



The U. S. Constitution Series
In Partnership with the National Constitution Center

AP[®] Comparative Government and Politics

Civil Liberties and Rights Worldwide



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Workshop Handbook

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Acknowledgements

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Civil Liberties and Rights Worldwide

This lesson will provide you the opportunity to analyze and compare civil liberties and rights in other countries around the world using the National Constitution Center's *Rights Around the World* interactive site. You will compare particular civil liberties and rights (i.e., expression, press, petition, religion, due process, and double jeopardy) found in the U.S. Constitution with those written in foundational documents of other countries including those core to the course (Great Britain, Mexico, Iran, Nigeria, Russia, and China), analyzing the wording of these rights using the interactive site. Using current events and other contemporary sources, you may also extend your investigation of how many of these rights/liberties among core countries are protected in practice.

Directions

Read the excerpt below and respond to the questions which follow.

Iran's Constitution defines the regime as an Islamic State based on the tenets of Jafari Shi'a Islam. However, in addition to Shi'a Muslims, Iran is home to sizable Sunni Muslim, Christian, Jewish, Baha'i and Zoroastrian communities, and the population is accustomed to the participation of non-Muslims in society. The Constitution guarantees the rights of protected religious minorities to practice their faith and even allots five seats in the parliament for representatives of recognized minority religions. However, despite official recognition, religious minorities face discrimination in practice. For example, non-Shi'a Muslims often struggle to gain entrance to universities and face institutional barriers in finding jobs, and since the government views the Baha'i as an apostate sect of Islam*, unlawful arrests, imprisonments and arson of Baha'i property in recent years have in some cases been ignored.

Nigeria also has Constitutional safeguards protecting freedom of religion: "Every person shall be entitled to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, including freedom to change his religion or belief...."¹ However, in recent years the government's inability and alleged unwillingness to effectively address the country's sectarian violence have allowed discrimination and hostilities against religious minorities to go unchecked. The government has failed to take legal action in the vast majority of 12,000 deaths linked to ethno-religious violence since the country's transition to democracy in 1999.

*Apostate: in Islam, relating to the deliberate abandonment of Islam by a Muslim in words or actions.

Sources: <http://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/essays/religious-freedom-in-iran>

<http://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/essays/religious-freedom-in-nigeria>

¹National Constitution Center's Rights Around the World Interactive website: <http://constitutionalrights.constitutioncenter.org/app/home/world>

Questions

1. How would you characterize religious freedom in both Iran and Nigeria?

2. How are non-Shi'a Muslims treated relative to followers of Jafari Shi'a Islam? Why are followers of Baha'i faith singled out for harassment?

3. Why is it difficult to assess the level of protection of civil liberties and rights or liberties in a given country based solely on constitutions and other legal documents?

Using the *Rights Around the World* Interactive Site

Rights Around the World

The National Constitution Center developed the Rights Around the World interactive website to provide users the opportunity to compare rights in the U.S. Constitution to corresponding rights in national constitutions in force across the world. For more information about the Rights Around the World interactive site, visit <http://constitutionalrights.constitutioncenter.org/app/home/world>

Using the National Constitution Center's *Rights Around the World* interactive site, we will investigate some of the civil liberties and rights that might be similar in the United States and Brazil.

First, let's look at the interactive site, which can be found at (<http://constitutionalrights.constitutioncenter.org/app/home/world>).

Then, we will use it to complete the chart below.

Directions:

Using the National Constitution Center's *Rights Around the World* interactive site, complete the organizer and respond to the questions the follow.

Civil Liberties and Rights	U.S.	Brazil
Expression		
Due Process		

Civil Liberties and Rights	U.S.	Brazil
Right to Bear Arms		
Freedom of Religion		
Examine Witness		

Civil Liberties and Rights	U.S.	Brazil
Birthright Citizenship		

Directions:

Using the National Constitution Center's *Rights Around the World* interactive site, complete the organizer and respond to the questions that follow.

Country	Assembly	Right to Counsel	Right to Bear Arms
<p>U.S.</p>			
<p>Comparison Country I</p> <p>_____</p>			
<p>Comparison Country II</p> <p>_____</p>			

Questions

1. Which of the three rights is most clearly protected in your assigned country? Support your answer using evidence from the interactive documents.

2. Which of the three rights is most clearly protected in the other country your group chose to investigate? Support your answer using evidence from the interactive documents.

3. Are there restrictions or limitations placed on any of these rights and liberties in either country? Why or why not?

Directions:

Using the National Constitution Center’s *Rights Around the World* interactive site, work with your team to complete the organizer for your assigned country, describing the rights/liberties and noting how they compare with rights/liberties found in the U.S. You will present your findings to the class and then complete the organizer when all six teams have completed their presentations. As a class, we will discuss how to apply a human rights ranking from 1-10 (with 10 being the most protective of civil liberties and rights) for each country based on the analysis of the documents.

Country	Expression	Press	Petition	Religion	Due Process	Double Jeopardy
U.S.						
Mexico						
Great Britain						
Russia						
China						
Nigeria						
Iran						

When you rank the countries, be sure to include a reason for your ranking based on the evidence you and your classmates found in the texts on the interactive site, as well as what you know about each country's regime/government type and willingness and ability to protect the selected rights and liberties

Human Rights Rankings

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

Directions:

You will now draft a response to the prompt below. A chart has been included for you to gather and organize your evidence before you begin to draft your response.

Prompt: Compare and contrast two regime/government types based on the degree to which civil liberties and rights are protected in written constitutions and laws. Justify your response with evidence.

Regime/Government Type:	Examples of Countries	Examples of Rights Protected

Practice AP Comparative Government and Politics Exam Questions Modified from the 2003 Exam Free Response Question #1

In China, opportunities for citizen participation have increased since the initiation of reform.

- a. Support this thesis with responses to each of the following:
 - › Describe two political rights that Chinese citizens enjoy that support their participation.
- b. Dispute this thesis with responses to each of the following:
 - › Explain two ways in which the political rights of Chinese citizens are limited by the government.

**Practice AP Comparative Government and Politics Exam Questions
Modified from the 2011 Exam Free Response Question #8:**

Political scientists often examine political rights and civil liberties to assess regime type.

- a. Explain the difference between political rights and civil liberties.
- b. Identify one country with an authoritarian form of government and one country with a democratic form of government.
- c. Support your claims about the type of government in each country with an evaluation of the state of political rights and civil liberties in each country.