

AP[®] Comparative Government and Politics

Teacher's Guide

Karen P. Coston
Blacksburg High School
Blacksburg, Virginia

Sarah Fisher
Central Kitsap High School
Silverdale, Washington

connect to college success[™]
www.collegeboard.com

AP[®] Comparative Government and Politics Teacher's Guide

Karen P. Coston
Blacksburg High School
Blacksburg, Virginia

Sarah Fisher
Central Kitsap High School
Silverdale, Washington

The College Board: Connecting Students to College Success

The College Board is a not-for-profit membership association whose mission is to connect students to college success and opportunity. Founded in 1900, the association is composed of more than 5,000 schools, colleges, universities, and other educational organizations. Each year, the College Board serves seven million students and their parents, 23,000 high schools, and 3,500 colleges through major programs and services in college admissions, guidance, assessment, financial aid, enrollment, and teaching and learning. Among its best-known programs are the SAT[®], the PSAT/NMSQT[®], and the Advanced Placement Program[®] (AP[®]). The College Board is committed to the principles of excellence and equity, and that commitment is embodied in all of its programs, services, activities, and concerns.

For further information, visit www.collegeboard.com.

© 2007 The College Board. All rights reserved. College Board, Advanced Placement Program, AP, AP Central, AP Vertical Teams, Pre-AP, SAT, and the acorn logo are registered trademarks of the College Board. AP Potentials and connect to college success are trademarks owned by the College Board. PSAT/NMSQT is a registered trademark of the College Board and National Merit Scholarship Corporation. All other products and services may be trademarks of their respective owners. Visit College Board on the Web: www.collegeboard.com.

Contents

Welcome Letter from the College Board	v
Equity and Access	vii
Participating in the AP Course Audit	xi
Preface	xii
A Note to Veteran Teachers About Course Changes in 2005-06.....	xiii
Chapter 1. About AP® Comparative Government and Politics	1
Overview: Past, Present, Future	1
Course Description Essentials	5
Key Concepts and Skills.....	8
Chapter 2. Advice for AP Comparative Government and Politics Teachers.....	13
Where do I start?.....	13
How do I teach a college course in a high school setting?.....	14
How should I ensure that students are prepared to take my class?	16
What occurs in a typical day?	16
How should I interact with parents?	19
What are some challenges I might face?	19
Chapter 3. Course Organization	22
Syllabus Development.....	22
Sample Syllabus 1	28
Sample Syllabus 2.....	32
Sample Syllabus 3.....	35
Sample Syllabus 4.....	38
Sample Syllabus 5.....	42
Chapter 4. The AP Exam in Comparative Government and Politics	50
Preparing Students for the AP Exam	50
Section I: Multiple Choice	51
Section II: Free Response	52
Administering the AP Exam	55
AP Exam Scoring.....	55
After the AP Exam.....	56

Contents

Chapter 5. Resources for New Teachers	58
How to Address Limited Resources	58
Resources	58
Professional Development	68

Welcome Letter from the College Board

Dear AP[®] Teacher:

Whether you are a new AP teacher, using this AP Teacher's Guide to assist in developing a syllabus for the first AP course you will ever teach, or an experienced AP teacher simply wanting to compare the teaching strategies you use with those employed by other expert AP teachers, we are confident you will find this resource valuable. We urge you to make good use of the ideas, advice, classroom strategies, and sample syllabi contained in this Teacher's Guide.

You deserve tremendous credit for all that you do to fortify students for college success. The nurturing environment in which you help your students master a college-level curriculum—a much better atmosphere for one's first exposure to college-level expectations than the often large classes in which many first-year college courses are taught—seems to translate directly into lasting benefits as students head off to college. An array of research studies, from the classic 1999 U.S. Department of Education study *Answers in the Tool Box* to new research from the University of Texas and the University of California, demonstrate that when students enter high school with equivalent academic abilities and socioeconomic status, those who develop the content knowledge to demonstrate college-level mastery of an AP Exam (a grade of 3 or higher) have much higher rates of college completion and have higher grades in college. The 2005 National Center for Educational Accountability (NCEA) study shows that students who take AP have much higher college graduation rates than students with the *same* academic abilities who do not have that valuable AP experience in high school. Furthermore, a Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS, formerly known as the Third International Mathematics and Science Study) found that even AP Calculus students who score a 1 on the AP Exam are significantly outperforming other advanced mathematics students in the United States, and they compare favorably to students from the top-performing nations in an international assessment of mathematics achievement. (Visit AP Central[®] at apcentral.collegeboard.com for details about these and other AP-related studies.)

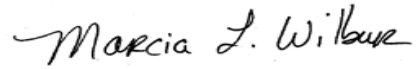
For these reasons, the AP teacher plays a significant role in a student's academic journey. Your AP classroom may be the only taste of college rigor your students will have before they enter higher education. It is important to note that such benefits cannot be demonstrated among AP courses that are AP courses in name only, rather than in quality of content. For AP courses to meaningfully prepare students for college success, courses must meet standards that enable students to replicate the content of the comparable college class. Using this AP Teacher's Guide is one of the keys to ensuring that your AP course is as good as (or even better than) the course the student would otherwise be taking in college. While the AP Program does not mandate the use of any one syllabus or textbook and emphasizes that AP teachers should be granted the creativity and flexibility to develop their own curriculum, it is beneficial for AP teachers to compare their syllabi not just to the course outline in the official AP Course Description and in chapter 3 of this guide, but also to the syllabi presented on AP Central, to ensure that each course labeled AP meets the standards of a college-level course. Visit AP Central[®] at apcentral.collegeboard.com for details about the AP Course Audit, course-specific Curricular Requirements, and how to submit your syllabus for AP Course Audit authorization.

As the Advanced Placement Program[®] continues to experience tremendous growth in the twenty-first century, it is heartening to see that in every U.S. state and the District of Columbia, a growing proportion of high school graduates have earned at least one grade of 3 or higher on an AP Exam. In some states, more

Welcome Letter

than 20 percent of graduating seniors have accomplished this goal. The incredible efforts of AP teachers are paying off, producing ever greater numbers of college-bound seniors who are prepared to succeed in college. Please accept my admiration and congratulations for all that you are doing and achieving.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marcia L. Wilbur". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M' and a distinct 'L'.

Marcia Wilbur
Director, Curriculum and Content Development
Advanced Placement Program

Equity and Access

In the following section, the College Board describes its commitment to achieving equity in the AP Program.

Why are equitable preparation and inclusion important?

Currently, 40 percent of students entering four-year colleges and universities and 63 percent of students at two-year institutions require some remedial education. This is a significant concern because a student is less likely to obtain a bachelor's degree if he or she has taken one or more remedial courses.¹

Nationwide, secondary school educators are increasingly committed not just to helping students complete high school but also to helping them develop the habits of mind necessary for managing the rigors of college. As *Educational Leadership* reported in 2004:

The dramatic changes taking place in the U.S. economy jeopardize the economic future of students who leave high school without the problem-solving and communication skills essential to success in postsecondary education and in the growing number of high-paying jobs in the economy. To back away from education reforms that help all students master these skills is to give up on the commitment to equal opportunity for all.²

Numerous research studies have shown that engaging a student in a rigorous high school curriculum such as is found in AP courses is one of the best ways that educators can help that student persist and complete a bachelor's degree.³ However, while 57 percent of the class of 2004 in U.S. public high schools enrolled in higher education in fall 2004, only 13 percent had been boosted with a successful AP experience in high school.⁴ Although AP courses are not the only examples of rigorous curricula, there is still a significant gap between students with college aspirations and students with adequate high school preparation to fulfill those aspirations.

Strong correlations exist between AP success and college success.⁵ Educators attest that this is partly because AP enables students to receive a taste of college while still in an environment that provides more support and resources for students than do typical college courses. Effective AP teachers work closely with their students, giving them the opportunity to reason, analyze, and understand for themselves. As a result, AP students frequently find themselves developing new confidence in their academic abilities and discovering their previously unknown capacities for college studies and academic success.

1. Andrea Venezia, Michael W. Kirst, and Anthony L. Antonio, *Betraying the College Dream: How Disconnected K–12 and Postsecondary Education Systems Undermine Student Aspirations* (Palo Alto, Calif.: The Bridge Project, 2003), 8.

2. Frank Levy and Richard J. Murnane, "Education and the Changing Job Market." *Educational Leadership* 62 (2) (October 2004): 83.

3. In addition to studies from University of California–Berkeley and the National Center for Educational Accountability (2005), see the classic study on the subject of rigor and college persistence: Clifford Adelman, *Answers in the Tool Box: Academic Intensity, Attendance Patterns, and Bachelor's Degree Attainment* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, 1999).

4. *Advanced Placement Report to the Nation* (New York: College Board, 2005).

5. Wayne Camara, "College Persistence, Graduation, and Remediation," *College Board Research Notes* (RN-19) (New York: College Board, 2003).

Which students should be encouraged to register for AP courses?

Any student willing and ready to do the work should be considered for an AP course. The College Board actively endorses the principles set forth in the following Equity Policy Statement and encourages schools to support this policy.

The College Board and the Advanced Placement Program encourage teachers, AP Coordinators, and school administrators to make equitable access a guiding principle for their AP programs. The College Board is committed to the principle that all students deserve an opportunity to participate in rigorous and academically challenging courses and programs. All students who are willing to accept the challenge of a rigorous academic curriculum should be considered for admission to AP courses. The Board encourages the elimination of barriers that restrict access to AP courses for students from ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic groups that have been traditionally underrepresented in the AP Program. Schools should make every effort to ensure that their AP classes reflect the diversity of their student population.

The fundamental objective that schools should strive to accomplish is to create a stimulating AP program that academically challenges students and has the same ethnic, gender, and socioeconomic demographics as the overall student population in the school. African American and Native American students are severely underrepresented in AP classrooms nationwide; Latino student participation has increased tremendously, but in many AP courses Latino students remain underrepresented. To prevent a willing, motivated student from having the opportunity to engage in AP courses is to deny that student the possibility of a better future.

Knowing what we know about the impact a rigorous curriculum can have on a student's future, it is not enough for us simply to leave it to motivated students to seek out these courses. Instead, we must reach out to students and encourage them to take on this challenge. With this in mind, there are two factors to consider when counseling a student regarding an AP opportunity:

1. Student motivation

Many potentially successful AP students would never enroll if the decision were left to their own initiative. They may not have peers who value rigorous academics, or they may have had prior academic experiences that damaged their confidence or belief in their college potential. They may simply lack an understanding of the benefits that such courses can offer them. Accordingly, it is essential that we not gauge a student's motivation to take AP until that student has had the opportunity to understand the advantages—not just the challenges—of such course work.

Educators committed to equity provide all students in a school with an understanding of the benefits of rigorous curricula. Such educators conduct student assemblies and/or presentations to parents that clearly describe the advantages of taking an AP course and outline the work expected of students. Perhaps most important, they have one-on-one conversations with the students in which advantages and expectations are placed side by side. These educators realize that many students, lacking confidence in their abilities, will be listening for any indication that they should not take an AP course. Accordingly, such educators, while frankly describing the amount of homework to be anticipated, also offer words of encouragement and support, assuring the students that if they are willing to do the work, they are wanted in the course.

The College Board has created a free online tool, AP Potential™, to help educators reach out to students who previously might not have been considered for participation in an AP course. Drawing upon data based on correlations between student performance on specific sections of the PSAT/NMSQT® and

performance on specific AP Exams, AP Potential generates rosters of students at your school who have a strong likelihood of success in a particular AP course. Schools nationwide have successfully enrolled many more students in AP than ever before by using these rosters to help students (and their parents) see themselves as having potential to succeed in college-level studies. For more information, visit <http://appotential.collegeboard.com>.

Actively recruiting students for AP and sustaining enrollment can also be enhanced by offering incentives for both students and teachers. While the College Board does not formally endorse any one incentive for boosting AP participation, we encourage school administrators to develop policies that will best serve an overarching goal to expand participation and improve performance in AP courses. When such incentives are implemented, educators should ensure that quality verification measures such as the AP Exam are embedded in the program so that courses are rigorous enough to merit the added benefits.

Many schools offer the following incentives for students who enroll in AP:

- Extra weighting of AP course grades when determining class rank
- Full or partial payment of AP Exam fees
- On-site exam administration

Additionally, some schools offer the following incentives for teachers to reward them for their efforts to include and support traditionally underserved students:

- Extra preparation periods
- Reduced class size
- Reduced duty periods
- Additional classroom funds
- Extra salary

2. Student preparation

Because AP courses should be the equivalent of courses taught in colleges and universities, it is important that a student be prepared for such rigor. The types of preparation a student should have before entering an AP course vary from course to course and are described in the official AP Course Description book for each subject (available as a free download at apcentral.collegeboard.com).

Unfortunately, many schools have developed a set of gatekeeping or screening requirements that go far beyond what is appropriate to ensure that an individual student has had sufficient preparation to succeed in an AP course. Schools should make every effort to eliminate the gatekeeping process for AP enrollment. Because research has not been able to establish meaningful correlations between gatekeeping devices and actual success on an AP Exam, the College Board **strongly discourages** the use of the following factors as thresholds or requirements for admission to an AP course:

- Grade point average
- Grade in a required prerequisite course
- Recommendation from a teacher

Equity and Access

- Recommendation from a teacher
- AP teacher’s discretion
- Standardized test scores
- Course-specific entrance exam or essay

Additionally, schools should be wary of the following concerns regarding the misuse of AP:

- Creating “Pre-AP courses” to establish a limited, exclusive track for access to AP
- Rushing to install AP courses without simultaneously implementing a plan to prepare students and teachers in lower grades for the rigor of the program

How can I ensure that I am not watering down the quality of my course as I admit more students?

Students in AP courses should take the AP Exam, which provides an external verification of the extent to which college-level mastery of an AP course is taking place. While it is likely that the percentage of students who receive a grade of 3 or higher may dip as more students take the exam, that is not an indication that the quality of a course is being watered down. Instead of looking at percentages, educators should be looking at raw numbers, since each number represents an individual student. If the raw number of students receiving a grade of 3 or higher on the AP Exam is not decreasing as more students take the exam, there is no indication that the quality of learning in your course has decreased as more students have enrolled.

What are schools doing to expand access and improve AP performance?

Districts and schools seeing the greatest success in improving both participation and performance in AP have implemented a multipronged approach to growing an AP program. These schools offer AP as capstone courses, providing professional development for AP teachers and additional incentives and support for the teachers and students participating at this top level of the curriculum. The high standards of the AP courses are used as anchors that influence the 6–12 curriculum from the “top down.” Simultaneously, these educators are investing in the training of teachers in the pre-AP years and are building a vertically articulated, sequential curriculum from middle school to high school that culminates in AP courses—a broad pipeline that prepares students step-by-step for the rigors of AP so that they will have a fair shot at success in an AP course once they reach that stage. An effective and demanding AP program necessitates cooperation and communication between high schools and middle schools. Effective teaming among members of all educational levels ensures rigorous standards for students across years and provides them with the skills needed to succeed in AP. For more information about Pre-AP® professional development, including workshops designed to facilitate the creation of AP Vertical Teams® of middle school and high school teachers, visit AP Central.

Advanced Placement Program
The College Board

Participating in the AP Course Audit

Overview

The AP Course Audit is a collaborative effort among secondary schools, colleges and universities, and the College Board. For their part, schools deliver college-level instruction to students and complete and return AP Course Audit materials. Colleges and universities work with the College Board to define elements common to college courses in each AP subject, help develop materials to support AP teaching, and receive a roster of schools and their authorized AP courses. The College Board fosters dialogue about the AP Course Audit requirements and recommendations, and reviews syllabi.

Starting in the 2007–08 academic year, all schools wishing to label a course “AP” on student transcripts, course listings, or any school publications must complete and return the subject-specific AP Course Audit form, along with the course syllabus, for all sections of their AP courses. Approximately two months after submitting AP Course Audit materials, schools will receive a legal agreement authorizing the use of the “AP” trademark on qualifying courses. Colleges and universities will receive a roster of schools listing the courses authorized to use the “AP” trademark at each school.

Purpose

College Board member schools at both the secondary and college levels requested an annual AP Course Audit in order to provide teachers and administrators with clear guidelines on curricular and resource requirements that must be in place for AP courses and to help colleges and universities better interpret secondary school courses marked “AP” on students’ transcripts.

The AP Course Audit form identifies common, essential elements of effective college courses, including subject matter and classroom resources such as college-level textbooks and laboratory equipment. Schools and individual teachers will continue to develop their own curricula for AP courses they offer—the AP Course Audit will simply ask them to indicate inclusion of these elements in their AP syllabi or describe how their courses nonetheless deliver college-level course content.

AP Exam performance is not factored into the AP Course Audit. A program that audited only those schools with seemingly unsatisfactory exam performance might cause some schools to limit access to AP courses and exams. In addition, because AP Exams are taken and exam grades reported after college admissions decisions are already made, AP course participation has become a relevant factor in the college admissions process. On the AP Course Audit form, teachers and administrators attest that their course includes elements commonly taught in effective college courses. Colleges and universities reviewing students’ transcripts can thus be reasonably assured that courses labeled “AP” provide an appropriate level and range of college-level course content, along with the classroom resources to best deliver that content.

For more information

You should discuss the AP Course Audit with your department head and principal. For more information, including a timeline, frequently asked questions, and downloadable AP Course Audit forms, visit apcentral.collegeboard.com/courseaudit.

Preface

This Teacher’s Guide has been created to give to you a head start teaching AP Comparative Government and Politics. In these pages you will find many useful resources regarding both content and methods. These include an overview of trends in the field of comparative politics; the curriculum outline from the Course Description and a discussion of the concepts and skills students should master; practical answers to questions many new teachers have; suggestions on how to organize the course, including a variety of sample syllabi; information about the AP Exam; and a list of print and electronic resources for further exploration. In creating this guide, we have solicited materials from college professors, high school teachers, and AP students in an effort to provide you with a range of useful advice.

AP Comparative Government and Politics is one of the most exciting and challenging courses you can teach. Your students will amaze you with the depth and breadth of their knowledge of this subject as the year progresses, especially considering that this course may be their introduction to the subject. Students find great personal satisfaction with this course—not only do they enjoy considering some of the fundamental concepts associated with this class (power, equality, justice, freedom, etc.), but they also enjoy the challenge of learning about unfamiliar subjects. On occasion during class discussion, you will get goose bumps listening to your class credibly assess the political situation in Nigeria or Russia. It is one of the most thrilling moments in teaching. Additionally, one of the best things about teaching AP Comparative Government and Politics is the opportunity to learn and explore the material alongside your students.

We anticipate that your students, like ours, will love the course and that you too will be hooked. So use this guide to begin your very fulfilling journey into the world of AP Comparative Government and Politics. Our hope for all the teachers reading this Teacher’s Guide is that they will be able to excite their students, learn a great deal, and feel the same energy and enthusiasm that AP Comparative Government and Politics generates in our high school classrooms.

Karen P. Coston

Blacksburg High School
Blacksburg, Virginia



Karen Coston currently teaches at Blacksburg High School in Blacksburg, Virginia. In addition to AP Comparative Government and Politics, she also teaches AP United States Government and Politics, AP United States History, and AP Macroeconomics, and has also taught classes in law. Karen has graded AP Government and Politics Exams for many years, serving as a Reader, Table Leader, and Question Leader at the annual Reading. She is a former AP Comparative Government and Politics Development Committee member and has attended many training sessions for government and politics. In addition to her teaching duties, Karen coaches debate and academic teams at Blacksburg High School, and her teams have often placed at state and national tournaments.

Sarah Fisher

Central Kitsap High School
Silverdale, Washington



Sarah Fisher teaches AP Government and Politics and AP World History at Central Kitsap High School in Silverdale, Washington. She is a current member of the AP Comparative Government and Politics Development Committee. Sarah has presented AP Comparative Government and Politics workshops as a College Board consultant and has served as a Reader and Table Leader at the AP Comparative Government and Politics annual Reading.

A Note to Veteran Teachers About Course Changes

Even though this guide is specifically designed for new teachers of AP Comparative Government and Politics, it should also be useful in exploring recent changes to the course. The most important differences are a greater emphasis on themes and concepts, the change to six core countries, and the free-response section format. Even though a shift has occurred, it is not too dramatic and thus many of your previous materials and strategies will still be useful.

This guide and other supplementary materials prepared by the College Board will provide you with valuable resources for teaching the revised course. To understand the nature of, and reasons for, the change, read Professor Jean Robinson's overview of the discipline of comparative government and politics in chapter 1. It also will be helpful to review the "Key Concepts and Skills" section. Finally, chapter 5, created specifically with the new course in mind, contains a variety of resource materials that will help students learn to analyze concepts and will help you to revise your core-country materials. We especially direct you to the invaluable briefing papers found at the AP Comparative Government and Politics Course Home Page (<http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/govpolcomp>), which cover selected concepts and countries in some detail.

The field of comparative government and politics is always evolving, and we hope this guide will make your transition a bit easier. Focusing on concepts instead of the finer details of each country's political system is a benefit to students and teachers. Good luck and enjoy your new venture!

Chapter 1

About AP[®] Comparative Government and Politics

Overview: Past, Present, Future

Jean C. Robinson
Professor, Department of Political Science
Indiana University

A glance at some recent comparative politics textbooks would convince even the most skeptical person that changes are afoot in the study of comparative politics. Whereas once most introductory textbooks were composed of separate country chapters, many texts now either dispense totally with specific country chapters or embed discussions of country case studies within larger frameworks and themes. Globalization, democratization, marketization, identity politics, and nationalism all have moved to the forefront in comparative political studies.

Textbooks and college-level introductory courses tend to follow established trends in the discipline, even long after a paradigm shift. A variety of factors combine to create a conservative approach to the way introductory political science is taught. The costs of publishing textbooks, the time and effort necessary to develop sound introductory syllabi, and the apprenticeship training of professional scholars all conspire to resist change and innovation. How then does one explain this shift that is discernible in comparative politics textbooks, in the research being done in comparative politics, and not coincidentally in the design and format of the revised AP Comparative Government and Politics Exam and course?

One can trace the changes in comparative politics back to the surprises that emerged in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Political scientists, like other scientists, like to claim that the purpose behind all the madness is to test hypotheses so that we can better predict the future. But few of us predicted the collapse of communism, the fall of apartheid, or the rise of Islamic fundamentalism. Conventionally, political scientists explain the paradigm shift in comparative politics by pointing to the dismantling of the Soviet empire, the crumbling of communist states from within, and long-established trends of authoritarianism beginning to give way to democratization. This too was a time when technology was transforming practices of citizenship, and communication was making the globe feel smaller. This can be witnessed by young protestors in China making use of the Internet and satellite television to spread news of their attempts to transform Chinese politics.

As economies became more interdependent, the political story of marketization in Russia found echoes in the growth of inequalities in southern Mexico and the development of export processing zones and industrial reform in northern Mexico. As newly formulated constitutions enabled the rise of new states, subnational and supranational politics became increasingly significant in understanding key questions about identity, governance, and political institutions. Finally, even in the midst of increased interest and

Chapter 1

participation in democratic processes, we have seen a rise in terrorism as well as a renewed interest in faith-based politics.

In a similar manner, the teaching of AP Comparative Government and Politics follows trends catalyzed by actual political events. Comparative politics, however, is more than current events, and the field of comparative politics has been engaged in vigorous debates about how we should study these incredible political events. If we have no method, then, as textbook author Patrick O’Neil argues, all we are left with is “a collection of random details” (2003, 4). Certainly, the introductory class is no place to begin teaching statistical analysis or the case-study method, but it *is* the place to begin thinking about *what* we are comparing, *why* we are comparing it, and *what kinds of generalizations* we might be able to draw from the details.

Comparative government and politics education has been moving away from in-depth studies of countries and their institutions and more toward thematic and conceptual issues. In the twenty-first century, predominating themes have included democratization, state and society relations, citizens and civil society, and the role of economics in the formation of public policy. This is not to dismiss entirely the study of individual countries but rather to deemphasize individual country studies in favor of helping students develop the conceptual and critical skills necessary for making rough generalizations.

In the last several years, both major book and journal publications have been remarkably focused on prominent conceptual conundrums. Scholars are asking how democratization is affected by “hidden publics” (Beck 2003; Inglehart and Norris 2003), by electoral processes, political culture (Inglehart and Welzel 2003; Seligson 2002; Shi 2001), ideology (Hanson 2003), and social capital (Putnam 2002). Although the trend seems to be toward democratization, political scientists are questioning how illiberal democracies and robust authoritarian states can still endure (Seligson 2002; Posusney 2004; Bellin 2004). We are also asking questions about the changes in institutions and practices such as party systems (Bielasiak 2002; Beer 2001) and electoral environments (Hiskey 2003). Other scholars, still interested in institutional change, are looking at how newly significant institutions such as religious orientations interact with politics, regime stability, and policy outcomes (Tessler 2002). Comparative politics researchers and teachers are also becoming more highly attuned to the ways in which politics and economics interact at both the domestic (Heo and Tan 2001; Kang 2003; Shadlen 2002) and the international levels (Howell 2003; Barnes 2003; Kaelberer 2002). Many of us are intrigued by protest, opposition politics, and the myriad ways in which citizens interact with the state, particularly with regard to the creation and maintenance of civil society (Langohr 2004; Yashar 2002; Lust-Okar 2004; Clark and Schwedler 2003; Thompson 2001), as well as the apparent growth of the local state, both in policy making and as the beneficiary of the decentralization of national state power (Remick 2002; Wegren 2002).

These ideas are taken up by scholars who write comparative politics textbooks. From the classics such as Almond et al. (2003) and Kesselman et al. (2004), which are regularly revised to include conceptual developments in political science, to the new textbooks such as those by O’Neil (2003) or McCormick (2004), a discerning reader can see abundant evidence of the increasing focus on testable concepts that shape the practice of politics around the globe. For instance, Kesselman et al. start their 2004 edition of *Introduction to Comparative Politics* with a discussion of globalization and the ways in which it has affected work, production, and migration, as well as the ways communication and information have been transformed. As they suggest, “globalization fosters insecurity in everyday life and presents extraordinary challenges to government” (2004, 5). In the eighth edition of the Almond et al. text, the focus remains on institutions, but the authors also address political questions about building community; fostering development; and securing democracy, human rights, and civil liberties (2003). Sections such as comparing Russia in 1985 to 2002 turn the focus to the dynamics of politics, rather than framing political institutions as stable and predictable. McCormick, in his tellingly titled text *Comparative Politics in Transition* (2004),

argues that the politics of the non-Western world give us a clearer understanding of the processes of change and transition, while avoiding any claim that all changes are necessarily in the direction of more democracy. These trends in textbooks are amply reflected in other texts including O’Neil (2003), Green and Luehrmann (2003), Curtis et al. (2002), and Hauss (2002).

The point here is that the study of comparative politics is not just about learning the difference between presidential and parliamentary systems, or figuring out how state capacity differs in authoritarian versus democratic states, or memorizing the specific formal leadership patterns in Britain or China. Rather, the introduction to comparative politics is about learning how to analyze political change. For students, as for scholars, the questions that motivate us are also the questions that shape people’s lives on a daily basis all over the globe. How can we make democracy work? Under what conditions can equality among people be created and sustained? How do marginalized people become part of a community? Under what conditions does violence erupt and spread?

Comparative politics offers students an exciting entrée into understanding a little bit more about the possibilities of, as well as the barriers to, individual opportunity and community development for people who live thousands of miles away, speak a different language, and exist in a very different culture. The challenge of comparative politics for teachers and scholars is that we must help students gain this understanding (while sitting in classrooms in Las Cruces, or Miami, or Ellettsville) and introduce them to conceptual and analytical frameworks so that they can begin to generalize and compare. If we want to know why democracies thrive in some societies but not in others; if we want students to start to grasp the conditions that must exist for the creation of an effective civil society; if we want to move beyond superficialities about the “McDonaldization” of the globe to the more enduring impacts of globalization, then our task is clear. We do need to help students master knowledge about the particulars of countries and nations, but we also need to help them develop the analytical skills to make comparisons and generalize from these discrete sets of facts and observations.

References

- Almond, Gabriel, et al. 2003. *Comparative Politics Today: A World View*. 8th ed. New York: Longman.
- Barnes, Andrew. 2003. “What Do We Know Now? Postcommunist Economic Reform Through a Russian Lens.” *Comparative Politics* 35(4): 477-98.
- Beck, Linda J. 2003. “Democratization and the Hidden Public: The Impact of Patronage Networks on Senegalese Women.” *Comparative Politics* 35(2): 147-69.
- Beer, Caroline. 2001. “Assessing the Consequences of Electoral Democracy: Subnational Legislative Change in Mexico.” *Comparative Politics* 33(4): 421-41.
- Bellin, Eva. 2004. “The Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Exceptionalism in Comparative Perspective.” *Comparative Politics* 36(2): 139-58.
- Bielasiak, Jack. 2002. “The Institutionalization of Electoral and Party Systems in Postcommunist States.” *Comparative Politics* 34(2): 189–210.
- Clark, Janine Astrid, and Jillian Schwedler. 2003. “Who Opened the Window? Women’s Activism in Islamist Parties.” *Comparative Politics* 35(3): 293–313.
- Curtis, Michael et al. 2002. *Introduction to Comparative Government*. 5th ed. New York: Longman.

Chapter 1

- Green, December, and Laura Luehrmann. 2003. *Comparative Politics of the Third World: Linking Concepts and Cases*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner.
- Hanson, Stephen E. 2003. "From Culture to Ideology in Comparative Politics." *Comparative Politics* 35(3): 355-77.
- Haus, Charles. 2002. *Comparative Politics: Domestic Responses to Global Challenges*. 4th ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson.
- Heo, Uk, and Alexander C. Tan. 2001. "Democracy and Economic Growth: A Causal Analysis." *Comparative Politics* 33(4): 463-74.
- Hiskey, Jonathan T. 2003. "Demand-Based Development and Local Electoral Environments in Mexico." *Comparative Politics* 36(1): 41-60.
- Howell, Chris. 2003. "Varieties of Capitalism: And Then There Was One?" *Comparative Politics* 36(1): 103-25.
- Inglehart, Ronald, and Pippa Norris. 2003. *Rising Tide: Gender Equality and Cultural Change Around the World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Inglehart, Ronald, and Christian Welzel. 2003. "Political Culture and Democracy: Analyzing Cross-Level Linkages." *Comparative Politics* 36(1): 61-80.
- Kaelberer, Matthias. 2002. "Ideas, Interests, and Institutions: The Domestic Politics of European Monetary Cooperation." *Comparative Politics* 35(1): 105-24.
- Kang, David C. 2003. "Transaction Costs and Crony Capitalism in East Asia." *Comparative Politics* 35(4):439-59.
- Kesselman, Mark, et al. 2004. *Introduction to Comparative Politics*. 3rd ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Langohr, Vickie. 2004. "Too Much Civil Society, Too Little Politics: Egypt and Liberalizing Arab Regimes." *Comparative Politics* 36(2): 181-205.
- Lust-Okar, Ellen. 2004. "Divided They Rule: The Management and Manipulation of Political Opposition." *Comparative Politics* 36(2): 159-81.
- McCormick, John. 2004. *Comparative Politics in Transition*. 4th ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson.
- O'Neil, Patrick. 2003. *Essentials of Comparative Politics*. New York: W. W. Norton.
- Posusney, Marsha Pripstein. 2004. "Enduring Authoritarianism: Middle East Lessons for Comparative Theory." *Comparative Politics* 36(2): 127-39.
- Putnam, Robert D. 2002. *Democracies in Flux: The Evolution of Social Capital in Contemporary Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Remick, Elizabeth J. 2002. "The Significance of Variation in Local States: The Case of Twentieth Century China." *Comparative Politics* 34(4): 399-419.

- Seligson, Mitchell A. 2002. "The Renaissance of Political Culture or the Renaissance of the Ecological Fallacy?" *Comparative Politics* 34(3): 273-96.
- Shadlen, Kenneth C. 2002. "Orphaned by Democracy: Small Industry in Contemporary Mexico." *Comparative Politics* 35(1): 43-63.
- Shi, Tianjian. 2001. "Cultural Values and Political Trust: A Comparison of the People's Republic of China and Taiwan." *Comparative Politics* 33(4):401-20.
- Tessler, Mark. 2002. "Islam and Democracy in the Middle East: The Impact of Religious Orientations Toward Democracy in Four Arab Countries." *Comparative Politics* 34(3): 337-55.
- Thompson, Mark R. 2001. "To Shoot or Not to Shoot: Posttotalitarianism in China and Eastern Europe." *Comparative Politics* 34(1): 63-84.
- Wegren, Stephen K. 2002. "Democratization and Urban Bias in Postcommunist Russia." *Comparative Politics* 34(4): 457-77.
- Yashar, Deborah J. 2002. "Globalization and Collective Action." *Comparative Politics* 34(3): 355-76.

Course Description Essentials

The *AP Comparative Government and Politics Course Description* is available for free online through the AP Central Web site (apcentral.collegeboard.com), and printed copies may be purchased from the College Board Store (<http://store.collegeboard.com>). The Course Description is the official guide for the AP Comparative Government and Politics Exam.

You will see that the Course Description contains a narrative description and outline of each of the major topics covered in the AP Exam. The curriculum outline from the Course Description is shown below. Pay close attention to the "Percentage Goals of Exam" for the multiple-choice section. These goals tell you approximately what percent of the exam will come from a particular topic. Looking at the outline, you will quickly notice which topics carry more weight on the exam. This should guide your planning. The Course Description also includes sample multiple-choice and free-response questions.

The Course Description may change from year to year to reflect changes in the curriculum. Topics in the curriculum outline may be added, deleted, or revised. On the cover of each Course Description booklet, the years for which the content is appropriate are noted. Important announcements about course changes and other issues can be found on AP Central under "AP Update" on the members home page.

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.

Chapter 1

All percentages are +/- 5%.

<i>Content Area</i>	<i>Percentage Goals of Exam (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; 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, 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	
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
 - C. Media roles
 - D. Political participation (forms/modes/trends) including political violence
 - E. Social movements
 - F. Citizenship and social 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
 - D. Relationship between political and economic change
 - E. Globalization and fragmentation: interlinked economies, global culture, reactions against globalization, regionalism

Chapter 1

- VI. Public Policy 10%
 - 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 policy making and implementation
 - 1. Domestic
 - 2. International

(Refer to 2008, 2009 AP Comparative Government and Politics Course Description.)

Key Concepts and Skills

For many students, the most difficult part of this course is learning how to think like a political scientist. Even though students have been making comparisons, classifying information, and reading charts since elementary school, they do not have a command of the particular set of skills needed to fully grasp concepts associated with political science. Even students who have been successful in challenging history classes need to adjust to this different kind of study, where change is a constant theme and comparative concepts are the major focus. Teachers must teach students to think like political scientists, in the context of a comparative government and politics course.

When selecting key concepts and themes, remember that they should be rooted in the Course Description and outline. Course Descriptions, provided by the College Board for every AP course, contain the essentials for the course—one part in outline form and one part in descriptive form—and they will help you determine what, of this vast amount of material, is most important to cover in your course. It is important to look through the outline and pull out the key concepts associated with each topic (recognizing the overlap from topic to topic). For example, in the topic “Sovereignty, Authority, and Power,” key concepts include sovereignty, stability, legitimacy, regime, state, nation, government, globalization, democracy, democratization, authoritarianism, and political culture. Students will also need to conceptually analyze economic and belief systems. Since most students don’t really know what these terms mean, much less understand them, it is important to first define the terms and then to help students understand them at a more analytical level.

Comparison is, of course, the most important skill needed when studying comparative government and politics. Comparisons should be focused on concepts, but they might be country oriented, with questions such as “What role does civil society play in the political process in Great Britain compared with the role it plays in Iran?” Or comparisons might be more general, with questions such as “What effect does a proportional representation electoral system have on the representation of women and minorities in legislatures?” The country-to-country comparisons are the most difficult part of teaching the course in the first year, especially if you follow a country-by-country approach. Once you have gone through the curriculum in its entirety, it will be easier to make comparisons the following year. If you make a conscious effort to compare as often as possible, regardless of how you have chosen to organize the course, students will be able to understand the concepts more clearly and make comparisons when reviewing at the end.

Measurement

Sometimes making comparisons requires a metric. The ability to measure concepts and traits is a powerful and flexible tool for learning about comparative politics. For example, using gross domestic product (GDP) per capita as a measure of national wealth is one way for students to compare countries in relation to their level of economic development, and it also leads them to further analysis about the causes or consequences associated with a particular GDP per capita. Other useful tools for comparison may include life expectancy, labor force distribution, religious affiliation, and percentage of females in the national legislature.

The proper use of measures allows for greater objectivity and accuracy when drawing inferences about the world than does comparison based purely on personal judgment or opinion. To ensure that students do not misuse this potent tool when using measures to make comparisons, it is important for students to understand where the numbers or data originate, why or how a measure represents the concept or trait being measured, what the advantages and disadvantages of the measure are, and what alternative measures may exist. For example, students need to understand that one of the limitations of using GDP per capita is that it does not account for distribution of national wealth or for purchasing power. Furthermore, using it as a measure of a country's success implies a particular judgment about what "success" is. Students should understand this and consider alternatives, as well as discuss the implications of using them.

Beyond making explicit comparisons, using measures is a great way to make students think about theory and concepts. For instance, one must have a very clear measure of democracy in mind before attempting to create or evaluate an indicator of democracy (such as the one used by Freedom House). Since there are many facets to this term, definitions will vary depending on the elements of democracy that you select and prioritize. For example, some definitions focus on a normative approach: democracy is a common good, something that is universal in nature and can be applied anywhere. Other definitions are more procedural: democracy is a set of institutions and rules about decision making that are binding on a group. A third method of defining democracy is more substantive: democratizing is about tangible results (better standards of living or less inequality, for example). The criteria used to measure democracy may vary with the approach. Students will hone analytical skills by exploring, evaluating, justifying, and critiquing the many possibilities, as well as creating and justifying their own measurement. This exercise will undoubtedly stretch their minds because, although many students like to think in black and white, they need to understand that true analysis is not formulaic. (They would like to be told that you have democracy if you have X and Y, period, yet they will soon see this is much too simplistic.) Considering the measurement of democracy in this way will help students think more like political scientists, few of whom consider democracy in a dichotomous fashion anymore. Thus, the question has become more "How democratic is country X's regime?" and less "Is country X a democracy?" Examining concepts using these kinds of standards also helps to properly critique existing measures, in addition to helping students understand complexities such as China's "socialism with Chinese characters" or Putin's "managed democracy." This process works on a variety of concepts such as federalism, rule of law, legitimacy, and civil society.

Classification

Being able to classify, or label, is another important skill in any social science discipline. Establishing types or classes allows for comparison and requires students to know and use both conceptual and country-specific information. For instance, in comparative politics we often talk about regime types. To correctly classify a country into the proper regime type requires knowledge of the concept of regime type and its categories, and it requires specific knowledge about the country being classified. To classify, students must move from the specific to the general (discerning common traits of particular countries that may form categories of some classification scheme) and from the general to the specific (using general categories to classify particular countries).

Chapter 1

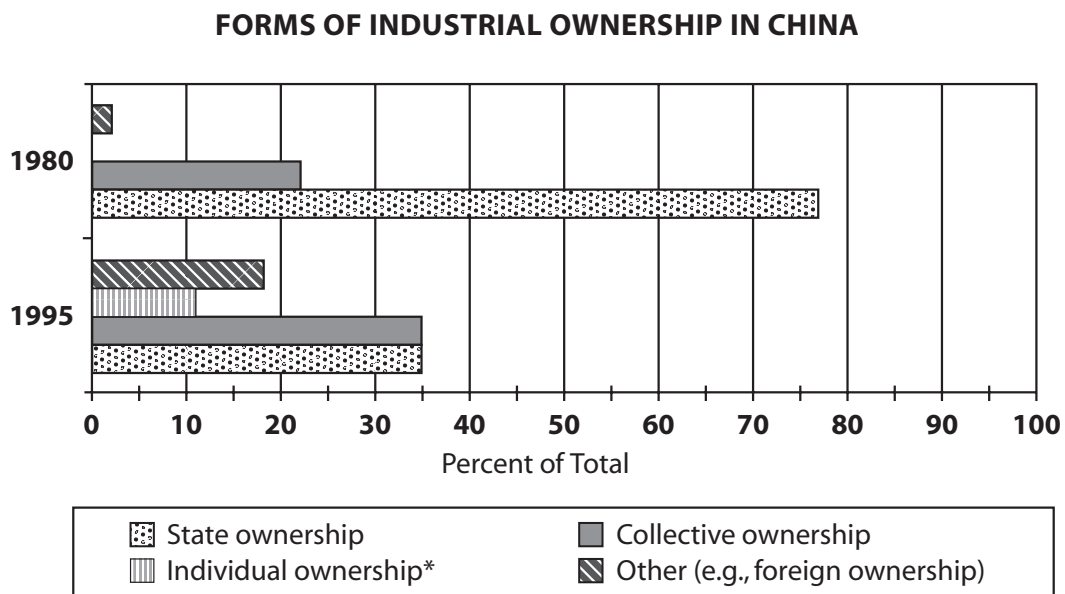
Classification promotes analysis. For example, students could consider questions such as “What are the attributes of a federal system that would allow us to categorize a country as such?” and “Does Mexico have any of these?” The discussion becomes particularly thought provoking when dealing with countries in transition or with countries that don’t meet traditional criteria. To continue with this point, what happens to our classification system when considering whether Russia is a democracy? Why do some political scientists refer to Russia as an “illiberal democracy?” Or, what happens when we try to classify Iran? Again, students need encouragement to be more at ease in situations without clear black-and-white answers.

Reading and Interpreting Data

The ability to interpret graphs and charts is one of the fundamental skills of a political scientist, and one that students are frequently called on to use in both parts of the AP Comparative Government and Politics Exam. As a first step, students need to develop the skill of looking at tables and graphs and figuring out what the numbers, lines, or bars mean. If they cannot read the graph, they will certainly not be able to interpret its implications.

Teachers should frequently use tables and graphs in class to help students develop the appropriate skills necessary for comprehension and interpretation. These particular skills may include knowing the units of measurement on a graph, knowing whether the data are presented in raw units or in percentages, knowing what the axes represent, and being able to determine the difference between a data point and a pattern or trend. Students should be able to answer the question “What story does the data in this chart or table tell?” To answer this question, students may have to use data to make comparisons across space, time, or, frequently, both.

For example, the 1999 AP Comparative Government and Politics Exam presented students with a bar chart like the one below, showing ownership patterns in China. Using this chart, students were expected to discern broad patterns and changes in ownership patterns in China in the past few years. One important note is that the data are presented in terms of percentage of ownership, which makes a difference when discussing patterns and trends. Student exploration of why the changes on the graph occurred can promote an excellent discussion of Chinese reform patterns and policy problems as both causes and cures. Similarly, teachers should ask students to go beyond the chart to discuss the consequences of the trends identified.



**Individual ownership did not exist in 1980.*

Finally, students should be aware of the limitations of data representation and analysis. Bias and graphical misrepresentation are two common problems students need to understand.

Learning Vocabulary

Since political science and the study of comparative politics have their own sets of vocabulary, helping students develop vocabulary comprehension skills is vital. Without these skills, students will not understand their readings, will not be able to classify and compare, and will not understand multiple-choice and free-response questions on the AP Exam. Furthermore, students will benefit from understanding the importance of learning the vocabulary associated with a particular field when they attend college. Many teachers have different ideas about teaching and assessing vocabulary, so it is important to develop methods that suit you and your students.

Marshalling Evidence/Documentation

Once students have learned how to analyze questions and have retrieved evidence from various sources, it is important for them to know how to use this evidence to document and support their statements. This skill is critical for success on the free-response section of the AP Exam and is a lifelong skill that will aid students no matter what career they ultimately pursue. Unfortunately, some students tend to simply assert conclusions with little concrete evidence to support their ideas; they often do this even when they have specific supports for their arguments but just don't see how important it is to let others know what is on their minds. Or, they have trouble marshalling evidence to respond to a specific question. Teachers need to provide students with many opportunities to use specific information and documentation in order to verify and justify their ideas about comparative politics, as well as to persuade others that their ideas are valid. This is how students demonstrate their understanding of concepts and put into practice the skills discussed above. For example, students might use information to support a particular interpretation of market socialism and its difficulties in China. They could address the question of salient facts that would be critical in exploring the effectiveness of these Chinese reforms, and then assess what information would be important in evaluating difficulties the Chinese government might face in the future. Finally, they could evaluate the statement that China has experienced “perestroika without glasnost,” supporting their assertion with specific examples.

Normative Versus Empirical Questions/Inductive and Deductive Reasoning

Students of almost every discipline often run into two very basic questions: “What is?” and “What should be?” These two questions illustrate the difference between empirical and normative assessments. An empirical approach describes and explains facts and factual relationships. A normative approach, however, deals with what one thinks *should be* or what *ought to be*. Normative evaluation typically deals with value statements such as “right” or “wrong,” or “good” or “bad.” Judgments in a purely empirical evaluation are free from value statements. Both approaches are useful in studying comparative politics, and it is a teacher's job to make students aware of these differences and, more importantly, to help them understand how both approaches can be useful in studying comparative politics. Often, the two approaches can be combined. It would be an empirical statement to say, “The United States has a higher level of economic development than does Nigeria.” We take a step further toward the normative realm when we state, “Nigeria would be better off with more foreign investment.”

Students should also be aware of the differences between inductive and deductive reasoning. Inductive reasoning uses observations from specific cases to establish generalizations, or theories, which would apply to a large number of cases. Using empirical examination, students can see the applicability of

Chapter 1

generalizations to particular cases. Deductive reasoning, on the other hand, starts from a set of logical premises and arrives at a conclusion (which may be a generalization) that can also be tested by empirical examination. In short, both induction and deduction are means of reasoning by which generalizations can be drawn, but they differ greatly in how these generalizations are obtained. One is obtained through observation (inductive) and the other through reasoning from stated propositions (deductive).

Students should be made aware of the advantages and disadvantages of these two techniques. Karl Popper's classic story about the inductive method comes to mind: What if you were to see nothing but white swans all your life? By induction, you would conclude that all swans were white. Popper observed, however, that no matter how many white swans you see, this is not a logical justification to conclude that all swans are white.

Critical Thinking and Analysis

Students need to address the world of comparative politics in a critical and analytical fashion. For example, they need to be able to discern between correlation (association) and causation in making reasoned conclusions. They should examine questions such as "Is the relationship between democracy and civil society a causal one or just an association? If causal, what are the causal links, and is there any evidence to support a theory about relationships?" Similarly, students can explore the differences between correlation and causation by examining the relationship between capitalism and democracy. Does capitalism support democracy? Subvert it? Does democracy support capitalism? Subvert it? The point is not to find the right answer, but, through discussion, to help students understand the subtleties in the differences between correlation and causation.

Asking students to evaluate and synthesize information will help them gain deeper understanding of the systemic aspect of a political system and make meaningful conceptual comparisons. They need to become accustomed to thinking in areas where, despite there being no right answer, one must be able to make pro or con arguments using specific examples. Similarly, they need to be able to appreciate alternative approaches in political systems, understanding that the United States is atypical in many respects. Only strong critical thinking and analytical skills will help students understand why those alternatives exist, and the implications of both the similarities and differences.

One of the best tools to help students develop the abstract reasoning skills necessary for this class is to have them create questions regarding various concepts, moving from the concrete to the abstract. In developing questions, it might help to look at the curriculum outline. For example, in the section "Citizens, Society, and the State," the concept of political participation is critical. Questions might include simple, defining questions such as "What is citizen participation?" and "What forms does it take?" Students might then move to questions such as "How can participation both support and undercut a regime? And how does participation differ in authoritarian regimes as opposed to democratic regimes? Why might an authoritarian regime want political participation?"

Students can use their growing knowledge of the different core countries to understand the many facets of a concept, as well as to see that political science rarely involves clear-cut answers. For example, students could discuss what political participation in Iran indicates about its regime type. As this demonstrates, using questions also helps students see links between concepts. Another example would be to ask students about the relationship between cleavages and political participation: "How do men and women participate in the political system, and what accounts for similarities and differences? What are the implications of your findings? What is similar and different in terms of participation when comparing Nigeria to the UK? Why?" Using this approach should also help students on the AP Exam because they will be more likely to gain those critical points on the free-response questions that ask students to link an explanation to a consequence.

Chapter 2

Advice for AP Comparative Government and Politics Teachers

In this chapter, Sarah Fisher provides her perspective on AP Comparative Government and Politics.

This section is organized around questions I had when I first began teaching AP Comparative Government and Politics and the issues that come up most often in workshops. Before addressing these, however, my overall advice is to keep in mind why this is such a great course to teach. Not only is the material fascinating for the teacher, but it is also a course that students like and find relevant. In our increasingly interdependent world, it is easy to make the argument that whether you are an engineer or a political scientist, or run a catering business, or are old enough to fight a war, or are interested in traveling, you will benefit from understanding other political systems. Plus, the study of comparative government raises issues students love to consider: What is power? Who should have it? How should it be limited? What is equality? Freedom? Order? Justice? How should each be ensured? What are the costs of ensuring them? What is the most important thing in life? Does everybody have a right to it? For most students, this is one of the few times they will turn their attention to the world and look at how others do things. Most are amazed to find that the United States is atypical in many political aspects, and are fascinated to learn about alternatives. Although the course is probably one of the most analytical they will take, they enjoy it—it makes them feel like adults, and it is much more captivating than memorizing facts. When you encounter challenges in teaching the course, remember that these students are learning more about their world than they ever have before and that you are working with a great group of individuals from whom you will learn as well. You may make mistakes—we all do—but you can fix them. Overall, your students will greatly benefit from and enjoy your class.

Where do I start?

You must begin by learning for yourself what this AP Comparative Government and Politics course is all about. First, read the materials available through the College Board, focusing on this guide and the Course Description. Both contain the core of what should be studied in the course. They are the most critical pieces of information you have, and you should consult them frequently in planning your curriculum. There is a lot of material to cover, and an organized approach is critical to your (and your students') success.

Second, find out about AP workshops and summer institutes by contacting your College Board regional office (see inside back cover). Try to attend a one-day workshop. There, you will learn about the content of the course and about approaches to organizing and teaching it. You will also receive a copy of a released exam and sample responses to the free-response questions and learn how they were scored.

Chapter 2

One of the greatest benefits is meeting other teachers in your situation and discussing with them the challenges and rewards of teaching this course. Then, over the summer, try to enroll in a weeklong summer institute where you will have even more opportunity to learn about the course and the exam. Typically, these institutes cover content and exam materials, share teaching and assessment strategies, and discuss more thoroughly the scoring of the free-response questions. Participants commonly leave with a wealth of ideas, free materials, assessments, and enthusiasm for the course. For more information on workshops and summer institutes, see the “Professional Development” section in chapter 5.

Third, explore the AP Comparative Government and Politics Course Home Page at AP Central (apcentral.collegeboard.com/govpolcomp)—you will find an abundance of valuable material. One of the most helpful sections is the collection of articles on contemporary world politics (for example, articles on leadership transition in China; the concept of Russia as an illiberal democracy; and the status and ramifications of the enlarging European Union). Particularly useful are the full-length briefing papers that either analyze key features of the political systems of some of the countries we study or examine in greater detail concepts such as democratization and globalization (see chapter 5, “Resources,” for a list of these briefing papers). You will also find book reviews that should help you make purchasing decisions. The collection of free-response questions, scoring guidelines, and sample responses with commentary from the past few years is very handy for helping students understand what will be required of them. Remember, you can also see sample free-response and multiple-choice questions in the Course Description booklet.

Finally, while at AP Central, sign up for the AP Government and Politics Electronic Discussion Group (EDG). You do this through a link from the Course Home Page. This allows you to communicate via e-mail with other teachers of AP Government and Politics (both United States and Comparative). I have received some of my best teaching tips from this group and find the discussion on topics such as the exam, what people do after the test, and summer assignments very useful.

Once you have an idea about what the course entails, you need to work with your school to establish the course. If your school already has AP courses, there should be a person designated as the AP Coordinator with whom you can work. After you familiarize yourself with the course through the steps above, read chapter 3, Course Organization, for suggestions on different ways to organize it.

How do I teach a college course in a high school setting?

The answer to this question depends on you, your students, your school climate, and your school district/state. On the one hand, you must let students know that you have college-level expectations (for homework, assessment, and class conduct) and that they should not take this class if they are unwilling (or unable) to meet them—they certainly won’t be successful on the AP Exam otherwise. Students need to understand at the outset that you will demand a great deal of homework reading time and that they must be strong and analytical readers. The upside is that students get to take an introductory, college-level course in a more intimate setting with greater opportunity for individual attention from the teacher. You can help them learn how to study and behave as if they were in college by assigning a college course workload, although you may have to spend more time teaching students how to read a textbook and making sure they actually do so by giving daily quizzes; teaching vocabulary strategies and then giving vocabulary tests; and teaching other skills more explicitly (see “Key Concepts and Skills” in chapter 1).

Both AP Vertical Teams® and Pre-AP professional development workshops developed by the College Board offer teachers excellent materials and strategies to help students learn general social studies concepts and skills. Working with other social studies teachers to help students build on skills throughout their high school years is a rewarding experience that will pay off for both you and your students. The more you can integrate your course with other AP courses, the more your students will benefit. For example, some

Advice for AP Comparative Government and Politics Teachers

teachers find that students who have taken AP World History have a better understanding of the historical setting for the countries discussed in AP Comparative Government and Politics. My students who also take AP European History have told me that some topics of the courses overlap. In light of this, I have shared and developed materials with the AP European History teacher on political parties in the United Kingdom after World War II and with the AP World History teacher on the Iranian Revolution and the book *Wild Swan* (see “Resources” in chapter 5). Making connections to other courses enhances classroom discussions and also encourages students to see how the skills and knowledge they acquire in high school will help them in their college studies.

Another aspect of teaching a college-level course in a high school setting that requires some consideration is your relationship with your fellow teachers. Non-AP teachers might say that you have the “easy classes” and the “best kids,” leaving them with the “most difficult” students to teach. Although I do not agree that AP classes are easier to teach, I do recognize that my students’ sometimes exceptional skills or knowledge can be attributed to the efforts of *all their teachers*, AP and otherwise. Letting other teachers know how their lessons help students in your AP class is one way to foster a more positive relationship.

Maintaining good relations with other teachers will help you build your program, as other teachers are critical in helping to identify students who should take an AP class. Some students will sign up for AP classes regardless of teachers’ efforts, but many others will enroll if a teacher encourages them to do so. Almost all of the students who have made the greatest gains in my AP classes are the ones who were encouraged by another teacher to take the class, even though they had never taken an AP class before.

Teaching Concepts to Students in a College Comparative Government Class

I employ the active learning method to teach concepts to students in introductory comparative politics. To ground each concept, I use examples of countries. For instance, when discussing electoral systems, first-past-the-post, single-member districts and proportional representation, I present the cases of Great Britain and Israel. Great Britain is an example of the essentially two-party political system, which typifies its first-past-the-post system; whereas Israel, with a threshold of 1.5 percent of the popular vote and its proportional representation system, has 13 parties currently holding seats in the Knesset. This helps students not only to understand the mechanisms of the different electoral systems but also the implications of using each type. When discussing the concepts of democracy and authoritarianism, I put a continuum on the board and have students place countries such as the United States, Great Britain, Norway, Russia, Mexico, South Korea, China, and North Korea. This helps them see that there is no one pure regime type either in terms of democracy or authoritarianism, rather the terms are relative. I then instruct students to think of additional examples to share during the next class.

I also use articles to teach concepts. The *New York Times* and the *Economist* provide current real-world examples. I ask students to take turns reading articles and leading discussions on the concepts. They also write essays analyzing the politics in a particular article. This assignment allows students to go beyond definitions and apply their knowledge, and it allows them to examine how politics actually plays out in the real world, focusing specifically on the issue of power.

This approach could work for other concepts such as institutional design or political culture, especially when a news agency is reporting on an election or some other major political event. To explore the concept of development, we first examine various measures including gross domestic product (GDP) and population, and the United Nations Human Development Index, which includes quality-of-life indicators such as educational attainment and real-purchasing power. As an assignment, the students choose an academic journal article that focuses on a country, and they categorize the country (e.g., First, Second, or Third World, or Core, Semi-Periphery, Periphery,) based only on the evidence in the article. This assignment has been the most difficult for students, but once they are finished, as a whole, they often feel a sense of accomplishment that they were able to read and analyze an academic journal article.

—Liz Frombgen, Ph.D., Hastings College,
Hastings, Nebraska

How should I ensure that students are prepared to take my class?

At my school we make it clear that taking AP classes requires a great deal of work and time, and that any student willing to take on that challenge can and should. Because the AP Comparative Government and Politics course focuses so much on concepts, students will need to develop abstract reasoning skills; because it covers a great deal of new material, they must be strong readers, able to handle the kind of texts assigned in a college-level political science class. If students understand this, other barriers should not prevent them from taking the course.

Karen Coston's experience with a student in the first AP Comparative Government and Politics class she ever taught supports this approach. Karen was not sure about her school's AP policy and hesitated over admitting one student who had a low GPA, had a grade hovering between a C and a D in his current history class, and could not get a good recommendation from his current history teacher. Indeed, being admitted into the AP class, on every test he took until March he scored what Karen figures was the AP Exam equivalent of a 2. (As you will learn in chapter 4, students who take the AP Exam in May receive a grade from 1 to 5. Some colleges require a 3 for credit, others a 4 or 5.) However, he came to class regularly, and something just clicked for him about a month before the AP Exam. He received a grade of 4 on both the AP United States Government and Politics and Comparative Government and Politics Exams. He was proud and so was Karen. We would never want to deny such a student the chance to try.

Advice for Learning: A Student's Perspective

Students need to learn how to organize their learning. Suggest that students make a giant outline in their head (and on paper). They should start with umbrella concepts and then break them down into more detailed ideas. For example, rather than trying to memorize every piece of legislation that Tony Blair has supported in the last 10 years, remember that Tony Blair is Third Way. Under the umbrella of Third Way are ideas such as greater privatization. Now fill this in with a couple key examples such as the increase in college tuition. This way students know the concepts, have some specific examples, and can make inferences about what they *don't* know.

—Kelsey Eyer, Class of 2004, Central Kitsap High School, Silverdale, Washington

What occurs in a typical day?

One of the first questions about teaching this course—"What am I going to do each day?"—is purely practical. What follows is my description of a typical day, so that you have an example of how one classroom works. Of course, your students, your school scheduling, and your own strengths will ultimately determine what your day entails.

Since I assign nightly homework readings, I start each day with a five-question quiz. Every year at the end of the course, I ask my students what I should keep and what I should jettison, and this is one of the things they consistently say "keep" because it helps them focus and gives them an immediate incentive to do the reading. It also gives me a few minutes at the beginning of the period to take attendance, pull out materials, and remind myself that this is not the class I just finished teaching the period before! I am strict about the time—four minutes and no more. Then the students correct their own quizzes using red pens that they know to grab at the beginning of the period. They know when they are correcting they may not have anything on their desk but the quiz and the red pen, which helps minimize cheating. I encourage them to write in the correct answer if they answered a question incorrectly.

Advice for AP Comparative Government and Politics Teachers

For each quiz, I write questions that cover some quick point I want to remember to make; clearly have a right and wrong answer (so we do not spend time discussing whether their answer was correct); and confirm that the assignment was read. To encourage students to pay attention to current events, I also add an extra credit question from the day's news. To save time, I have them pass around a file box and file their own quizzes, which I then record in weekly batches and return to students to use to study for tests. The whole process of quiz-taking and correcting takes just five to seven minutes.

For the remainder of the period, I try to do a variety of activities to help illustrate some part of the Course Description within the context of the particular country we are studying. While lecturing is a good way to cover a lot of material, I find it's best to limit it to only part of the period—sometimes I lecture for an entire period, but not often. Even then, my lectures include ample time for class discussion. Other activities I have found helpful include:

- **Gathering graphs and statistics (from Web sites or other textbooks) and having the students interpret them, compare them to data from other countries, and/or explain their ramifications.** For example, in examining a graph showing the percentage of workers in agriculture in different countries, I might ask: What do you notice about the correlation between types of countries and percentages? What might that mean for rates of participation? What will it mean for policy choices? How will globalization impact countries differently depending on their rates? As another example, I might give students a chart showing seats gained by political parties in the Duma in the last four elections. I would then ask them to compare the seats a party gained through party lists with those they gained in the single-member districts. What explains the difference? I might have them observe which parties have contested all four elections and ask them what typifies the Russian party system and why? What are the ramifications of this party system on the separation of powers? Sometimes I have students interpret and answer the questions in small groups and present their findings to the class; sometimes we do the exercise as a class discussion. Sometimes I have students find the information themselves and present their findings (see chapter 5 for good Web sites), though more often I provide the charts/graphs.
- **Asking students to draw charts of the relationship between the electorate and the various institutions in Iran, for example, and/or the power relationship between the institutions.** The variety of illustrations the students create is interesting and provokes great discussion. Through this exercise, we can cover concepts such as democracy, theocracy, legitimacy, independent courts, separation of powers, citizen participation, and cleavages, as well as make comparisons to other countries. Another tactic is to have students draw a continuum showing the strength of civil society, or separation versus fusion of power, or involvement of the military in politics in the United States and the six countries we have studied (or whatever we are up to at that point). Exactly where they place the countries is not as important as their justification for the placement, which comes out in discussion.
- **Reading and discussing articles on the particular country we are studying.** For example, an article from the *New York Times* describes a case in which someone driving a BMW hit an onion cart in China, killing a woman. The incident would have gone largely unnoticed but for the Internet, where “200,000 messages buzzed with indignation.” The article led to a class discussion of many concepts. How does it illustrate the growing gap between the rich and the poor? Why is the gap growing? Where is it growing the most? What is the consequence for the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)? How have President Hu and other leaders responded to this gap? What is the impact of the Internet, and how has the CCP tried to deal with it? What does this mean for civil society? How has the CCP dealt with other dissidents like Falun Gong or the Muslims in Southwest China? What will the resolution of the case reveal about the rule of law in China? About civil society in China? What would be different about this article if it were set in the United States? In Iran? Students consistently tell me that these current event articles help them the most on the free-response questions.

Chapter 2

- **Presenting content-based rubrics for past free-response questions or for ones you have written.** If you attend a workshop, you will probably receive a bank of past questions. You can also find free-response questions from the past few years on the AP Comparative Government and Politics Course Home Page at AP Central. I divide students into groups and give them past questions covering as many countries as we have studied so far. They must then anticipate the rubric (i.e., two points for part (a) distributed as follows . . .) and prepare an outline for an acceptable response. I usually have students present their rubrics to the class for discussion.
- **Having students research and present part of a chart that is composed of different elements of the Course Description as columns and the different countries as rows.** I have students fill in this chart as we go through the course, and sometimes I assign a section to each student, who then researches and presents it, with other students filling in the relevant parts of their charts.
- **Requiring students to keep track of any connections they make between what we study in class and things they encounter in other classes or outside of school.** Sources may include movies (*Star Wars* has been an interesting source for conceptual connections), books, places of worship, the news, conversations with parents (parents appreciate the incentive for conversation), political cartoons, computer games, and so on. We also shout “connection” in class when someone makes an observation connecting countries, concepts, or information from other classes. I encourage them to look for conceptual connections, not just facts about a country we are studying. My objective is for students to use their brains more actively and analytically in all areas of their lives. They must turn in five “connections” for each unit, identifying the concept (and country, if applicable), describing the source for their connection (explaining where they heard, saw, or read their example, and what it is in brief detail), AND explaining the connection (why/how this is an example of the concept).
- **Playing “The Game,” which my students love.** Using the topics from the Course Description (Sovereignty, Authority, and Power; Political Institutions; Citizen, Society, and the State, etc.), I write questions illustrating each topic with examples from individual countries, vocabulary from that unit, or more general ideas. Students work in groups of four or five, and each group has a whiteboard and a pen. I go around the room and ask each group to identify a topic, then I ask a question from that topic that all groups must answer. Each group writes its answer on their whiteboard, and then I say, “5, 4, 3, 2, 1—boards up.” I record each group’s score and move on to the next group, asking which unit they want. Obviously, as we progress through the course we have more country-specific content to choose from. By the end of the course, the game serves as a useful review. It also acts as a very handy emergency substitute plan because the students can run it themselves.

Studying Current Events: A Student’s Perspective

One of the best tools that helped me capture the required material was the daily assignment of current events in the form of newspaper articles. This really brought things up to date, and it was more interesting than reading a textbook but still covered essential material that applied to the course. Sometimes one article can contain many important concepts. Articles also provide the specific examples needed when answering a free-response question.

Daily quizzes compelled me to read the textbook every night as a part of the daily homework, which is essential. While correcting and going over the quiz, points are brought up that might not have caught the reader’s eye otherwise. They are a good way to start discussions as well.

—Leah Perry, Class of 2004, Central Kitsap High School,
Silverdale, Washington

How should I interact with parents?

It is not unusual for parents or guardians to have concerns about their child taking an AP course. They may wonder about the workload, reading level, or vocabulary; they may be worried about the greater difficulty level and its effect on their child's grades; or they may have concerns about the textbook (some content or pictures that are common at the college level are atypical at the high school level). You will probably find that your classroom is fuller at the open house for your AP classes than it is for your other classes.

Take this as the advantage it is and make sure parents know that you welcome their questions and involvement. Propose a means of communication that is most comfortable and convenient for you. For example, you may want to provide your e-mail address—at the open house or in your syllabus—so you can respond with appropriate materials at your convenience. Encouraging parental contact is an excellent proactive strategy. Most importantly, willingness to work with students' parents sends the message that the AP experience is a team effort. After all, research shows that students are more successful in school when their parents are involved. Parental participation really benefits everyone.

You can explain to parents at the open house (or in a letter sent home) how they can play an active role in their child's education. Encourage them to view homework assignments posted on your Web site or in a handout. Also, consider offering suggestions to parents on how to help their child study for tests. For example, my "connections" assignment is a great way for parents to be involved because a connection can be any well-described conversation students have with parents, grandparents, or siblings about issues covered in AP Comparative Government and Politics. Finally, parents can be an incredible classroom resource—they may have traveled to one of the countries you are studying, or perhaps they will give you copies of relevant magazines. The bottom line is that the relationship you are likely to have with your students' parents really is an asset that will enrich your class.

What are some challenges I might face?

Teaching an AP course for the first time can seem like a daunting task even for experienced teachers. Below, I address some of the most common questions and concerns of new AP teachers and offer suggestions for handling specific challenges you may face.

You look at everything you have to cover and realize that you should also probably include some current news and you don't see how you can do it all! Or you realize that you only have two days left for this unit and you haven't covered X, Y, and Z in class.

First, remember we are all in that same boat—we all have a lot of material to cover. Second, just think about everything your students *will* know as a result of taking your course—that is much more important than fretting over what you may not address. Third, stick to your schedule, no matter what. Move on to your next unit when you planned to do so, regardless of what you haven't covered. Fourth, go back to the Course Description, as it will help you pick and choose what to let go. Finally, know that you simply can't get to everything in this course during class time. This last piece of advice was the most useful to me as a new teacher. If the students read everything you have assigned them and you've assigned work following the topics in the Course Description, they will have covered everything necessary for the AP Exam. Doing the reading is their responsibility; your responsibility is to teach them analytical skills, and to help them understand concepts using particular examples. Students who come to your class regularly and who have read all you have assigned them will do fine on the AP Exam and, even more importantly, will have learned a great deal. It is very important for students to understand that you will not generally go over their homework reading other than to answer any questions. This is part of the college-level aspect of this

Chapter 2

course, something students, accustomed to having their teachers review in class what they were expected to do as homework, must adjust to. They also should understand that attending class is not a substitute for doing homework.

You give your students their first test and the class average is 65 percent.

This concern has come up more than once on the EDG. I panicked and declared myself unfit to teach the first time this happened to me. I then looked at the equivalent of Table 4.4 in the *1999 AP Comparative Government and Politics Released Exam*. It shows the probabilities that a student would receive a particular grade on the 1999 AP Exam, given that student's particular score on the multiple-choice section. You can see that a student scoring somewhere between 45 and 60 had about a 75 percent probability of achieving a 5. So I adjusted the grading scale for my tests (which have 55 items to parallel the current AP Exam format) as follows:

49–55 = A	32–35 = C+
45–48 = A–	29–31 = C
41–44 = B+	27–28 = C–
38–40 = B	any less is a D
36–37 = B–	

You don't have to use this grading scale, but the point is that the AP Exam is difficult, as are your tests, especially if you use some of the questions from past AP Exams. It is okay to give your students a break on grades; they are still being challenged and your standards are still high. Students who receive an A or B on these tests, using this scale, most often receive a 4 or a 5 on the AP Exam, and so on down the line.

The smartest student in the school asks you yet another question for which you don't have an answer.

You just have to become comfortable saying, "That is a fascinating question, and I'll get back to you." (Or even better, "you get back to me.") It is important and helpful for students to see that even you need to study for this class—you can't be expected to remember it all. I make a point of letting them know that I need to reread and review every year because there is no way I can remember all of the material. In fact, when students complain about the workload, I tell them that I spend as much time preparing to teach the course as they do studying!

A fascinating current events topic has just distracted your class for two days, and it has nothing to do with the AP Exam.

Some events—elections, war, 9/11—necessitate taking class time away from the syllabus. In the scheme of things, would you rather have your students remember your discussion of these events or would you rather have covered one more thing that *might* be on the AP Exam? Grounding these discussions in the larger needs and interests of the course content will ensure that your diversion won't be wasted time.

You realize that everything you have always taught your students about writing essays looks irrelevant in your AP class because someone at a workshop told you "they even accept bulleted answers."

This is another topic that has appeared more than once on the EDG. It is true: some of the free-response questions can be answered without a thesis and in bulleted format. One helpful piece of advice I received from a workshop was to stop thinking of these questions as "essays" and start referring to them as free-response questions. This makes the point that the skills being tested are less how to write a formal essay and more how to analyze a question and figure out exactly what it is asking, and then answer the question directly, using specific details as support. (I tell my students "AP" means "Address the Prompt—

Advice for AP Comparative Government and Politics Teachers

All Parts.”) Understanding what is being asked of you and responding with specific evidence is a very useful skill. It is also an effective way to test students’ knowledge of content. It does look very different from the requirements of an essay in a history class such as AP World History. It does *not* mean that you are barred from requiring essays in your class, or that a thesis is never necessary: students just need to learn to figure out what is being asked of them, and in what form they should answer.

You realize this course has far less “ready-made” material than any other AP social studies course.

It’s true. AP Comparative Government and Politics has a paucity of test review books, premade teacher lesson plans, and available workshops when compared with other social studies courses. You have taken on a challenge—consider yourself among the elite. There are far fewer numbers of students and teachers taking on AP Comparative Government and Politics than other social studies courses. You will need to be more creative on your own, but you and your students will benefit from your commitment. Furthermore, as the numbers have grown for this course (as they have over the last few years), more materials have become available. The College Board has provided you with a wealth of helpful information in this Teacher’s Guide, the Course Description, and at AP Central. And when it comes to the most useful materials, namely, released exams, the scoring guidelines, and sample responses for the free-response questions, AP Comparative Government and Politics is on par with other AP subjects.

Students come back from the AP Exam and say there was something on the multiple-choice section that they weren’t familiar with or an entire question in the free-response section was on something that had been only covered in two paragraphs in their textbook.

This has happened more than once. In fact, it happened during my first year teaching this class. The AP Coordinator assured me that if that was true for my students, it was bound to be true for others and it would all figure into the final scoring. That is, that I needn’t worry (nor should my students). Indeed, my students’ scores did not seem to suffer. Remember, it is their responsibility to read the text. If it is in the text (and I have never seen a question that wasn’t at least given some coverage in all the standard texts), you have done your part.

Current Events Project

The purpose of this assignment is to ensure that students are conversant in current issues facing the core countries. Students collect and read current, in-depth news articles that discuss policy, political events, policy formulation, or political action in regard to some of the topics listed below. Several weeks before the end of each marking period, students submit the articles, a 35-question multiple-choice test, and an essay question that will be taken by a classmate as an open-notebook test or quiz. The students must make the questions challenging without being impossible, and the questions must compel the test-takers to read the articles in order to find the answers. The essay question should require a response of at least three paragraphs. After several days, the completed tests are then returned to the original students, “graded,” and then submitted to the teacher for further evaluation. At the beginning of the course, students make a preference list of three countries, and the teacher assigns the countries* as evenly as possible. Students should collect at least one article a week, and they should exchange projects with a student who does not have the same country.

Possible Topics: Economic Performance; Education; Health Care; Poverty; Civil Liberties, Rights, and Freedoms; Environment; Population and Migration; Economic Development; Budgetary Matters; Taxes; Government Spending; Military Conflicts and Spending; Interest Group Activity; Foreign Policy; Elections; Court Cases; Welfare; Ethnic Relations; Parliamentary Proceedings; Major Political Leaders; Political Parties

*Instead of country assignments, students could be assigned concepts (e.g., power, legitimacy, democratization, accountability, political culture, nationality, citizenship, constitutionalism) to research from the core countries.

—James Wehrli, Ph.D., Ravenscroft School,
Raleigh, North Carolina

Chapter 3

Course Organization

In this chapter, Karen Coston shares her experience in course organization.

Syllabus Development

In looking at various course syllabi, you may be struck by two seemingly contradictory observations: (a) the syllabi look very similar and (b) there are wide differences among them! Borrowing a syllabus from another teacher is an easy temptation for a first-time AP teacher. It is true that adopting the same general time frames will give you an indication of where you ought to be at any particular time in the school year and also helps indicate the weight of various subjects. However, each teacher must consider unique factors and, at the very least, modify a syllabus to meet the singular needs of students and the particular situations in their own high school. Teachers will need to consider several important factors that are outlined below.

Considerations Before You Begin the Construction of Your Syllabus

How many students will be taking your course? You must modify your expectations of student work if you have a lot of students and/or several class sections. The number of students you will teach may vary considerably from year to year. I have had schedules, for example, that require teaching five sections of students, which might include AP United States History, a law seminar, a government and economics section, as well as both AP United States and Comparative Government and Politics. In another year I might have two very large sections of AP United States History and three sections of AP Comparative Government and Politics. You could run yourself ragged trying to do all the things you had wished to do or would have been able to do with a lesser class load. I have had to learn to modify my course requirements as my schedule shifts, perhaps using assignments that are easier to grade and relying on rubrics for essay grading.

Also consider how well prepared your students are when they enter your classroom. What grade level are they? Have they had experience with AP courses before? These are key factors that vary from school to school and from year to year. If students have had no experience with AP courses, you will have to modify the instruction to include more test-taking strategies to help them prepare for free-response questions; to teach interpretation of charts and graphs; and perhaps to review multiple-choice test-taking strategies. These pedagogical and content concerns will need to be built into the framework of your syllabus. For example, when working with charts and graphs, students may appear to have little understanding of what a trend or a pattern is. When you encounter such a group of students, you must reorganize yourself and spend more class time focused on data and its interpretation. Assess your students' background and skills before you set your syllabus in stone.

How much time do you have to teach this course? Will the winter months have delays because of weather conditions? What happens if you miss a week or two because of illness? The syllabus must be

flexible enough to allow for all kinds of contingencies. Obviously, if you are given a whole school year to teach AP Comparative Government and Politics, you have much more leeway and, thus, considerable opportunities to alter the syllabus as you go along. A semester-long course, however, presents other difficulties; you must be prepared to think concretely about the whole course. And, of course, it is very different planning for a block schedule than for a yearlong “traditional” schedule.

Consider whether you will opt for a review session immediately before the AP Exam. This will require a week or two of class time, which is not easy to accommodate but which I nonetheless find invaluable. It seems to allow students to pull together disparate threads of the course and think clearly about broad issues. Since many of us also teach a semester of AP United States Government and Politics, ending in December, we also need the review to refresh and remind students about United States Government and Politics. Of course, review should be ongoing throughout the year. When discussing the importance of a party structure in Mexico, for example, you could also review the same concept as it applies to the United States. If you opt for a review week, try to have written work that you can evaluate. Seniors in particular tend to be rather distracted during May; if you have no evaluative device, you may be the only person reviewing material!

The nature of your materials is also of some importance in constructing a syllabus. You will find that providing students with a variety of reading materials is an excellent idea, though new AP teachers may find it difficult to decide how to utilize them. I suggest that you provide class time for response to articles, or have students write responses to assigned reading. The use of supplemental materials is especially important if, like many AP teachers, you have to rely on textbooks that are out of date. Current information is simply invaluable. Even as simple a source as an almanac may add a great deal to your ease in the classroom and to your students’ understandings of specific systems. Students should also be encouraged to supplement the textbook material with their own findings.

A syllabus needs to reflect the teacher’s level of confidence. A first-year AP teacher should begin with a more streamlined agenda than should an experienced teacher. A syllabus, like the course itself, is a growing and evolving instrument.

Time and the Syllabus

A major concern with any new course is simply getting through the curriculum. This is especially true with a one-semester course that has a rich body of content to consider. I advise first-year teachers to make the curriculum fit their individual calendars. At first, you will simply weight coverage time by the importance of content. Here, the Course Description is useful because it gives you approximate weights for various components of the course. If you have, say, 16 weeks of class time, then each week should reflect about 6 percent of the course work. You need to allow for emergencies and student evaluations.

Following a syllabus can be problematic. What you will discover is that, at least for the first year or so, you will need to adhere fairly strictly to the time schedule you have made; otherwise you’ll never finish. If you find yourself not finishing topics, have the students read or do independent projects to catch up and save on valuable class time. If you deviate too much from your syllabus, you’ll find that it’s May and you’ve taught just half a course.

Prioritizing will be the key to your success. I suggest that you front-load your course by making sure the important topics are covered first. For example, in the past I often made sure to start my course with a section on development because I knew that there would always be free-response questions on a developing country. Likewise, be sure that your students are well grounded in the concepts they will need to know by beginning your course with those concepts.

Chapter 3

As you become more comfortable with your course, you can amend the syllabus to reflect what you've discovered about how long you need to teach certain topics. By the time you've finished two or three years of instruction, you'll know which topics take longer and require more attention from your students. You will also discover that certain topics are particularly interesting to you and that you enjoy spending more time on them. The only caveat is that you finish the entire course by May.

Approaching the Content

There are generally two different planning strategies for covering what the course requires. In the first, the course's organizational structure is based on the countries. In the second, concepts serve as the core, and the country specifics are melded into the conceptual framework. There are advantages (and disadvantages) to each type of organizational strategy.

High school students typically have very little knowledge about the political makeup of any of the countries discussed in this course. They may have some vague understanding that the United States borrowed structural components from the United Kingdom's government or that the People's Republic of China is undergoing some interesting changes. Because of this *tabula rasa*, country-by-country organizational schemes do seem simpler and more understandable for high school students. Using such a scheme, teachers can provide first a general, but brief, historical overview of a particular system as an introductory unit, followed by country-specific instruction and the concrete data that fit with each of the systems. A brief introductory section could serve as a way of initiating the important concepts of the course, such as participation, recruitment of elites, or globalization. As each new system is introduced, these concepts should be applied to the country-specific data.

A major drawback of this approach is that sometimes students and teachers get bogged down with details and end up with minimal understanding of the broader concepts important in this restructured course. Students may lose focus, and learning can become disorganized. They are left with facts flying about their heads like gnats, with no way to make sense of them.

An alternative approach, then, is to construct your syllabus around the six major organizational sections of the course. With this organizational format, students concentrate, for example, on political cleavages and explore how cleavages affect the potential structure, participation, or socialization of the political system. Each specific system, woven into the general framework, is used to emphasize, delineate, and illustrate the broad concepts that give comparative politics its meaning. Given the emphasis of the AP Comparative Government and Politics curriculum, teachers generally prefer the approach of organizing most of their lessons around concepts.

The downside that can be encountered with such an approach, however, is that students have a difficult time with broad concepts without specific knowledge of how they apply in the real world. They also can end up confused about the specifics in each of the explored countries and lack a clear, overall picture of the six systems.

There is no right answer to this dilemma. Teachers need to explore a variety of organizational strategies and decide which is most fruitful for their students. Start out with the strategy you can best handle. It may depend on the text you select—some are organized by concepts, some by countries—or you can attempt a hybrid.

Evaluation

Unless you have a unique school system, you must provide grades and evaluations for your students. AP teachers have one obvious goal: to help their students score well on the AP Exam given each spring.

To do well, students must be familiar with the exam's format and structure, and your job is to provide them with practice. The 2006 AP Comparative Government and Politics Exam will be released by the College Board in 2007. This will reflect the focus of the current course and provide excellent practice for your students. Have students take the multiple-choice exam using the included scannable answer sheet, and set time limits.

In terms of free-response questions, many of the past exams have questions that also can be used in a conceptual course structure. Have students answer free-response questions as you finish each unit of study, whether that unit focuses on a specific country study or on a specific concept. Provide the students with some questions that utilize a stimulus (a graph or map or chart of some sort). These are often used on the exam, and students need to be able to analyze and respond to them quickly.

If you are interested in developing students' thesis-writing skills, you will have to move beyond the AP Exam itself because it does not particularly require essay-writing abilities. Perhaps you or your students are interested in some particular concept, or perhaps students don't quite grasp a concept that is important to the course. Assign a term paper or position paper that requires research, writing skills, and the development and support of a thesis statement. Some of the past AP Exam questions, which required the writing of an essay, could be given to students for a longer, more formal writing assignment.

Homework, vital for this course, will help your students understand concepts with greater breadth and depth. You might begin collecting interesting papers, current event articles, or chapters in books and use these as reading/homework assignments. There are also comparative politics readers that you could consider. Students should be encouraged to write one- to two-page reaction papers. This is a great way to have them do the reading and to expand on your class lessons. Just remember that you'll have to grade them!

There are a few resources that give suggestions for daily homework and review strategies. It might be useful for you to develop worksheets that require students to analyze or use data, or that require specific information about the six core countries. Time for these, of course, must be built into your syllabus. Don't overburden students with too much new content and homework simultaneously.

Example of the Construction of a One-Semester Course Syllabus (16 Weeks of Instruction, Plus Review Week)

Here is a simplified version of how you might start out constructing your own AP Comparative Government and Politics syllabus. First, simply allocate your time. Determine when you have midterms, spring break, the senior trip, and the like, then approximate the time you need for each section. Consider these bare bones of a syllabus:

- I. Introduction to Comparative Politics (3 weeks)
- II. Democracies (3 weeks)
Case Studies: The United Kingdom, the European Union
- III. Developing Democracies (4 weeks)
Case Studies: Mexico, Nigeria, Russia
- IV. States in Transition (4 weeks)
Case Studies: Iran, People's Republic of China
- V. Conclusion—Overview (2 weeks)

Chapter 3

Students should be able to read 50 pages of text per week. You may need to modify this expectation if you use a more difficult text.

Next, decide what other things you want the students to do. For example, do you ask them to read *The Communist Manifesto* or part of *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*? Decide where these readings should be placed. Students in high school can handle two or three assignments a week in addition to studying for tests and completing some other evaluation devices. Are you going to assign a research paper? Add this in. If you have any activities that are relevant, such as a video or slides, put them on the list, too. Are there any experts you can invite to class for a guest lecture? For example, consider the following for part II of the above bare-bones syllabus:

Textbook reading about 40 pages
Dahl, Robert A. 1998. *On Democracy*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
Economist, article on British constitutional reform
Economist, article on electoral reform
Articles on pluralism, elitism
British Survey from the *Economist*
Article on parliamentary versus presidential forms of government
Video: *The Prime Minister's Questions* (taped from C-Span)
Yes, Prime Minister
European Union: current articles collected by teacher
Article on liberal and illiberal democracies
One or two tests/quizzes
Map work with EU expansion
Thesis paper due at the end of the grading period

This is surely too much for a two- or three-week unit. Since students cannot do everything you would like them to do, choose what you think is most important and save the rest for next year.

Check with your textbook, the Course Description, and the “Course Description Essentials” section of chapter 1 of this guide to decide what is important for students to learn. If your school system has state or local standards of learning, include them in your learning objectives, too. A list of objectives might look like the following.

Learning Objectives: Students will be able to

1. Discuss the differences between parliamentary and presidential forms of government
2. Discuss the elements of a liberal democracy and of an illiberal democracy
3. Define pluralism, elitism, civil society, and corporatism
4. Assess the importance of civil society in the creation of a democracy and apply this to the British system
5. Evaluate the effects of proportional versus single-member electoral systems
6. Describe the structure of the British system, including political parties and institutions
7. Describe changes in the structure, especially devolution, and institutional changes in the British system
8. Discuss the importance of globalization on modern democratic systems

9. Describe the structure of the EU and discuss how the EU has altered sovereignty in the United Kingdom
10. Evaluate problems posed for the UK and the EU

If this seems like a great deal of material, remember that you have already discussed the concepts to some degree in the introductory section and used the UK as an example. Now you can create a content outline that can be given to students as they plan their study of democracies, applying the lessons to the UK and EU.

- Democracies
 - Criteria
 - Liberal, illiberal
 - Universal?
 - Role of civil society: pluralism, interest groups
 - Participation in democratic regimes
 - United Kingdom
 - Development of democratic regime
 - Institutional structures
 - Changes
 - Political parties
 - Interest group politics: neocorporatism, pluralism
 - European Union
 - History (including recent expansion)
 - Structures, democratic deficit
 - Problems facing democracies today

Although you can make this outline more detailed, you now have in place the general structure of a unit that explores the democratic systems, using the UK and the EU as examples. You may also break the outline down into instructional days. Do this with the remaining parts of your syllabus and you're ready to go. Plan for the course *before* you start teaching it. Look ahead to be sure that you will do what you need to do in the allotted time.

Then, go to it!

Important note: The AP Course Audit

The syllabi included in this Teachers Guide were developed prior to the initiation of the AP Course Audit and the identification of the current AP Comparative Government and Politics Curricular Requirements. These syllabi contain rich resources and will be useful in generating ideas for your AP course. In addition to providing detailed course planners, the syllabi contain descriptions of classroom activities and assignments, along with helpful teaching strategies. However, they should not necessarily be used in their entirety as models that would be authorized under the guidelines of the AP Course Audit. To view the current AP Curricular Requirements and examples of syllabi that have been developed since the launch of the AP Course Audit and therefore meet all of the AP Comparative Government and Politics Curricular Requirements, please see AP Central.

<http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/courseaudit/resources>

Sample Syllabus 1

Karen Coston

Blacksburg High School
Blacksburg, Virginia

School Profile

Blacksburg High School is part of the Montgomery County, Virginia, public school system and is located in a rural area in southwest Virginia.

Grades: 9–12

Type: Public

Total Enrollment: 1,200

Ethnic Diversity:

African American: 5 percent

Asian and Hispanic: 8 percent

College Record: 85 percent attend college

As a public school in a university town, Blacksburg places a great deal of emphasis on academic achievement. Currently, about 550 AP Exams are administered every spring, with over 85 percent of the grades above 3. Generally, the AP Comparative Government and Politics course has between 30 and 50 seniors in two or three sections. The state of Virginia requires a course in United States government; students in the AP Comparative Government and Politics course take a yearlong course that combines the AP United States Government and Politics course (first semester) with the AP Comparative Government and Politics course (second semester). Students may opt to take both AP Exams in the spring, and most of them do. Blacksburg High School has open admissions for all of its AP courses.

Course Overview

Textbook:

Kesselman, Mark et al. 2004. *Introduction to Comparative Politics*. 3rd ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

1. Homework is assigned in advance. It generally consists of analysis of various readings.
2. Tests reflect the AP Exam and include both multiple-choice questions and various free-response questions.
3. The six-week paper is a research paper of a minimum of 1,000 words, with at least two resources that are not from the Internet. New assignments are given at the beginning of every six-week period.
4. Outside-meeting reports: Virginia requires instruction in state and local government. During each grading period, students are to attend one local government meeting and submit a newspaper-style account of the meeting, including an editorial.

Course Planner

I. Introduction to Comparative Government and Politics—3 weeks

- A. Why study comparative politics
- B. Important terms

- C. Development
 - 1. Economic
 - 2. Political
 - 3. Connections
 - 4. Transition problems
- D. Forms of government and problems

Assignments:

Textbook reading: pp. 2–23

Supplemental readings (due dates provided in a separate calendar):

Scott, Bruce. 2001. “The Great Divide in the Global Village.” *Foreign Affairs* 80(1): pp. 160-77.

Wolf, Martin. 2001. “Will the Nation-State Survive Globalization?” *Foreign Affairs* 80(1): pp. 178-90.

Drucker, Peter. 2001. “The Next Society.” *Economist*, November 3.

Test at end of unit

II. Democracies—3 weeks

- A. Historical Development
- B. Criteria
 - 1. Liberal
 - 2. Illiberal
- C. Costs and Benefits
- D. Case Studies
 - 1. United Kingdom
 - 2. European Union

Assignments:

Textbook reading: pp. 25–80

Supplemental readings:

Dahl, Robert A. 1998. *On Democracy*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

“Survey: European Union.” 2004. *Economist* (September 25).

“Survey: Britain.” 1999. *Economist* (November 6).

Verney, Douglas. 1959. Parliamentary vs. Presidential Systems. In *The Analysis of Political Systems*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Test at end of unit

Six-week research paper due one week before close of marking period

Local meeting report due before close of the marking period

III. Developing Democracies—4 weeks

- A. Patterns of Democracies
- B. Electoral Systems and Democracies

Chapter 3

- C. The Importance of the Civil Society
- D. Case Studies
 - 1. Russia
 - 2. Mexico
 - 3. Nigeria

Assignments:

Textbook reading: pp. 344–406, 463–570

Supplemental readings:

Marx, Karl, and Frederick Engels. 1939. *The Communist Manifesto*. English trans. New York: New York Labor News.

“Survey: Russia.” 2004. *Economist* (May 22).

“Survey: Mexico.” 2000. *Economist* (October 28).

“Survey: Nigeria.” 2000. *Economist* (January 15).

Kaplan, Robert. 1997. “Was Democracy Just a Moment?” *Atlantic Monthly* (December).

“Electoral Reform: Good Government? Fairness? Or Vice Versa. Or Both?” 1993. *Economist* (May).

Zakaria, Fareed. 1997. “The Rise of Illiberal Democracy.” *Foreign Affairs* 76(6).

Test at end of unit

IV. States in Transition—4 weeks

- A. Colonialism
- B. Ideology and Belief Systems
- C. Historical Patterns
- D. Globalization
- E. Case Studies
 - 1. China
 - 2. Iran

Assignments:

Textbook reading: pp. 570–671

Supplemental readings:

“Survey: China.” 2000. *Economist* (April 8).

“Survey: Iran.” 2003. *Economist* (January 18).

Friedman, Thomas L. 2000. *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Pei, Minxin. 2002. “China’s Governance Crisis.” *Foreign Affairs* 81(5).

Fukuyama, Francis. 1998. “Women and the Evolution of World Politics.” *Foreign Affairs* 77(5).

Brinton, Crane. 1952. *The Anatomy of Revolution*. In *The Anatomy of Revolution*. New York: Prentice Hall.

Test at end of unit

Six-week research paper due one week before end of grading period

Local government report due before end of grading period

V. Conclusion and Overview—2 weeks

- A. Policy problems—commonalities
- B. Policy problems—differences

Assignments:

Supplemental readings:

“Globalisation and Its Critics.” 2001. *Economist* (September 27).

Franck, Thomas. 2001. “Are Human Rights Universal?” *Foreign Affairs* 80(1).

“Politics Brief: Is There a Crisis?” 1999. *Economist* (July 17, 24, 31; August 7, 14, 21).

Test at end of unit

During the rest of the semester, we have a graded review for the AP Exam in both United States and Comparative Government and Politics. Depending on the time remaining after the AP Exam, we view pertinent videos, especially those relating to comparative politics.

Student Evaluation

Homework assignments = 20 points

Tests = 100 points

Six-week papers = 200 points

Outside meeting reports = 50 points

Sample Syllabus 2

George Westergaard

Sammamish High School

Bellevue, Washington

School Profile

Located in Bellevue, Washington, Sammamish High School operates on a four-period day schedule with each period lasting 90 minutes (as a result, each quarter functions as the equivalent of a semester).

Grades: 9–12

Type: Public

Total Enrollment: 1,150

Ethnic Diversity:

African American: 4 percent

Asian: 22 percent

Hispanic: 11 percent

Other: 24 percent qualify for free or reduced-price lunch

College Record: More than 80 percent plan to continue their education beyond high school

Sammamish High School offers a number of AP courses including AP United States Government and Politics and AP Comparative Government and Politics. About 540 AP Exams were given in the last school year. The Bellevue School District strongly encourages all students to attempt advanced courses that will challenge them.

Course Overview

During this course, students will have the opportunity to examine and compare the cultures and political behaviors of people in six different countries: the United Kingdom, Iran, China, Russia, Nigeria, and Mexico. While they do so, they will participate in class discussions, debates, and role-playing situations. They will compare political institutions and systems in regard to the ways they provide for the welfare, needs, and desires of its constituents. In order to do so, students will use analytical tools such as concepts and inquiry to conduct their comparisons. Often they will be asked to work in cooperation with their classmates.

The following outline and syllabus provides a brief summary of the materials and activities students will review and use as they progress through the course.

Textbooks/Resources

Kesselman, Mark, et al. 2000. *Introduction to Comparative Politics*. 2nd ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Macridis, Roy C., and Mark Hulliung. 1996. *Contemporary Political Ideologies*. 6th ed. New York: HarperCollins College Publishers.

Fisher, Roger, and William Ury. 1991. *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement without Giving In*. 2nd ed. New York: Penguin Books.

Debates

Students will be required to participate in at least one formal debate. The debates will follow a prescribed outline and will be judged by the instructor.

Position Statements

Students will be required to construct and defend a position statement concerning policies taken and/or recommended for two or more of the countries studied.

Research

Students should use the Internet and regular library resources as they conduct research for their debates and position statements.

Course Planner

Data for the countries we are studying and comparing can be located in chapters 2 (Britain), 9 (Mexico), 10 (Russia), 11 (China), 12 (Nigeria), and 13 (Iran) of *Introduction to Comparative Politics*.

Part 1: Comparative Political Analysis (Week 1)

- a. Using concepts—classroom examples
- b. Using inquiry as a strategy for comparison—classroom examples
- c. Taking a position—classroom exercises
- d. Scheduling debates—choosing debate topics and examining formal debate structure

Part 2: Political Institutions—Background and Structure (Week 2)

- a. Political and cultural backgrounds—an examination of the differences between the development of authoritarian and democratic political cultures
- b. Government structures—an examination of different kinds of government structures from presidential to parliamentary, and from noncompetitive to military
- c. Political parties, party systems, and interest groups—an examination and comparison of ways extragovernmental institutions attempt to gain social control to change the normative behaviors of the cultures within the countries
- d. Judicial systems—a comparison of the ways judicial systems operate within authoritarian and democratic political systems
- e. Bureaucracies—a comparison of the differing roles bureaucracies play within the countries

The first round of debates will occur during this portion of the course.

Part 3: Political Culture (Weeks 3 and 4)

Data for this part of the course can be located in both the course text and in *Contemporary Political Ideologies*.

- a. Political culture and socialization—definitions and examples
- b. Political culture—differences between the countries in ways the countries socialize their citizens and the norms and values communicated in the socializing process
- c. Economic systems—an examination of the role played by the economic systems in the political culture of each country and the potential effect such systems have on policy
- d. Constitutions—an examination of constitutions as a reflection of the political cultures of each country in terms of forms and applications of each

Chapter 3

- e. Power—an examination of the sources and uses of power in each of the countries as it affects state-building, legitimacy, and accountability, as well as membership in supranational organizations

The second round of debates will occur during this portion of the course.

Part 4: Societies and Citizens (Weeks 5 and 6)

- a. Civil society—an examination of the roots of civil society and the degree to which it exists in each of the countries
- b. Citizenship and political participation—an examination of the role of citizens in each society and the degree to which they are participants or subjects in the society
- c. Cleavages and social movements—an examination of the degree to which social cleavages exist within each society as to demographics, geography, ethnicity, and gender, and whether such cleavages engender social movements within the country

The third round of debates will occur during this portion of the course.

Part 5: Public Policy Issues (Week 7)

- a. Issues of public policy—an examination and comparison of issues such as how social welfare, economic performance, economic development, and the environment affect policy in each of the countries
- b. Cultural influences—an examination of the political cultural influences on policy in each of the countries
- c. Civil liberties and civil rights—an examination and comparison of several case studies dealing with the ways civil liberties and civil rights manifest themselves in several of the countries

Position statement presentations due during this portion of the course.

Part 6: Cultural, Economic, and Political Change (Weeks 8 and 9)

Data for this portion of the course can be located in the course text and in *Getting to Yes*.

- a. Elements of political change—a review of the roles played by revolutions, wars, and social reforms in each country
- b. Results of economic change—a review of the role played in each country by economic changes such as privatization and marketization
- c. Results of political change—a review of the role played by political changes such as democratization and cleavages in each country
- d. Results of globalization and fragmentation—an examination of the roles played by regionalism, globalization, and fragmentation as a reaction to globalization and nation-building within and among the countries

Note: The time allotted for each unit will need to be doubled when the course is offered during a regular semester.

Student Evaluation

Student progress during the course will be determined by a series of evaluations, including essays, multiple-choice examinations, and graded presentations such as debates and position statement presentations.

Sample Syllabus 3

Rebecca Small

Herndon High School
Herndon, Virginia

School Profile

Herndon High School is a suburban school located about 30 miles from Washington, D.C., and is part of the Fairfax County Public School system in Northern Virginia.

Grades: 9–12

Type: Public

Total Enrollment: 2,200

Ethnic Diversity:

African American: 10 percent

Asian: 12 percent

Hispanic: 16 percent

College Record: 95 percent plan to attend postsecondary schools

Herndon High School has a strong AP program. Of the 500 graduating seniors, 175 take the AP Comparative Government and Politics course, and more than 400 students are enrolled in AP courses.

Personal Philosophy

I truly believe that students learn more about their own government when they take AP Comparative Government and Politics than they do when they take AP United States Government and Politics. Since this course requires students to compare countries and governments, all aspects of a country's government (including their own) become relative. I also believe that this course naturally lends itself to interactive teaching. Students can be placed in country-specific groups for presentations and research, and because the issues addressed are current, a close look at current events, debates of pertinent world issues, and simulations (i.e., model parliament) are also appropriate. These types of activities bring the course to life.

Class Profile

AP Comparative Government and Politics is offered with AP United States Government and Politics. There are usually between one and three classes of 20 to 30 students in a given year. This class meets every other day for 90 minutes. Typically, I begin teaching the AP Comparative Government and Politics course in January.

Course Overview

2005-06 AP Comparative Government and Politics: A Thematic Approach

At the conclusion of the AP Comparative Government and Politics course students should be able to describe common types of governments and cultures in the world, compare and analyze their governments and societies, and describe their interaction in a global environment. My approach is thematic (themes correspond with the outline in the Course Planner below), and I use the following countries for the basis of our comparisons: UK, Russia, China, Mexico, Nigeria, and Iran.

Reading assignments and required projects are listed. In addition to the reading assignments, students will be routinely required to respond in class to free-response type questions similar in format to those on

Chapter 3

the AP Exam. Students will also have three multiple-choice tests (Units I–II; Unit III, and Units IV–V). Students will take a cumulative exam in class that will be similar in format to the AP Exam. This will be given immediately prior to the AP Exam.

Textbooks

O’Neil, Patrick. 2003. *Essentials of Comparative Politics*. New York: W. W. Norton.

Kesselman, Mark, et al. 2004. *Introduction to Comparative Politics*. 3rd ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Supplemental Readings

Haus, Charles. 2002. *Comparative Politics: Domestic Responses to Global Challenges*. 4th ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson.

Soe, Christian, ed. 2005. *Annual Editions: Comparative Politics 04/05*. Guilford, CT: Dushkin Publishing Group.

Course Planner

I. Introduction to Comparative Politics (2 Weeks)

O’Neil, chapters 1 (Introduction) and 2 (States); Kesselman, chapter 1 (Introduction)

II. Sovereignty, Authority, and Power (2 Weeks)

O’Neil, chapters 3 (Nations and Society), 4 (Political Economy), and 5 (Authoritarianism)

Kesselman, chapters 2 (UK), 8 (Russia), and 12 (Iran) (selected pages)

Haus, chapter 7 “The European Union” (selected pages)

Soe, “A Constitutional Revolution in Britain”

Soe, “Russian Democracy Under Putin”

Soe, “Iran’s Crumbling Revolution”

III. Political Institutions (3 Weeks)

O’Neil, chapters 6 (Democracy) and 7 (Advanced Democracies)

Kesselman, chapters 8 (Russia), 2 (UK), and 10 (Mexico) (selected pages)

Soe, “Women in National Parliaments”

Soe, “Judicial Review: The Gavel and the Robe”

IV. Citizens, Society, and the State (2 Weeks)

O’Neil, chapter 9 (Less Developed and Newly Industrializing Countries)

Kesselman, chapters 11 (Nigeria) and 13 (China) (selected pages)

V. Political and Economic Change (2 Weeks)

O’Neil, chapters 8 (Communism and Post-Communism) and 10 (Globalization)

Kesselman, chapters 8 (Russia) and 13 (China) (selected pages)

Soe, “China the Quiet Revolution”

Soe, “Jihad vs. McWorld”

VI. Public Policy (2 Weeks)

Haus, chapter 7 “The European Union” (selected pages)

Teaching Strategies

I combine lecture/text discussion with interactive teaching strategies such as model parliament, debates, and Web site round tables. We discuss news articles from the *Economist* daily. Additionally, I assign my students to country-specific groups, and I ask each group to prepare a Web site about their country for use by the rest of the class.

Student Evaluation

The most important aspect of students' grades is their multiple-choice tests and free-response writing, which together comprise more than 60 percent of their overall grade. Students are given one multiple-choice test on each unit described in the Course Description. About once each week students are given unannounced free-response questions in class. Students have two projects (described in my syllabus) and one cumulative exam that is an AP Released Exam (both multiple-choice and free-response) and counts for 20 percent of the semester grade.

Student Activities

Group Web Site

Students are assigned in groups to create Web sites on the core countries. Each group presents its Web site and makes it accessible to the rest of the class. Each Web site is presented to the class at a preassigned date during the quarter.

Individual Public Policy Research Paper

Each student researches a public policy and writes a report on the implementation of that policy in the designated country (or countries). Students give a brief presentation at the end of the quarter.

Current Events

Students are required to summarize one current event per week from the *Economist*, *BBC News*, the *Washington Post*, or the *New York Times*. The article must relate to either one of the themes of AP Comparative Government and Politics or one of the core countries.

Sample Syllabus 4

Neil Mitchell

University of New Mexico at Albuquerque
Albuquerque, New Mexico

University Profile

Founded in 1889, the University of New Mexico is located in the metropolitan area of Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Type: Public university

Total Enrollment: 16,603

Ethnic Diversity:

African American: 3 percent

Hispanic: 33 percent

Native American: 7 percent

Personal Philosophy

If this introductory course can illustrate for students the rich diversity of political life and begin to show how, through comparison, we can move toward more satisfactory explanations of political phenomena and toward solutions of common problems, then it will have achieved its major aims.

Class Profile

There are six to eight sections a year, with a minimum of 40 students per section. Classes meet either two times a week for 1 hour and 15 minutes or three times a week for 50 minutes.

Course Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this introductory course.

Course Overview

Political Science 220 003: Introduction to Comparative Politics

Political Science 220 introduces students to some of the fundamental concepts and theories used by political scientists to understand the political world. It applies these concepts and theories to the political experience of a variety of countries. It is a prerequisite for the more specialized, upper-level undergraduate courses in comparative politics. The course provides a survey of structures and processes of government in a select group of countries. Time permitting, we cover the United Kingdom (and the European Union), Japan, Canada, India, and Russia. The discussion of these countries will illustrate the institutional alternatives available in designing political systems, the relationship of these systems to democratic norms, and the impact of different cultural, demographic, and economic environments on politics. The course will finish with a section on the importance of comparison with a focus on the protection of human rights across different political systems.

Course materials include two texts. *Power and Choice* introduces the basic institutions found in political systems and the concepts we use to analyze politics. *Comparative Politics in Transition* provides detailed coverage of the individual countries.

Textbooks

McCormick, John. 2004. *Comparative Politics in Transition*. 4th ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson.

Shively, W. Phillips. 2003. *Power and Choice: An Introduction to Political Science*. 8th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Course Planner

Week 1

Introduction: Politics, Comparative Politics, and the Principles of Political Analysis
Reading: *Power and Choice*, chapter 1 (Politics: Setting the Stage) and Appendix

Week 2

Nations, States, and Development
Reading: *Power and Choice*, chapter 3 (The Modern State)

Week 3

Nationalism/Ideologies: Cultural and Ideological Approaches to Politics
Reading: *Power and Choice*, chapter 2 (Modern Ideologies and Political Philosophy)

Week 4

The Democratic Vision and the Democratic Trend: Broad Structural Approaches to Politics
Reading: *Power and Choice*, chapters 8 (Democracy and Its Recent Surge in the World) and 9 (Autocratic Government)

Week 5

Constitutions: Federal or Unitary?
Reading: *Power and Choice*, chapter 10 (Constitutions and the Design of Government)

Week 6

Courts
Reading: *Power and Choice*, chapter 17 (Law and the Courts)

Week 7

Elections: Institutional Approaches to Politics
Reading: *Power and Choice*, chapter 1 (Politics: Setting the Stage)

Week 8

Parties and Groups: Individual Approaches to Politics
Reading: *Power and Choice*, chapters 12 (Parties: A Linking and Leading Mechanism in Politics) and 13 (Structured Conflict: Interest Groups and Politics)

Week 9

Media

Chapter 3

Week 10

Parliaments and Presidents

Reading: *Power and Choice*, chapters 14 (National Decision-Making Institutions: Parliamentary Government) and 15 (National Decision-Making Institutions: Presidential Government)

Case Studies: Democracies

Week 11

United Kingdom

Reading: McCormick

Week 12

European Union

Case Studies: Transitional Systems

Week 13

Russia

Mexico

Nigeria

Case Studies: Nondemocracies

Week 14

China

Iran

The Importance of Comparison: Political Systems and the Protection of Human Rights
Paper Due in Class

Week 15

Review Week

Week 16

Final Exam

Teaching Strategies

In conjunction with my lectures, I encourage student participation and discussion. Students are expected to attend class and complete the reading assignments by the date indicated. There are four exams and a short (3–5 page) paper required. The exams and paper are designed to test students' familiarity with the material and their ability to independently apply what they have learned. The exams are multiple-choice and essay. Students cannot pass this course unless they complete all the assignments.

Student Evaluation

Assignment Weight

1st Exam	20 percent
2nd Exam	20 percent
3rd Exam	20 percent

Letter Grade Definitions

A = Excellent
B = Good
C = Satisfactory

Final Exam 20 percent
Paper 20 percent

D = Barely Passed
F = Not Passed

Letter Grades: Fractionated grades will be used.

Student Activities

Here is an example of an assignment I give my students:

Current Events Analysis Essay

1. From daily newspaper coverage (*New York Times/Wall Street Journal*), select an event that happened in one of the countries that we are covering in Political Science 220 during the course of the semester.
2. Summarize the event.
3. Explain why it is politically significant.
4. Describe the possible consequences of the event and the policy options available to the country's government. Which option is best from the government's perspective? Which option addresses the policy problem most efficiently? What are the likely costs and benefits for the political support of the government?
5. Place the event in comparative context. To what extent does the event tell us something unique about the country's political system? To what extent does the event illustrate something that one finds in other/all political systems?
6. Attach a copy of the newspaper article that you analyzed to your essay and turn in a hard copy to me on the due date.

Sample Syllabus 5

Charles Blake

James Madison University
Harrisonburg, Virginia

University Profile

Founded in 1908, James Madison University is located in the town of Harrisonburg, Virginia, in the heart of the Shenandoah Valley. The university is situated on a 600-acre campus.

Type: Public university

Total Enrollment: 14,685

Ethnic Diversity:

African American: 5 percent

Hispanic: 2 percent

Personal Philosophy

With regard to teaching comparative politics, I have four sets of overarching goals that frame the course:

- Better understanding other countries' political dynamics
- Better understanding U.S. political dynamics
- Better understanding the realm of political possibilities
- Making generalizations and/or predictions about political life

The various political concepts and theories presented in the course serve these four goals. For example, when students learn to distinguish between parliamentary and presidential systems of executive–legislative relations, they are not simply positioning themselves to understand British politics but also to deepen their understanding of U.S. dynamics, of political options worldwide, and of the sorts of generalizations that may apply to each institutional system in a variety of national contexts.

Philosophy of the Department

The Department of Political Science offers strong major and minor programs sharing a focus on public concerns. We are committed to providing our students with the tools and competence to succeed in their lives, their graduate education, and their professional careers by providing access to information and instilling academic rigor, research skills, dedication to lifelong learning, and respect for diversity in cultures, nations, and institutions of democracy.

Class Profile

This is an introductory course aimed at political science and international affairs majors, along with other students who are interested in the subject matter. Most students are in their first or second year of college. Typically, two or three large sections are offered each year; usually one per semester. Seventy students are normally enrolled in each section. All three-credit courses meet 150 minutes per week; either one 50-minute class, three times a week (M, W, F) or two 75-minute classes, two times a week (T/TH).

Course Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this course.

Course Overview

This is an introduction to the comparative study of domestic politics. The course focuses first on the basic distinctions in formal and informal governing institutions and then on applying and developing those distinctions in a variety of settings. Over the course of the semester, the class examines several contemporary political issues including the challenges presented by ethnic, racial, and religious conflict; democratic consolidation amid severe economic scarcity; the role of the military in politics; and the politics of revolution and reform.

Textbooks/Teacher Resources

Joseph, William. 2004. *Introduction to Politics of the Developing World*. 3rd ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. (JKK)

Koff, Sondra Z., and Stephen P. Koff. 2000. *Italy: From the First to the Second Republic*. New York: Routledge.

Maier, Karl. 2002. *This House Has Fallen: Nigeria in Crisis*. Boulder: Westview Press.

Wilson, Frank L. 2002. *Concepts and Issues in Comparative Politics: An Introduction to Comparative Analysis*. 2nd ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Course Planner

Week 1—Introduction

Introduction to Comparative Politics. Wilson, pp. 2–29
 Societal Cleavages. Wilson, pp. 30–53; Koff and Koff, pp. 1–16
 Political Regime Types: Democratic and Nondemocratic Political Systems. JKK, pp. 5–11; Maier, pp. xv–xxxvii

Part I: Democratic Politics (France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom)

Week 2

Political Culture and Legitimacy. Wilson, pp. 8–9, 22–27; Koff and Koff, pp. 17–30
 Interest Groups. Wilson, pp. 105–21; Koff and Koff, pp. 78–109
 Political Parties. Wilson, pp. 78–104; Koff and Koff, pp. 31–35

Week 3

Electoral Systems. Wilson, pp. 57–76; Koff and Koff, pp. 56–77
 Executive–Legislative Relations. Wilson, pp. 154–64
 Executive–Legislative Relations in Italy. Koff and Koff, pp. 110–48, 211–21

Week 4

The Bureaucracy. Wilson, pp. 171–78; Koff and Koff, pp. 149–63
 The Judiciary. Wilson, pp. 178–81; Koff and Koff, pp. 164–81; online articles from the *Economist*
 Subnational Government: Unitary vs. Federal States. Wilson, pp. 164–69; Koff and Koff, pp. 182–97

Week 5

Politics Workshop: Policy Reform Exercise Under President System
 Politics Workshop: Policy Reform Exercise Under Parliamentary System

Chapter 3

Essay #1 Assigned

Test #1

Part II: Nondemocratic Politics and Democratization (Brazil and Nigeria)

Points of Emphasis: theories of politics amid late industrialization; the military in politics; the politics of colonialism and decolonization; ethnic conflict; the politics of institutional reform; Nigerian politics

Week 6

Test Review and Writing Workshop. Maier, pp. 1–38

Late Industrialization and Politics. Wilson, pp. 184–201, review pp. 36–40; JKK, pp. 11–25, 197–209

The Military in Politics. Wilson, pp. 138–51

Week 7

Military Rule in Brazil. JKK, pp. 185–97, 210–18

Essay #1 Due

Democratization and Civil-Military Relations in Brazil. JKK, pp. 218–34

Colonial Nigeria. JKK, pp. 241–47; Maier, pp. 39–74

Week 8

From the 1st Republic to Civil War. JKK, pp. 247–48; Maier, pp. 75–110

From the 2nd Republic to the Return of Military Rule. JKK, pp. 248–49; Maier, pp. 111–43

Week 9

Obasanjo and the 4th Republic. JKK, pp. 249–53; Maier, pp. 143–92

Video on Nigeria. Maier, pp. 193–250

Simulation Preparation and Group Meetings. Maier, pp. 251–303

Week 10

Simulation Group Meetings

Simulation: Nigerian Constitutional Convention Day 1

Simulation Day 2

Week 11

Simulation Day 3 and Simulation Debriefing

Essay #2 Assigned

Test #2

Part III: Revolution and Reform (China, Iran, and Mexico)

The Politics of Revolution and Reform. Wilson, pp. 202–18

Week 12

Revolutionary Politics: China. JKK, pp. 31–53

The Reformer's Dilemma: Deng Xiaoping in China. JKK, pp. 53–73

Revolutionary Politics: Iran. JKK, pp. 299–321

Week 13

The Reformer's Dilemma: Mohammed Khatami in Iran. JKK, pp. 321–42

Revolutionary Politics: Mexico. JKK, pp. 135–57

The Reformer's Dilemma: Carlos Salinas in Mexico. JKK, pp. 157-79
Essay #2 Due

Week 14

The Reformer's Dilemma: Vicente Fox. Online readings

Week 15

Reform Politics Workshop: Fox's platform meets the legislature—defining agenda
Reform Politics Workshop: Fox's platform meets the legislature—pursuing priorities
Course Wrap-Up

Week 16

Final Exam

Teaching Strategies

As a teacher, I try to create an atmosphere in which students will feel free to raise questions in and out of the classroom. Simple things like learning students' names (even in large classes), coming into the room in an upbeat mood, and giving positive and negative feedback on writing assignments can go a long way. Even in a large class, I pose factual, analytical, and interpretive questions to my students to engage them more directly in the material. Beyond the classroom, I have an open-door policy that extends well beyond regularly scheduled office hours. I have created a variety of teaching materials and simulations in support of my courses that are available via the Internet. My enthusiasm for my students has been at least as important to my teaching as my many hours of preparation; I imagine that colleagues in university and secondary institutions have had similar experiences.

Student Evaluation

Class participation	10 percent
Take-Home Essay #1	15 percent
Test #1	15 percent
Test #2	15 percent
Take-Home Essay #2	15 percent
Final Exam	30 percent

Student Activities

The following are examples of student activities I assign in my course.

Take-Home Essay

This essay must be typed and double-spaced. Each page can be no longer than 30 lines, and each line cannot exceed 80 characters. The essay must not exceed two pages. Please include a separate title page with your name, course number, etc.; do *not* write your name on the two pages containing the essay itself.

You are neither required nor encouraged to consult outside readings in preparing this essay. You are required to write a concise yet comprehensive essay that reflects your thoughtful consideration of course readings and discussions. Please manage your schedule so that you have time to proofread and revise your essay before submitting it.

Essay Topic: Assume, for the purposes of this essay, that Italy will adopt a new governmental system regarding executive–legislative relations and regarding the electoral system. It will be used in the next national elections, and it will frame how executive–legislative relations are structured from that point forward. This reform decision will require the consent of majorities within *both* the Olive Tree *and* the House of Freedom legislative caucuses in a joint session of Parliament.

Assume further that you are a political analyst assigned the task of recommending a new system. Rather than use the current system, these two coalitions of parties have agreed to choose between the following two governmental systems:

- the United States’ presidential executive–legislative system combined with single-member plurality district (SMDP) elections
- the German parliamentary executive–legislative system with its constructive vote of no-confidence combined with a hybrid electoral system of half SMDP and half proportional representation

Which of these two governmental systems should be chosen? Why should that system be preferred over the alternative? In the first paragraph, begin by specifying your standards for evaluating possible governmental options. In your analysis of these two options, make it clear how your preferred system’s executive–legislative relations and electoral system meet those standards better than the alternative. Include specific information about Italy to support your argument.

There is no single “correct” answer to this question. I want you to build an argument for your point of view. *No matter which way you argue in your essay, be sure to include at least three major arguments in favor of your position and three GOOD potential counterarguments.* Do not include counterarguments that are easy to attack while avoiding more persuasive positions. *Your essay should make it clear why your reasons are more convincing than the counterarguments.*

In-Class Simulation

Nigeria is (again) debating how its political institutions should be redesigned. In this simulated constitutional convention, we will deal with three major issues: (1) What sort of executive and legislative institutions should Nigeria have in the future? *Presidential? Parliamentary? A hybrid?* (2) What sort of electoral system(s) should be used in voting for those offices? *Plurality? Majority? Proportional representation? A mix? Some other system?* (3) What sort of system for subnational government should

Nigeria have? *Unitary? Federal? If federal, how many states should there be? If federal, what percentage of oil revenues (if any) should be allocated to the states? Should the states have the power to tax? If so, what taxes will the states control?*

All groups must make proposals on these three issues. Groups have the option of proposing constitutional provisions regarding other issues but are not required to do so.

In this simulation, you will represent the interests of eight major political organizations representing various racial, ethnic, and political groups:

- **People's Democratic Party** (PDP: north with notables from southwest and southeast)
- **All Nigeria People's Party** (ANPP: Middle Belt along with notables from north and southeast)
- **Alliance for Democracy** (AD: southwest with focus on Yoruba concerns)
- **All Progressives Grand Alliance** (APGA: southeast with focus on Igbo concerns)
- **People's Redemption Party** (PRP: leftist northerners who oppose use of *sharia* in the north)
- **Federated Niger Delta Izon Communities** (Ijaw group mobilized for new local governments and revised revenue allocation in the southern oil delta)
- **Obasanjo government**
- **Junior military officers**

Each group will be responsible for coming to the simulation with specific proposals addressing: issues 1–3 above, which all group members are prepared to defend—recognizing all along that you are role-playing members of your assigned organizations. In other words, you must be prepared to defend your proposals not only against criticisms from other groups but also from criticisms from the very people and interests they represent. As moderator, I will feel free to role-play “the absent constituents” as circumstances demand.

In the simulation, we will follow a strict format to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to participate.

****All groups must post their complete proposals on the appropriate forum of the Blackboard discussion board by 11 p.m. on the night before Day One.****

Day One

- (1) *21 minutes*: 3-minute proposals from each group's first speaker on the three major issues
- (2) *2 minutes*: a vote (1 rep, 1 vote) among the proposals
- (3) *25 minutes*: NEGOTIATIONS within and between groups re: possible amendments, counterproposals, coalitions, etc.

Day Two

- (1) *50 minutes*: NEGOTIATIONS within and between groups re: possible amendments, counterproposals, coalitions, etc.

****All groups must repost their (potentially revised) proposals on the Blackboard by 11 p.m. on the night before Day Three.****

Chapter 3

Day Three

- (1) *21 minutes*: 3-minute proposals from each group's second speaker on the three major issues
- (2) *2 minutes*: a vote (1 rep, 1 vote) among the proposals
- (3) *25 minutes*: NEGOTIATIONS within and between groups re: possible amendments, counterproposals, coalitions, etc.

All groups must repost their (potentially revised) proposals on the Blackboard by 11 p.m. on the night before Day Four.

Day Four

- (1) *6 minutes*: 1 minute per group for final amendments, speeches from each group's final speaker
- (2) *10 minutes*: open, yet controlled, debate from the floor (maximum 1 minute per person)
- (3) *2 minutes*: a final vote (1 rep, 1 vote) to determine the results (a two-thirds majority needed for passage)
- (4) *The rest of class time will be used to discuss the results of the simulation and the ongoing process in Nigeria.*

Because time is short, each person must be familiar with the general issues at stake and with his or her group's stance in Nigerian politics in order to make the simulation work. I do not expect any of you to do enough thinking and reading to write a term paper off the top of your head. But I do expect everyone to think and read enough to talk thoughtfully about the issues at hand from the perspective of the organization you represent and from the perspective of Nigeria as a whole.

TEMPLATE for CONSTITUTIONAL PROPOSALS

Group Name: _____

(1) What sort of executive and legislative institutions should Nigeria have in the future?

(Presidential? Parliamentary? A hybrid? → DETAIL your proposal below.)

(2) What sort of electoral system(s) should be used in voting for those offices?

(Plurality? Majority? Proportional representation? A mix? Some other system? → DETAIL your proposal below.)

(3) What sort of system for subnational government should Nigeria have?

(Unitary? Federal?)

A. If federal, how many states should there be? *(List the number below.)*

B. If federal, what percentage of oil revenues (if any) should be allocated to the states?
(List the number below.)

C. If federal, should the states have the power to tax? *(Yes or no?)*

If so, what types of taxes will the states control? *(Income? Sales? Property? _____?)*

(4) Are there any other provisions you would like to ensure are in the constitution?

(Yes or no? If yes, DETAIL below.)

Chapter 4

The AP Exam in Comparative Government and Politics

The culmination of the AP Comparative Government and Politics course is the AP Exam given every spring. Although some may worry that an AP course will become overly focused on the exam at the expense of exploration and depth, this would only be true if the exam were not a fair reflection of what a good survey course should cover. We have never seen a multiple-choice or free-response question that we felt was unreasonable in this respect, nor have our students ever made this complaint. The class's pace must be rigorous in order to cover all of the material in the Course Description. This is, after all, a survey course—in-depth exploration of a particular concept or country is more appropriate to an upper-level college course.

Preparing Students for the AP Exam

Preparation for the AP Exam should be an ongoing activity. It helps for students to learn about the exam at the beginning of the course and to be familiar with the type and timing of assessments associated with the exam. Teachers can adapt AP Released Exams for their own testing purposes so students can see the level of difficulty and practice responding to the types of questions asked. Nevertheless, one must not be overly concerned with the exam itself. The focus should be on the Course Description; if this directs your planning, students will then be well prepared for the exam. In fact, students are often at a disadvantage when teachers try to guess what will be on the exam. First of all, students tend to write a response to what the teacher anticipated, regardless of what the question was. Secondly, it is just impossible to guess what will be asked—you are doing students a disservice if you lead them to expect that it is possible. They are much better off understanding that what will be on the test is what is in the Course Description.

AP Exams are released to the public periodically. Teachers will want to keep track of when new exams are to be released (watch for an announcement on AP Central) and purchase these through the College Board Store (store.collegeboard.com). Since past AP Exams are extremely useful in preparation for a new exam, you should use these exams whenever possible for practice and review. Some test preparation manuals also contain practice questions. By seeing AP-level questions on classroom tests, students should be better prepared to answer similar questions in the AP Exam.

Preparing Students for the AP Exam

When students begin their AP Comparative Government and Politics experience in September or January, the May exam seems a long way off. But that school year, full of AP and non-AP experiences, passes quickly, and before one knows it, test day has arrived. One way to prepare students is to begin the test preparation the first day of the course, and continue it throughout the semester or full-year curriculum following this five-step process:

First, students should be strongly encouraged to read all of their assigned course material, including textbook reading assignments, workbooks, and supplementary materials. Students who are scoring less than a “B” in my course have to complete the assigned study guide material that supplements their course work. It is more work for the instructor, but in the long run the student is developing another review component that will come in handy prior to test day.

Second, all evaluation tools—quizzes, exams, writing assignments—should follow the exam format outlined in the AP Comparative Government and Politics Course Description. Free-response questions should be timed, and scoring guidelines should be reviewed so the students experience how points are earned.

Third, provide voluntary review sessions for your students, especially if you are teaching a fall-semester course and your students are taking the exam in May. Students have to realize that review provides them the opportunity to organize their materials and dust off cobwebs. But they can’t expect review sessions to do the work for them. If they review on their own, and come to the review sessions prepared to ask questions, it brings many of the key concepts back into focus.

Fourth, the College Board releases multiple-choice exams every five years. Use one either as your “final” exam prior to the May exam or as a review exam. Students will find out quickly if they are ready for the current exam or if they need more preparation prior to test day.

Finally, students can also purchase review books at bookstores. These texts provide another perspective on how material is organized and most provide test banks with detailed question descriptions.

Follow these five steps in preparing your students and let those “5s” ring true!

—Dave La Shomb, Brainerd Senior High School,
Brainerd, Minnesota

Section I: Multiple Choice

As is true of all AP Exams, the AP Comparative Government and Politics Exam consists of two parts: a multiple-choice section, weighted as half of the overall exam score, and a free-response or written section, also weighted as half of the overall score. A Development Committee, composed of both college and high school instructors with experience in comparative politics courses, is responsible for the exam’s content. Construction of an exam generally takes two years from start to administration.

Multiple-choice questions are timed, answered using scannable answer sheets, and scored by computer scanners. The number of questions and time allowed for this section varies among AP Exams; the AP Comparative Government and Politics Exam has 55 multiple-choice questions, and students have 45 minutes to answer them. All multiple-choice questions have five available answer choices. The Development Committee takes care to ensure that there is only one correct answer for each question. Some multiple-choice questions are reused from one year’s exam to the next in order to ensure the test’s reliability over time. In terms of coverage, the questions in the exam will correspond to the content specifications in the Course Description. Thus, if the political institutions category is specified to constitute about 35 percent of the questions on the exam, then about 35 percent of the multiple-choice questions on any given version of the exam will be about political institutions. Students are expected to have studied all six countries, and the multiple-choice section of the exam will include country-specific questions on all of these countries. It will also include questions that require students to make comparisons among the six countries. The Course Description contains sample multiple-choice questions so that students and teachers can have an idea of what to expect.

Chapter 4

All multiple-choice questions on the exam are weighted equally, no matter how difficult the question or where it is located in the exam: question 55 is weighted equally with question 2. Thus, students are encouraged to answer as many questions as possible. Spending five minutes on one question is probably not in the student's best interest. This is why during the course students should learn to pace themselves by taking timed tests with comparable timing requirements. Teachers should also use scannable answer sheets so that students practice answering multiple-choice questions in this context. Remind students that erasing must be done meticulously, as the scanners will not correct badly erased marks.

Students commonly ask whether they should guess if they don't know an answer. There is a penalty affixed for incorrectly answering a question; this penalty is the same for all AP Exams and is set at 25 percent of the wrong answers. That is, if a student gives 39 correct answers and 16 incorrect answers, his or her score will be 39 minus (16 x 0.25), or 35. If the 16 incorrect answers had been left blank, the score would have been 39. This measure is taken to statistically ensure that someone who randomly guessed on the entire exam would receive a grade of 0. Teachers may wish to use a similar grading system during the school year to demonstrate to students the impact of guessing on the exam.

Advice for Preparing for the AP Exam: A Student's Perspective

One of the best ways to prepare for the AP Comparative Government and Politics Exam is to read current events while studying the different countries. This is helpful because it makes the essay less stressful on the exam. Students are expected to be able to give specific examples while addressing the prompts. If a student is familiar with what is going on in the country of question, it is much easier to come up with these specific examples.

Another piece of advice is this: learn vocabulary. Even if the student does not understand the concepts, if the vocabulary used is known it is much more likely that the student will do well on the exam. If words such as *guanxi*, *noblesse oblige*, and *single-member district* are known to the student, it is easier to grasp the concepts behind them.

—Kathryn Harada, Class of 2004, Central Kitsap High School,
Silverdale, Washington

Section II: Free Response

The free-response section is a timed section where students have 100 minutes to answer five short-answer questions and three longer questions. There are no choices given in the free-response section; students must provide their own answers. Again, students should be familiar with this approach by the time they take the exam. Students will plan how to use those 100 minutes themselves; proctors may give time alerts during the 100 minutes, but students are free to allocate the time as they wish.

There are three parts to the free-response section, which is designed to elicit responses that demonstrate a variety of skills. In one part, students must provide brief answers to five questions about concepts or terms, noting their significance as asked. This part of the exam is designed to test students' fundamental understanding of the important concepts in comparative politics. Students may be asked to provide an example for the concept in one or more of the countries studied or to define and/or contrast concepts. Students are advised to take 30 minutes on this part; it counts for 25 percent of their free-response score. In the second part of the free-response section, students will be asked to analyze a concept. Here, they are asked one question that requires them to examine major concepts in more detail, identifying and explaining important relationships and, if appropriate, discussing the causes and implications of politics and policy. It may be possible to answer this question in the abstract without reference to a particular country. Students are advised to take 30 minutes on this part as well, since it is also worth 25 percent of their free-response score. A third part tests students' knowledge of concepts within the context of one or more of the countries

The AP Exam in Comparative Government and Politics

studied. In this section, students must respond to two questions that ask them to use central concepts in an analysis of one or more of the core countries. Students are advised to take 40 minutes (20 minutes for each of the questions); the section is worth 50 percent of the free-response score. Sample questions, found in the Course Description, will help you understand this format.

The first priority for students during this section of the exam is to understand exactly what tasks each question is asking them to perform. Students should then focus on writing a clear, concise, and well-supported response. When appropriate, they should draw on their knowledge of current events in the core countries as support for their responses.

To this end, it is critical that students understand the instructions and the action verbs often used on the AP Exam. Students may be asked to list, discuss, describe, explain, analyze, and so on. These are not all identical tasks. Furthermore, the question may call for more than one task, such as both identify and explain. Students should understand that some of the tasks are more complex than others. For example, composing a list may not even require a complete sentence, but students may need to write several paragraphs, including well-developed examples as support, to adequately explain some phenomenon. We compiled the following list of commonly used action verbs to help students understand the exact tasks that they are required to perform.

List/Identify

Listing or identifying is a task that requires no more than a simple enumeration of some factors or characteristics. A list does not require any causal explanations. For example, a student might be asked to list or identify three factors that increase political legitimacy.

The list could be bulleted or numbered and might include such factors as a written constitution, competitive elections, and transparent institutions.

Define

A definition requires a student to provide a meaning for a word or concept. Examples may help to demonstrate the student's understanding of the definition. Students also may be instructed to note the term's significance as part of the definition.

Describe

A description involves providing a depiction or portrayal of a phenomenon or its most significant characteristics. Descriptions most often address "what" questions. For example, if students are asked to describe a political cleavage in Mexico, they must demonstrate knowledge that the cleavage has at least two sides by describing what the two sides are.

Discuss

Discussions generally require that students explore relationships between different concepts or phenomena. Identifying, describing, and explaining could be required tasks involved in writing a satisfactory discussion.

Explain

An explanation involves the exploration of possible causal relationships. When providing explanations, students should identify and discuss logical connections or causal patterns that exist between or among various political phenomena.

Compare/Contrast

This task requires students to make specific links between two or more concepts, occurrences, or countries. Thus, students cannot simply have a one-paragraph description of how women participate

Chapter 4

in Iranian politics and a one-paragraph description of how they participate in Nigeria with no connections between the two paragraphs. To correctly compare participation of women in Nigeria and Iran, there must be cross-paragraph references and development of a comparative structure. Students must provide the connective tissue. They should understand that it is important to note similarities and differences.

Evaluate/Assess

An evaluation or assessment involves considering how well something meets a certain standard and, as such, generally requires a thesis. It is important to identify the criteria used in the evaluation. If no criteria are explicitly given in the question, students should take care to clearly identify the ones that they choose to employ. Specific examples may be applied to the criteria to support the student's thesis. Evaluation or assessment requires explicit connections between the thesis or argument and the supporting evidence.

Analyze

This task usually requires separating a phenomenon into its component parts or characteristics as a way of understanding the whole. An analysis should yield explicit conclusions that are explained or supported by specific evidence and/or well-reasoned arguments.

Teachers are encouraged to apply to be a Reader after teaching this course for three years (the Reading is described in the “Exam Scoring” section below). Many Readers will attest that this is the most useful asset available for teaching AP Comparative Government and Politics. Teachers can learn a great deal about the subject matter from their colleagues at the Reading and from reviewing a wide array of student responses from which they can glean commonly occurring mistakes.

Attending the Reading every year informs how we modify and update our courses. In addition, it is a place to meet many wonderful high school and college teachers who share enthusiasm for the subject. Finally, it has made grading free-response questions in our own classes much easier, as we have become more proficient and confident about what constitutes a good response.

Teaching Students to Respond to Free-Response Questions

The single-most important aspect in teaching students to take the free-response portion of the AP Exam is encouraging them to READ the question. It is impossible for students to answer a question completely and comprehensively without first understanding exactly what they are being asked. The following tips will help your students prepare:

- Keep students on task by having them write a heading for their answer containing the countries or concepts to be discussed, and remind them to refer back to that heading as they are writing.
- Make sure students are aware that the free-response questions are divided into subsections, and that each subsection must be addressed as a separate paragraph in their answer.
- Have students actually label each paragraph that they write with the appropriate letter heading from the question.
- Instruct students to underline the key words in each subsection. Words such as *define*, *describe*, *identify*, and *explain* each call for a separate response.
- Tell students to check off the underlined key words in their exam booklets as they address each issue during the progress of their essay. This way, they will be sure to respond to all parts of the question.
- Always remember that long, involved descriptions full of random facts about a specific country or concept are neither encouraged nor rewarded in the grading process; students should make sure both their information and presentation clearly and completely ANSWER the actual question that is being asked.

—Robert Crawford, Pine Crest Preparatory School,
Fort Lauderdale, Florida

Administering the AP Exam

Policies regarding AP Exams differ from school system to school system. Some schools mandate that all students in an AP program take the exam; others encourage but do not mandate this. Some states pay for all exams, some don't. Obviously, you must follow your district and state policies.

We recommend that all students take the AP Exams—even those who fear they will not do well (they may surprise you and themselves). Although the exams may cost students precious money, remind them that it is a fairly inexpensive way to potentially earn college credit. In addition, it provides useful practice and feedback for exam-taking that will serve them well in college. Although students accepted at some universities may discover that they will receive no college credit for their AP Exams, they should be reminded that AP grades may benefit them in other ways. Students might shift colleges or majors and find that the AP grades will be accepted later in their college careers. Also, AP grades are often considered in placement for college courses and may be a factor for admission into certain programs or colleges themselves. AP Coordinators can provide information about state, federal, and AP Program subsidies that can help defray or entirely cover the cost of the exams.

Specific information regarding exam administration is given to each school's AP Coordinator. It is important that all the exam requirements be met exactly as directed in the exam materials. Your students will have a grueling day if they take both of the AP Government and Politics Exams. They should have some access to food and beverages between the two exams. Since there are often multiple exams scheduled for the same time slot, alternate exam dates are provided for AP-related conflicts. *In no event can schools switch or manipulate test days or times.* There are, however, contingency plans for emergencies. One year, for example, one of our students suffered an injury requiring hospitalization. In the hospital, the first thing he asked about was his AP Exam! He took the exam on the alternate day and did very nicely in spite of his setback. See your school's AP Coordinator about what to do when such problems arise in your school, and for any additional details regarding administering the exam.

AP Exam Scoring

When students are finished with the exam, they seal their multiple-choice section and their responses to the free-response questions, and return the exam books to the College Board via the AP Coordinator. The free-response section of the AP Exam is scored at the AP Reading, held each June for one week. Readers include AP Comparative Government and Politics high school teachers and college faculty who teach an introductory comparative government and politics course. The number of Readers varies with the number of exams to be scored. In recent years, this exam has been scored at the same time and site as the AP United States Government and Politics Exam.

The questions are scored through the use of scoring guidelines. When writing the questions, the Development Committee suggests possible answers for each of the questions as well as a possible scoring scale for each question. Prior to the Reading, a group of experienced Readers (the Exam Leaders and Question Leaders) arrives at the Reading site and begin to read student examples randomly, getting a sense of the question as answered by the students. This group then prepares the scoring guidelines, which outline each score point and what type of response qualifies for a particular score.

Next to arrive on site are the Table Leaders, who are also experienced Readers. Each Table Leader is assigned to one question, and over the course of two days learns the rubric and begins to apply it to student samples. When the Readers arrive, the Table Leaders are responsible for training a table of 6 to 10 Readers. Throughout the course of the Reading, each Reader is carefully monitored to ensure that all responses are

Chapter 4

scored reliably and accurately. Table Leaders double-check the scores Readers assign and use computer-generated data to make certain that each Reader is consistent throughout the Reading.

A Chief Reader is designated for every AP subject to be responsible for the accurate, reliable, and timely scoring of the AP Exam. The Chief Reader, a college faculty member with significant expertise in that AP subject, analyzes exam results for the current year and sets score numbers that correspond to various grades. These numbers vary from year to year based on the difficulty of the exam, comparison to previous exam grades, and the overall performance of the students on the current exam. Remember, 50 percent of the score is based on the multiple-choice section and 50 percent on the free-response section. Perfect exams are not expected, and the raw scores required for earning a final grade of 5 on the exam vary from year to year. A 5 denotes someone “extremely well qualified”; a 4, someone “well qualified”; a 3, “qualified”; a 2, “possibly qualified”; and a 1, “no recommendation.”

AP Grade Reports

AP grades are reported to students, their schools, and their designated colleges in July. Each school automatically receives an AP Grade Report for each student, a cumulative roster of all students, rosters of all students by exam, an AP Scholar roster for any qualifying students, and a *AP Instructional Planning Report*. (Note: Data for students testing late with an alternate form of the exam are not included in this report.) For a fee, schools may also request their students’ free-response booklets.

Using the AP Instructional Planning Report

Schools receive the *AP Instructional Planning Report* for each of their AP classes in September. The report compares your students’ performance on specific topics in the AP Exam to the performance of students worldwide on those same topics, helping you target areas for increased attention and focus in the curriculum. To get the most out of the report, please read the interpretive information on the document. It explains how the data, when used correctly, can provide valuable information for instructional and curricular assessment as well as for planning and development. Contact your school’s AP Coordinator for this report.

Student grades for AP Exams are generally mailed out during the second week of July. Copies of grades are also sent to the student’s high school and to colleges designated by the student. Grades may be suppressed if a student opts to do so. Earlier disclosure of specific exam grades is available to the student by phone from the College Board; instructions on how to receive early grades are available in the Student Pack given out during the exam administration.

After the AP Exam

When the exam is over, teachers are anxious to know how their students did, and many students want to discuss the test. You must keep very specific restrictions in mind. According to College Board policy:

Forty-eight hours after the exam has been administered, the green and blue inserts containing the free-response questions (Section II) can be made available for teacher and student review. However, the multiple-choice section (Section I) must remain secure both before and after the exam administration. No one other than students taking the exam can ever have access to or see the questions contained in Section I—this includes AP Coordinators and all teachers. The multiple-choice section must never be shared, copied in any manner or reconstructed by teachers and students after the exam. . . . Selected multiple-choice questions are reused from year to year to provide an essential method of assuring that AP grades are comparable from year to year. That goal can be attained only

The AP Exam in Comparative Government and Politics

when the multiple-choice questions remain secure. This is why teachers cannot view the questions and students cannot share information about these questions with anyone following the exam administration.

Thus, while you will want to hear how your students felt after the exam, it is important to make sure you do not ask students to help you reconstruct the multiple-choice section of the exam. Teachers who ask students about specific questions are asking their students to violate a pledge they make during the exam to not divulge multiple-choice questions. Free-response questions are made publicly available every year on AP Central 48 hours after each exam is administered and should not be discussed before they are released. You may discuss the free-response questions as much as you like after they are made publicly available. In fact, the free-response questions often become the topic of much discussion on the EDGs.

Many teachers wonder what to do with their class *after* the AP Exam. What you and your class do depends on how much time remains in the school year and your particular school system's exam policy. In some schools, there may be about one week of class time remaining after exams, and almost all students may be exempt from a final exam in the class. This single week can also accommodate student obligations such as other AP Exams, senior skip days, and award assemblies. It may be an opportunity to show movies for which there has not been sufficient time during the school year. Other teachers have about a month left after the exam. Much of this time can be spent on a senior presentation project or other specific requirement of the school, or on debates that had been put aside in the interest of time. In some systems, state and local government is a required topic, so time after the AP Exam can be used to study such mandated topics. Almost every year there are multiple suggestions from teachers on the AP EDG about possible activities. This seems to be a good time to do some innovative, unusual activities. Use it to maximum advantage—and to your and your students' enjoyment.

What to Do After the AP Exam

Your students take the AP Exam in mid-May. The school year extends into June. How do you keep students engaged in the marvelous process of learning after the course's climactic event?

Every class is unique, but each group reacts with special interest to some concept, theme, or topic. Follow up on it. The AP Comparative Government and Politics course offers wonderful prospects.

Throughout the course, did your students want to debate about differing concepts of human rights? Were they shaking their heads about other people's ideas of political legitimacy? Did they wonder about the validity of the relationship between urbanization and democratization? "Send" them off on a research quest to gather information. Bring them back together for a seminar or debates.

Was there a student from Poland (or another country) in your class? (I've had students from half a dozen different countries in my AP classes.) Or were there questions about a particular country that came up? It may be the time for a mini-unit on one country after the exam. Your students should have a theoretical approach down pat. Have them find appropriate examples.

Do none of these ideas fit your experience? Assign a presentation (Web page, PowerPoint, or poster) to pairs of students and allow them to choose a concept or a country. Whether topical or geographic, your students will be able to approach the subject—they've been doing it all semester. We know they can present what they learn.

These ideas emphasize building on students' interests, on what they've learned in the course, and on their active involvement. In those post-exam spring weeks, creativity and flexibility are keys to extending the learning season.

—Ken Wedding, Retired AP U.S. Government and Politics Teacher,
Hopkins High School,
Minnetonka, Minnesota

Chapter 5

Resources for New Teachers

How to Address Limited Resources

AP classes in small schools or schools with limited budgets, resources, or enrollments face unique challenges. The College Board’s publication *Building Strong AP Programs at Small Rural Schools* is an invaluable resource. It provides compelling stories and excellent suggestions and resources for meeting some of those challenges. This publication is available free of charge in the AP Central Document Library at apcentral.collegeboard.com/documentlibrary.

Luckily, AP Comparative Government and Politics does not require a great deal of expensive material. The biggest expense is the textbook. Although using dated comparative government and politics texts is more problematic than using a dated math text, teachers can and should supplement and update any text with current events sources that are freely available on the Web. The AP Comparative Government and Politics Course Home Page at AP Central (apcentral.collegeboard.com/govpolcomp) is the best Web site to visit for starting and keeping up with the course. Furthermore, textbook companies will provide teachers with free “examination copies” of their textbook, and if you attend an AP Summer Institute you are also likely to receive a number of free texts. Finally, teachers who have a difficult time purchasing “ready-made” materials are not at a disadvantage because AP Comparative Government and Politics has fewer such materials available than some other subjects.

Resources

Note: Although references below were as up-to-date as possible at the time of publication of this Teacher’s Guide, contact information occasionally changes, and some materials become unavailable.

There are many places to go in search of comparative government material; while we offer some avenues for you to investigate, you should not end your search here. These suggestions are not formally endorsed by the College Board but are simply a list that we have compiled to provide you with a starting point as you gather your own unique materials in teaching this class. Every AP Comparative Government and Politics course is distinctive and reflects the strengths of the individual instructor. For additional resources, refer to Jean Robinson’s essay “Overview: Past, Present, Future” in chapter 1, and the sample syllabi in chapter 3.

The AP Comparative Government and Politics Course Home Page at AP Central (apcentral.collegeboard.com/govpolcomp) is the best source for material. This site is maintained by the College Board and has an incredible amount of information on all AP courses written by high school teachers, college professors, and other experts. Materials include a Course Description; exam information; the College Board Store; teaching tips; briefing papers (see below); and reviews of many Web sites, articles, books, and more in the Teachers’ Resources area that are contributed by classroom teachers and college instructors.

Online Briefing Papers at AP Central

A series of briefing papers, some with the scope and depth of a chapter in an introductory textbook, have been specifically written to cover concepts and countries from the AP Comparative Government and Politics course. They are focused on:

- Democratization (by G. Bingham Powell, Jr., University of Rochester, and Eleanor N. Powell, Harvard University)
- Globalization (by Matthew Krain, The College of Wooster)
- Iran (by Mehrzad Boroujerdi, Syracuse University)
- Mexico (by Caroline Beer, University of Vermont)
- Nigeria (by Paul J. Kaiser, University of Pennsylvania)

Online Articles at AP Central

The following short, topical articles may also be used as additional resources:

- “Challenges of European Union Enlargement,” by Beate Sissenich, Indiana University
- “Elite Transformation and Institutional Change: The Recent Party Congresses in China,” by Kristen Parris, Western Washington University
- “Russia’s Elections and ‘Managed Democracy,’” by Henry Hale, Indiana University
- “Illiberal Democracy and Vladimir Putin’s Russia,” by Neil J. Mitchell, University of New Mexico

Textbooks

This Teacher’s Guide does not endorse or recommend any particular textbook. Instead, it offers a list of books that are often used by AP teachers and at the college introductory level. In assessing these textbooks for your own use, consider several factors.

First, select a book that appeals to you and fits your students’ reading ability and their interest level. You will notice that some texts are denser than others and offer exhaustive information and examples. Some have more graphs and charts than others. Some are more readable but less formal. Some use more technical vocabulary than others. Some are more abstract while others offer more specifics. Some have glossaries and some don’t. Some are better respected by organizations that review them. Some are organized thematically, others country by country. Some might not include the countries covered in AP Comparative Government and Politics. Some may be written by just one or two authors; in others, each country chapter is prepared by a different person. (In this case you will have to decide whether the advantages of expertise seen in the latter approach outweigh the advantages of continuity, style, and usually more explicit inter-country comparison in the former.) Many have companion Web sites with updates, practice tests, and opportunities for further exploration. It is always worth considering using supplemental materials such as test banks and teacher’s manuals. Some of your decision criteria will be based on other considerations. States or school districts often have specific criteria regarding binding or costs, for example. No text will be perfect. A textbook that engages some students may be the worst choice for others. You must select the one that you think will work best in your situation.

Second, remember that these texts are manufactured for colleges where students purchase textbooks every semester. While some high schools also have students purchase their texts, many others provide the text to their students. In Karen’s district, teachers can adopt a textbook once every few years. Her current

Chapter 5

textbook has two brief mentions of Tony Blair; no mention at all of Vicente Fox, the first non-PRI president of Mexico; no references to Iran; and no discussion of President Hu of China.

Although this problem is not insurmountable, it is impossible to teach a valid comparative course using just a textbook—even a more recent edition. You should provide students with supplemental, current materials in order to enrich and enhance their understanding of each of the topics in AP Comparative Government and Politics. At best, textbooks are basic primers that offer a starting perspective. Even the most recent editions are out of date the moment they are published because the political world is always changing. All teachers need to regularly refer to quality news sources and use the information and articles in class.

Third, there are several good sources for advice. The AP Comparative Government and Politics Teachers' Resources area on AP Central offers a very helpful review of textbooks. The EDG is a great place to ask for suggestions (you can also search the archives for discussions about textbook choices, a popular topic).

Fourth, there are several places where you can go to personally review books. At the AP Summer Institutes, textbook companies often contribute free books for participants to take home. Textbook publishers also usually offer examination copies for free; contact publishers directly to obtain as many as you can to review and to keep as resources. In addition, you can view textbook content on various Web sites, which typically provide a table of contents and sometimes a sample from the text itself.

A list of textbooks that are often used in comparative politics courses follows:

Almond, Gabriel, et al. 2003. *Comparative Politics Today: A World View*. 8th ed. New York: Longman.

Curtis, Michael, et al. 2002. *Introduction to Comparative Government*. 5th ed. New York: Longman.

Haus, Charles. 2006. *Comparative Politics: Domestic Responses to Global Challenges*. 5th ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson.

Kesselman, Mark, et al. 2004. *Introduction to Comparative Politics*. 3rd ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Mahler, Gregory S. 2003. *Comparative Politics: An Institutional and Cross-national Approach*. 4th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

McCormick, John. 2004. *Comparative Politics in Transition*. 4th ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson.

O'Neil, Patrick. 2003. *Essentials of Comparative Politics*. New York: W. W. Norton.

Roskin, Michael G. 1998. *Countries and Concepts: An Introduction to Comparative Politics*. 6th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ : Prentice Hall.

Sodaro, Michael J. 2004. *Comparative Politics: A Global Introduction*. 2nd ed. Boston: McGraw-Hill.

Wiarda, Howard J. 2002. *Comparative Democracy and Democratization*. Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt College.

Supplemental Readers

Published readers will allow first-year AP teachers to provide the additional readings they need for their classes. Many of the following readers are collections of current literature on the core countries of this course, and these readers change on an annual basis. If your students buy texts, you could update the annual editions as needed. If you adopt texts only periodically, annual editions may prove frustrating to you. You may decide to compile your own reader in a few years, which can be particularly useful for students since you can tailor the selections to reflect your unique course.

Brown, Bernard E. 2000. *Comparative Politics: Notes and Readings*. 9th ed. Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt College.

This is a collection of modern and classic readings that introduce important concepts and theories to students in light of current trends.

O'Meara, Patrick, Howard Mehlinger, and Matthew Krain. 2000. *Globalization and the Challenges of a New Century: A Reader*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

This collection of articles is less time-specific and concentrates more on “classic” authors and discussions such as articles by Paul Kennedy, Samuel Huntington, or Lester Thurow. The articles are somewhat difficult to read, but students often appreciate the authors’ more philosophical approach.

Global Studies. Guilford, CT: Dushkin.

Editions vary for Latin America, Africa, China, Europe, India, Japan, and Russia. Each volume focuses on a particular area of the world. At the close of each country discussion, there are current articles about the countries mentioned. Visit www.dushkin.com for information.

Soe, Christian, ed. *Annual Editions in Comparative Politics*. Guilford, CT: Dushkin.

These are published yearly and have excellent collections of articles. *Annual Editions in World Politics*, edited by Helen Purkitt, is also available.

CQ Press in Washington, D.C., (publisher of the *Congressional Quarterly*) has an extensive list of titles that may be useful for the AP Comparative Government and Politics course. For more information, visit www.cqpress.com.

Novels and Other Books

Teachers often use nonacademic books to introduce a political system to students. For example, many students already are asked to read novels by Chinua Achebe for their world literature classes. Consider having students read his *Things Fall Apart* (1994, Anchor Books) or *A Man of the People* (1989, Random House). Students can appreciate recent changes in China by reading a short story by current Chinese author Ha Jin. *The Bridegroom* (2001, Vintage Books) has several interesting stories. *Wild Swans* by Jung Chang (2003, Touchstone) is the real-life memoir of three generations of women in China. Students will be fascinated by the rapid changes in China in this story, which begins with the foot-binding of the grandmother, born in 1909, and ends with the transformation of the author, born in 1952, into a modern woman. A recent bestseller, *Reading Lolita in Tehran* by Azar Nafisi (2003, Random House), tells quite a compelling story of a young woman in Iran. These are but a few of the sources that may help students become aware of political change and culture in systems that are very different from our own. Again, you must find material that appeals to you and your students—this may take two or three years. You cannot

Chapter 5

expect students to read *all* of the things you discover. Choose sources that seem best suited to their overall learning.

Web Sites

The best and worst thing about Web sites is that they are usually free and easily accessible. There are too many sources out there, some with limited credibility and some that disappear overnight or are seriously outdated and in need of revision. Your task is to help students assess Web site credibility. Before you send your students to a site, you should check it out yourself quite thoroughly to ascertain whether it is current, credible, and worthwhile. Still, often by chance you can discover wonderful Web sources. Recently, Karen came across a great online article on Chinese reform while reading a paper turned in by a student in which the online source was mentioned.

The sites listed below provide a wealth of useful information. Again, check AP Central for updates on new sites and read the EDG, which often mentions new sites discovered by teachers.

AP Central

Main Entry Page

<http://apcentral.collegeboard.com>

AP Comparative Government and Politics Course Home Page

<http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/govpolcomp>

AP Government and Politics Electronic Discussion Group

<http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/community/edg>

CIA World Factbook

www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/

You will find a wealth of basic information in a short and easily accessible format.

CIRI Human Rights Data

www.humanrightsdata.org

This site contains a free database of variables indicating how well governments respect a wide variety of human rights, enabling country comparisons across many issues. It covers 195 countries from 1981 to 2004.

Council on Foreign Relations

www.cfr.org

This Web site publishes many interesting articles and has a searchable database.

Election World

www.electionworld.org

This site contains a data set on elections around the world. This is useful if one of the countries recently had an election and you need up-to-date information.

Freedom House

www.freedomhouse.org

Freedom House provides information on democracy and rates countries according to their levels of democracy.

Nationmaster

www.nationmaster.com

This site provides a wealth of comparative statistics and charts, and allows you to make your own.

The Political Compass

www.politicalcompass.org

This site from the UK has a great quiz that students can take to find their personal ideological rating, which can then be compared with the ratings of political leaders and historical figures.

Transparency International

www.transparency.org

This group collects and analyzes data on corruption problems around the world.

U.S. Department of State Background Notes

www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/

This is a State Department source that offers demographic, historical, and political information for countries with which the United States has relations.

U.S. Department of State Country Reports on Human Rights Practices

www.state.gov/g/drl/hr/c1470.htm

The State Department provides an annual compendium of reports on a wide variety of human rights, covering almost every country in the world.

World Bank

www.worldbank.org

The World Bank has many different links to data on a variety of subjects, including gender and development (www.worldbank.org/gender). This site also provides information on ordering several different sets of data for classroom use.

Country-Specific Web Sites:

BBC

<http://news.bbc.co.uk>

The United Kingdom's premier news agency provides world news and particularly interesting and in-depth reports about Europe and the United Kingdom.

Chapter 5

Check out the BBC's history of the 1979 Iranian revolution (www.bbc.co.uk/persian/revolution) or its great set of pages on the CCP Congress in China and Chinese history and government organization (http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/spl/hi/asia_pac/02/china_party_congress/china_ruling_party/html/default.stm)

Chinese Propaganda Posters

www.iisg.nl/~landsberger

You will find a wealth of Chinese propaganda posters from the Maoist era to the present and other interesting information.

European Union

<http://europa.eu.int>

Here you will find information on European Union institutions and happenings.

MEXOnline

www.mexonline.com/mexagency.htm

This site contains information on Mexican politics and elections, various institutes, the Mexican cabinet, transportation, embassies and consulates, the Constitution of Mexico, President Vicente Fox, and government and private organizations.

Nigerian National Data Bank

www.nigeriandatabank.org

This site contains data about Nigeria's economy.

NigeriaSite

www.nigeriasite.com/newslinks.html

This site provides links to news stories and to government sources such as the Constitution and federal ministries.

Political Database of the Americas

www.georgetown.edu/pdba/

Georgetown University's Political Database of the Americas (Western Hemisphere countries) includes information about constitutional studies, electoral systems, civil society, political parties, executive institutions, legislative institutions, and judicial institutions.

Russia Votes

www.russiavotes.org

Everything you might want to know about public opinion in Russia and Russian election results can be found here. This site often has information papers on specific aspects of Russian politics and is updated frequently.

Statistical Centre of Iran

www.sci.org.ir

This site provides statistics on Iran. It also provides an interesting point-of-view example because it uses a different calendar (as it explains: “The Iranian year begins from 21 March of each Christian year and ends on the 20th of the next year. To convert the Iranian year into the Christian year, please add 621 years to the reference year.”).

Periodicals

Teachers and students must be able to discuss and analyze current problems, shifts, changes, and challenges in AP Comparative Government and Politics. This requires that attention be paid to current periodicals. Many excellent sources are available free of charge on the Internet, while print sources are available for a fee. National newspapers generally have better international coverage than do local newspapers. Many teachers find that journals such as the *Economist* are essential for bringing their courses up-to-date. The periodicals listed below are readily available, but teachers may find other sources equally useful for their own personal instruction. Again, teachers need to assess these sources for their usefulness.

China Daily

www.chinadaily.com.cn

News from China in English.

Christian Science Monitor

www.csmonitor.com

The *Christian Science Monitor* is published five days a week and offers balanced, analytical coverage of national and international events.

Current History

www.currenthistory.com

This periodical is issued six times a year; each issue concentrates on different areas of the world. The analytical articles are generally about five to six pages long and provide useful additions to the curriculum.

Economist

www.economist.com

The *Economist* reports world political and economic news with excellent coverage, analysis, and data. Also check out the *Economist's* country briefings (www.economist.com/countries). In general, these country briefings provide an excellent, up-to-date overview of the core countries for this course, as well as links to current *Economist* articles, some of which are free. Many AP Comparative Government and Politics teachers subscribe to the print version.

Foreign Affairs

www.foreignaffairs.org

This is a well-established journal that publishes in-depth articles on a variety of topics. It is both very readable and thought provoking.

Chapter 5

Iran Daily
www.iran-daily.com

News from Iran in English.

Moscow News
www.mn.ru/english

News from Russia in English.

Moscow Times
www.themoscowtimes.com

News from Russia in English.

New York Times
www.nytimes.com

Nigeria World
www.nigeriaworld.com

News from Nigeria in English.

Washington Post
www.washingtonpost.com

Movies/Videos/DVDs

Adam's Rib (1992), a film by Vyacheslav Krishtofovich, produced by Fox Lorber, tells the story of women in the Soviet Union.

Children of Zapata (1996) is a video about political unrest in Chiapas, Mexico. www.filmakers.com

China: A Century of Revolution (2002), a three-disc set released by Winstar Home Entertainment, has primary footage from the early 1900s through the 1989 demonstration at Tiananmen Square. It tells quite an interesting tale but is six hours long.

The Commanding Heights (2002), produced by WGBH, is a three-video set that discusses globalization and terrorism. www.pbs.org/wgbh/commandingheights/

Emerging Powers (1996) is a set of videos that looks at the emerging economies of China, Mexico, Brazil, and India. It is produced by Wall Street Journal videos and introduces nicely the challenges faced by governments in transition. www.worldpolicy.org

Frontline: China in the Red (2003) is a two-hour documentary that chronicles three pivotal years in China's ongoing effort to modernize its economy through the stories of 10 Chinese individuals: factory workers, rural villagers, and a millionaire entrepreneur. www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/red/

Frontline: Return of the Czar (2000) reviews the economic policies of the Yeltsin years and the involvement of the U.S. government in pressing for reforms. www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/yeltsin/

Frontline: Terror and Tehran (2002) provides an overview of Iran and its politics as well as the relationship between the United States and Iran, including the effect the U.S. war on terrorism has had on Iran's reform movement. www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/tehran/

Yes, Prime Minister, a BBC series from the mid-1980s that spoofed the British government, is available on videotape. www.bbcamericashop.com

Television

During the year be aware of programs being shown on television. For example, students like to listen to the British Prime Minister's question hour, which is broadcast on C-SPAN. Often there are interesting specials during the course of the school year. You can tape them and use them in your classroom.

You may find other interesting films at your local video rental store or library. A good time to expose students to films from other countries is after the AP Exam. This is a great cultural experience for them.

Professional Associations

National Humanities Center

www.nhc.rtp.nc.us/pds/pds.htm

This organization is designed to promote history and literature. Its Web site contains online toolboxes for teachers to use, each specific to a certain period and containing primary documents that help illustrate the issues related to that period.

National Council for the Social Studies

www.socialstudies.org

The mission of this organization is to provide leadership, service, and support for social studies educators.

The American Political Science Association

www.apsanet.org

This professional organization for the study of political science serves more than 15,000 members in more than 80 countries. APSA brings together political scientists from all fields of inquiry, regions, and occupational endeavors within and outside academe to expand awareness and understanding of politics.

People

A great source for you may be right at your doorstep. Students come from all over the world and very often have interesting stories or have parents who do. Once, Karen had a student whose grandfather had been in the Long March and whose mother had been a member of the Red Guard. This student had very interesting tales to tell about her family. Sarah had a student whose parents had written an underground newspaper in the Soviet Union and fled the country when the student was young. Find out if you have exchange students or immigrants at your school from the countries studied in AP Comparative Government and Politics. Invite local people to speak—usually they are very willing to talk to AP students. Also, consider specialists at your local college. If you are not a great expert on economic reform, contact the political science or economics departments and see if they can help you out. You never know until you ask.

Professional Development

In the following section, the College Board outlines its professional development opportunities in support of AP educators.

The teachers, administrators, and AP Coordinators involved in the AP Program compose a dedicated, engaged, vibrant community of educational professionals. Welcome!

We invite you to become an active participant in the community. The College Board offers a variety of professional development opportunities designed to educate, support, and invigorate both new and experienced AP teachers and educational professionals. These year-round offerings range from half-day workshops to intensive weeklong summer institutes, from the AP Annual Conference to AP Central, and from participation in an AP Reading to Development Committee membership.

Workshops and Summer Institutes

At the heart of the College Board's professional development offerings are workshops and summer institutes. Participating in an AP workshop is generally one of the first steps to becoming a successful AP teacher. Workshops range in length from half-day to weeklong events and are focused on all 37 AP courses and a range of supplemental topics. Workshop consultants are innovative, successful, and experienced AP teachers; teachers trained in developmental skills and strategies; college faculty members; and other qualified educational professionals who have been trained and endorsed by the College Board. For new and experienced teachers, these course-specific training opportunities encompass all aspects of AP course content, organization, evaluation, and methodology. For administrators, counselors, and AP Coordinators, workshops address critical issues faced in introducing, developing, supporting, and expanding AP programs in secondary schools. They also serve as a forum for exchanging ideas about AP.

While the AP Program does not have a set of formal requirements that teachers must satisfy prior to teaching an AP course, the College Board suggests that AP teachers have considerable experience and an advanced degree in the discipline before undertaking an AP course.

AP Summer Institutes provide teachers with in-depth training in AP courses and teaching strategies. Participants engage in at least 30 hours of training led by College Board-endorsed consultants and receive printed materials, including excerpts from AP Course Descriptions, AP Exam information, and other course-specific teaching resources. Many locations offer guest speakers, field trips, and other hands-on activities. Each institute is managed individually by staff at the sponsoring institution under the guidelines provided by the College Board.

Participants in College Board professional development workshops and summer institutes are eligible for continuing education units (CEUs). The College Board is authorized by the International Association for Continuing Education and Training (IACET) to offer CEUs. IACET is an internationally recognized organization that provides standards and authorization for continuing education and training.

Workshop and institute offerings for the AP Comparative Government and Politics teacher (or potential teacher) range from introductory to topic-specific events and include offerings tailored to teachers in the middle and early high school years. To learn more about scheduled workshops and summer institutes near you, visit the Institutes & Workshops area on AP Central: apcentral.collegeboard.com/events.

Online Events

The College Board offers a wide variety of online events, which are presented by College Board-endorsed consultants and recognized subject-matter experts to participants via a Web-based, real-time interface. Online events range from one hour to several days and are interactive, allowing for exchanges between the presenter and participants and between participants. Like face-to-face workshops, online events vary in focus from introductory themes to specific topics, and many offer CEUs for participants. For a complete list of upcoming and archived online events, visit apcentral.collegeboard.com/onlineevents.

Archives of many past online events are also available for free or for a small fee. Archived events can be viewed on your computer at your convenience.

AP Central

AP Central is the College Board's online home for AP professionals. The site offers a wealth of resources, including Course Descriptions, sample syllabi, exam questions, a vast database of teaching resource reviews, lesson plans, course-specific feature articles, and much more. Bookmark the information on AP Central about AP Comparative Government: apcentral.collegeboard.com/govpolcomp

AP Program information is also available on the site, including exam calendars, fee and fee reduction policies, student performance data, participation forms, research reports, college and university AP grade acceptance policies, and more.

AP professionals are encouraged to contribute to the resources on AP Central by submitting articles or lesson plans for publication and by adding comments to Teacher's Resources reviews.

Electronic Discussion Groups

The AP electronic discussion groups (EDGs) were created to provide a moderated forum for the exchange of ideas, insights, and practices among AP teachers, AP Coordinators, consultants, AP Exam Readers, administrators, and college faculty. EDGs are Web-based threaded discussion groups focused on specific AP courses or roles, giving participants the ability to post and respond to questions online to be viewed by other members of the EDG. To join an EDG, visit apcentral.collegeboard.com/community/edg.

AP Annual Conference

The AP Annual Conference (APAC) is a gathering of the AP community, including teachers, secondary school administrators, and college faculty. The APAC is the only national conference that focuses on providing complete strategies for middle and high school teachers and administrators involved in the AP Program. The 2007 conference will be held July 11 to 15 in Las Vegas, Nevada. Conference events include presentations by each course's Development Committee, course- and topic-specific sessions, guest speakers, and pre- and postconference workshops for new and experienced teachers. To learn more about this year's event, please visit www.collegeboard.com/apac.

AP professionals are encouraged to lead workshops and presentations at the conference. Proposals are due in the fall of each year prior to the event (visit AP Central for specific deadlines and requirements).

Professional Opportunities

College Board Consultants and Contributors

Experienced AP teachers and educational professionals share their techniques, best practices, materials, and expertise with other educators by serving as College Board consultants and contributors. They may lead workshops and summer institutes, sharing their proven techniques and best practices with new and experienced AP teachers, AP Coordinators, and administrators. They may also contribute to AP course and exam development (writing exam questions or serving on a Development Committee) or evaluate AP Exams at the annual AP Reading. Consultants and contributors may be teachers, postsecondary faculty, counselors, administrators, and retired educators. They receive an honorarium for their work and are reimbursed for expenses.

To learn more about becoming a workshop consultant, visit apcentral.collegeboard.com/consultant.

AP Exam Readers

High school and college faculty members from around the world gather in the United States each June to evaluate and score the free-response sections of the AP Exams at the annual AP Reading. AP Exam Readers are led by a Chief Reader, a college professor who has the responsibility of ensuring that students receive grades that accurately reflect college-level achievement. Readers describe the experience as providing unparalleled insight into the exam evaluation process and as an opportunity for intensive collegial exchange between high school and college faculty. (More than 8,500 Readers participated in the 2006 Reading.) High school Readers receive certificates awarding professional development hours and CEUs for their participation in the AP Reading. To apply to become an AP Reader, go to <http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/readers>.

Development Committee Members

The dedicated members of each course's Development Committee play a critical role in the preparation of the Course Description and exam. They represent a diverse spectrum of knowledge and points of view in their fields and, as a group, are the authority when it comes to making subject-matter decisions in the exam-construction process. The AP Development Committees represent a unique collaboration between high school and college educators.

AP Grants

The College Board offers a suite of competitive grants that provide financial and technical assistance to schools and teachers interested in expanding access to AP. The suite consists of three grant programs: College Board AP Fellows, College Board Pre-AP Fellows, and the AP Start-Up Grant, totaling over \$600,000 in annual support for professional development and classroom resources. The programs provide stipends for teachers and schools that want to start an AP program or expand their current program. Schools and teachers that serve minority and/or low income students who have been traditionally underrepresented in AP courses are given preference. To learn more, visit apcentral.collegeboard.com/apgrants.

Our Commitment to Professional Development

The College Board is committed to supporting and educating AP teachers, AP Coordinators, and administrators. We encourage you to attend professional development events and workshops to expand your knowledge of and familiarity with the AP course(s) you teach or that your school offers, and then to share that knowledge with other members of the AP community. In addition, we recommend that you join professional associations, attend meetings, and read journals to help support your involvement in the community of educational professionals in your discipline. By working with other educational professionals, you will strengthen that community and increase the variety of teaching resources you use.

Your work in the classroom and your contributions to professional development help the AP Program continue to grow, providing students worldwide with the opportunity to engage in college-level learning while still in high school.