

AP Comparative Politics and Government
Fall and Spring Semester
Pre-Coursework

1. Textbook: Read to page 31 (stopping at “Political Culture) in *AP Comparative Government & Politics: An Essential Coursebook, 8th Edition* by Ethel Wood. (7th Edition will be similar). Complete the questions and terms below that go along with the textbook reading
2. Read “After Decades of Triumph, Democracy is Losing Ground” from the *Economist*.
<https://www.economist.com/international/2018/06/14/after-decades-of-triumph-democracy-is-losing-ground>. Complete the questions about the article below.
3. Complete the current event assignment

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Textbook Questions and Terms

Before the course begins, read your textbook to page 31 (stop at “Political Culture”). Then answer all questions and define the terms *in your own words*. Anticipate an assessment on this material early in the course.

What is Comparative Politics?

Study Questions:

- What is politics?
- Give an example of empirical data. Give an example of a normative statement. What is the role of both in studying politics?
- Contrast causation with correlation.
- What is the problem with using the Three-World approach?

Terms: Civil Society, Advanced Democracies, Informal Politics

Understanding the State

Study Questions:

- How do the concepts of regime and government differ from one another?
- If the UK Parliament selects a new Prime Minister, does that qualify as a regime change or a government change? Explain why.
- What are institutions and why are they important? Give an example.
- What is the difference between direct and indirect democracies?
- What is the purpose of the state?
- Why is legitimacy important?
- Explain the three basic forms of legitimacy.

Terms: State, sovereignty, autonomy, nation, corporatism, coup d'état, pluralism, common law vs. code law

“After Decades of Triumph, Democracy is Losing Ground”

- According to the author, why is democracy in decline?
- What are the steps of democratic decline? (The author credits Putin with perfecting the technique.)

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Current Events

You'll submit a one-page summary and analysis of a recent event in one of the six AP States – Mexico, Nigeria, UK, Iran, Russia, or China. You may select whichever state you like.

Finding Articles:

After picking one of the six states, read up on its recent news. Select one news article to write about for this assignment. The article should be current (within the last several weeks) and in-depth. Look specifically for articles that relate to the course. For instance, look for news about elections, the ruling government, political protests, etc. Avoid stories that are really about the United States relationship with your assigned state.

I recommend that you use one of the following news outlets known for their international coverage:

The Economist
The BBC

The Washington Post
The New York Times

The Guardian
Foreign Policy

If you prefer local news sources, you can also access these websites. Keep in mind the restrictions on free press that exist in some countries:

Great Britain - www.thetimes.co.uk

China - www.chinadaily.com.cn

Iran - www.irna.ir www.iran-daily.com www.tehran.com

Nigeria - www.ngrguardiannews.com

Mexico - www.pan.org.mx (can translate in Google)

Russia - www.themoscowtimes.com www.regnum.ru/english

Written Format:

Write one page about your news article. Give a summary and analysis of the article. Include the article's key points and **why** the topic is important. Be prepared to share your findings with the class.