:

Kesselman, Mark, et al. *Introduction to Comparative Politics,* 4th Edition, Boston: Houghton Mifflin © 2007

**GRADING SCALE**

* Major Assessment 55%
* Minor Assessment 15%
* Other 10%
* Final Exam 20%

**Fulton grading scale:** 90-100 A 80-89 B 70-79 C 69 and below F

**Chattahoochee High School Provision for Improving Grades**

1. Students who complete a major assessment but fail to demonstrate mastery as evidenced by a grade below 75% on the major assessment may pursue an improvement opportunity to show proficiency. In the case of an honor code violation on a major assessment, the grade will stand as a zero with no eligibility for recovery on that assignment. What is classified as a major assessment is determined within the content area; consult your course syllabus for details.
2. Students should contact the teacher concerning recovery opportunities within 5 school days of being informed of the grade on the assessment in class.  Students are allowed one attempt at recovery per major assessment category listed in the course syllabus. All recovery work must be completed 10 days before the end of the semester.
3. The grade on the recovery assignment will replace the original grade if the recovery grade is equal to or below 75%.  If the recovery grade is above 75%, the original grade will be replaced with a 75%.

**Cheating and Plagiarism**:

The Social Studies department considers academic integrity a top priority. ANY copying or sharing of answers on homework, major assessments, minor assessments, or exams will be viewed as cheating by the Social Studies Department. The only exception to this rule is if the teacher has explicitly stated that the work is a “cooperative learning” experience. If in doubt, ask the teacher.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating. It is defined by the American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language is “the act of stealing and using the work ideas or writings of another as one’s own.” Although the direct copying of another’s work is the most blatant example, any time a student takes another’s ideas and passes them off as their own, it is considered plagiarism. This includes “rephrasing” material without noting the source. If in doubt, ask in advance. The consequences for cheating or plagiarism on any assignment are outlined in the handbook: it will result in a zero grade on the assignment, an Honor Code Referral, and a phone call notifying the violator’s parent.

CHS uses turnitin.com to detect plagiarism. You may be required to submit assignments and assessments to turnitin.com.

**Extra Credit**

No grades will be given for non-academic assignments and no extra credit will be offered.

**Electronic Privacy Policy**

No use of electronic devices to record or transmit class activities, resources, or information is permitted. This means that you may not use a tape recorder, camera, camera phone, camera tablet, camera pen or any other device to record or take pictures of students, teachers, classroom materials or resources, notes, etc. Doing so is a serious violation of the honor code and of the privacy rights of individuals and will be treated as such.

**Tardy Policy**:

In all Chattahoochee classrooms, instruction occurs from bell to bell. Attendance for the entire period is vital to students’ success. If a student is not in class before the tardy bell rings, he or she will be marked tardy. Tardies will be tracked throughout the semester and progressive discipline will be applied.

**ASSESSMENT PRACTICES**

**READING:** In order for a student to be successful in a college-prep course of this type, it is essential that students maximize their time, through proper organization and planning strategies, to complete all assigned reading prior to class discussion. The required reading, along with lectures and class discussion, will figure prominently in formal evaluations using quizzes and examinations. In addition to the survey text, students will be reading handouts from the College Board as well as a variety of other sources, including *The Economist,* the *New York Times*, and others. These supplemental readings will deal with theory as well as specific countries. Reading comprehension will be evaluated through quizzes and typed summaries.

**GROUP WORK:** For the purpose of presentations over the assigned readings, mini-assignments, and presentations, students may be placed into groups. Group work is a course requirement and working alone on these activities will not be allowed.

**DATA AND STATISTICAL ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:** Throughout the course of the semester, students will be required to analyze various political statistical data. This will include assignments involving analysis of charts, maps, graphs, political cartoons, and the use of the Internet. Students will respond to a series of questions with respect to the data examined that will constitute a daily grade.

**CURRENT EVENTS:** Students are required to find, summarize, and present a current event related to a specific country. We will have current event presentations weekly. Students will be required to lead a discussion of their article’s topic. More information will be provided on a separate handout.

**PRESENTATIONS:** Students will be expected to complete at least one major presentation and several “mini-presentations.” Presentations are intended to enhance student understanding and application of key concepts learned throughout the course. Students are required to take part in an assigned group country public policy presentation. Students will also be required to research and present topics in a “mini presentation” format over the course of the semester. More information will be provided on separate handouts during the units of study.

**FRQ’s:** Students will be evaluated throughout the semester by writing answers to College Board analytical FRQ’s (Free Response Questions) at least every other week on quizzes and tests and during FRQ workshops. They may be given as either in-class or take-home format. Answers should be thoughtful and thorough, and, yes, **proper grammar is always important**. However, thesis statements are not necessary in answering AP Comparative Government questions unless specifically requested by the instructor. Students should answer precisely what the question is asking, using examples to reinforce your responses.

**QUIZZES:**  Quizzeswill be randomly scheduled at least once per unit. Most quizzes will be announced and geared towards student comprehension of vocabulary and scheduled reading assignments.

**UNIT TESTS**: Unit tests will consist of multiple choice questions and FRQ’s. Please note that unit tests will frequently incorporate material from previous units. ***\*\*\*Please note that if you are absent on the day of an announced test, you will be expected to make an appointment for the retest to take place within 1 week of the missed exam.***

**Course Outline/Units of Study**

Unit I – The Comparative Method

Focus: In an increasingly interdependent and globalized world, the actions of one nation can

impact the lives of citizens from other nations.

Unit II – United Kingdom of Great Britain and European Union (*Substantive Democracies*)

Focus: Great Britain is considered a model of consolidated/advanced democracy due to many

social, political, and economic institutions. Understanding the historical legacy of Great Britain

helps to explain the formation of the Westminster Model and other constitutional systems. The European Union as a supranational organization dictates the behavior of countries and the people in a variety of ways.

Unit III – United Mexican States (*Substantive Democracies*)

Focus: Mexico is still in the formation process of its social, political, and economic institutions. It

can be susceptible to both internal and external challenges as well as revolution. Mexico’s

historical legacy is rooted in both revolution and imperialism.

Unit IV – Russian Federation (*Procedural and Electoral Authoritarian States)*

Focus: Russia derives its power differently compared to democratic regimes. Russia has social,

political, and economic institutions, but they tend to keep the citizenry out of the social,

political, and economic decision-making. Although it has different levels of government and

electoral systems, Russia faces public policy challenges, social movements, and leadership

struggles as other countries.

Unit V – Federal Republic of Nigeria (*Procedural and Electoral Authoritarian States)*

Focus: Nigeria is still in the formation process of its social, political, and economic institutions. It

can be susceptible to both internal and external challenges as well as revolution. Nigeria’s

historical legacy is rooted in both revolution and imperialism.

Unit VI – People’s Republic of China *(Closed Authoritarian States)*

Focus: China derives its power differently compared to democratic regimes. China has social,

political, and economic institutions, but they tend to keep the citizenry out of the social,

political, and economic decision-making. Although China has different levels of government and

electoral systems, it faces public policy challenges, social movements, and leadership struggles

as other countries.

Unit VII – Islamic Republic of Iran *(Closed Authoritarian States)*

Focus: Iran derives its power differently compared to democratic regimes. Iran has secular

social, political, and economic institutions, but its religious institutions tend to dominate the

social, political, and economic decision-making. Although Iran has different levels of

government and electoral systems, it faces public policy challenges, social movements, and

leadership struggles as other countries.

Unit VIII – Conclusions

Focus: The comparison of systems and institutions over time allows a better understanding of

the world around us. Using data and making comparisons allows for the application of

knowledge to other situations to add clarity. Globalization and Democratization continue to

affect countries socially, politically, and economically. Understanding the foundational roots of

government and politics is essential when facing future challenges.