

## SYLLABUS

### AP Comparative Government & Politics (APCoGo) QSI Virtual School

#### Instructor Information

Instructor: Jennifer Sedmak

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Weekly Meetings (optional Teams meeting): weekly day and time TBD

Preferred Method of Communication: Teams

#### Course Description

In this course students will acquire college-level knowledge and skills used by comparative political scientists to explore big ideas about power, authority, legitimacy, stability, democratization, internal and external forces, and methods of political analysis. This course focusses on the following six countries as case studies: the United Kingdom, Russia, China, Iran, Mexico, and Nigeria. Students will study concepts from the field of political science and apply these to these six case study countries. By studying data and political writing from different countries, students will learn to draw conclusions and make reasoned arguments about different political systems and governments.

Recommended for Secondary III or IV students

Credit earned: 10 QSI credits / 1 Carnegie credit

Approximate length of course: 1 school year

#### Course Prerequisites

None, but higher-level mastery in World Geography and World History (or similar Social Studies courses) is strongly recommended.

#### Required Materials

(E-)textbook: O'Neil, *Essentials of Comparative Politics (AP Edition)*, WWNorton.

Additional news media will be provided from the following sources:

- *The Economist*
- *BBC*
- *Russia Today*
- *South China Morning Post*
- *Al Jazeera*
- *The Nation Nigeria*
- *Mexico News Daily*

#### Technology Information and Requirements

Computer with internet access

Microphone

QVS account & linked e-mail account

Microsoft Teams

College Board account to access AP Classroom

#### Course Grading

Grades of all essential units are determined based on mastery of all TSWs (=The Student Will) and the following rubric:

**General Rubric – This can be used with all essential units**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Students will demonstrate mastery during in class activities, formative assessments, and/or summative assessments.

- All AP Course Objectives below must be mastered for a ‘B’.
- 4 of 6 ‘A’ level AP Course Objectives below should be met to receive an ‘A’.

AP Course Objectives	B level	A level	Comments
<b>Unit Content Mastery</b>	I can show evidence of my understanding of the unit content by <b>demonstrating mastery of ALL TSWs in this unit.</b>	I can connect my participation of in-class learning by demonstrating mastery of all TSWs in this unit, as well as showing evidence that connects TSWs of this unit to other units and/or Big Ideas.	
<b>Unit Content Organization</b>	I can show that I have organized the content from this unit. This includes but is not limited to my notes, classwork, and/or class activities.	I can show evidence of processing my coursework by adding my own reflections and questions to my classwork and notes. This demonstrates a higher level of AP study preparation.	
<b>Big Ideas</b>	I can use the Big Ideas of AP Comparative Government as required by this unit’s TSWs.	I can use the Big Ideas of AP Comparative Government to make strong connections between units and their major themes.	
<b>Course Skills:</b>	I can apply the 5 disciplinary practices to unit content. (1. Concept Application; 2. Country Comparison; 3. Data Analysis; 4. Source Analysis; 5. Argumentation.)	I can effectively apply the 5 disciplinary practices by making connections to the Big Ideas and unit content. (1. Concept Application; 2. Country Comparison; 3. Data Analysis; 4. Source Analysis; 5. Argumentation)	
<b>Reflection</b>	In my reflection, I... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss all TSWs of the unit.</li> <li>• Explain my decision-making process in this unit.</li> <li>• Explain the thematic connections between TSWs.</li> <li>• Use specific evidence from the organization I have kept during the unit to support these connections.</li> </ul>	In my reflection, I... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain growth over time that is reflected in this unit and its TSWs.</li> <li>• Show critical and independent thinking in making connections between the parts of the unit and previous units.</li> </ul>	
<b>AP Type Assessment</b>	I can complete an end-of-unit assessment that evidences a good level of understanding, equivalent to a 3 in the AP grading system.	I can complete an end-of-unit assessment that evidences a high level of understanding equivalent to a 4 or 5 in the AP grading system.	
<b>AP Classroom</b>	I can use AP Classroom for review and complete set questions/tasks by the teacher, seeking feedback and support when needed.		

**Assignments will be graded as follows:**

- Attempted /NOT Completed - the student has attempted the assignment, but it is not done correctly or completely to mastery standards.
- Completed – the assignment in question is completed to mastery standards for the TSW being evaluated.

- Mastery “B” - the student has met the criteria covered by the assignment for Mastery. This is sometimes also referred to as “B Level Mastery”.

### **Units will be graded as follows:**

Every unit has a start date and an end date per your course calendar.

- P: unit(s) in progress according to the course calendar.
- A or B: a unit has been mastered
- D: student is not meeting expectations about the amount of work submitted in a given time period and is therefore “deficient in effort”.

### **Teacher feedback and revision of work:**

- The instructor will endeavour to return work within 24 hours, excepting weekends and holidays.
- If a student does not receive feedback within 48 hours, the student should contact the instructor.
- The student will endeavour to revise any assignment that requires it within 48 hours.

### **Progression through course units:**

- Students must close a unit with at least a B before beginning the next unit.
- Students may only complete two (2) units in June. That is to say that if a student has fallen behind during the school year it is not possible to close more than two units between June 1st and the last day of school (typically, mid-June).

## **Course content**

### **Welcome to QVS APCoGo (pre-requisite for engaging in the units):**

- Intro (online) Lesson: Welcome to APCoGo on QVS
- Introductory meeting with instructor
- Enroll in AP Classroom section
- Access e-textbook
- Pre-assessment: Mock Exam

### **E01: Introduction to AP Comparative Government**

#### WEEK 1

- **TSW1** summarize the disciplinary practices and big ideas central to the course, as described in the CED. (*Lesson with integrated quizzes*)
- **TSW2** describe the elements which make up the end-of-course exam, as described in the CED. (*Lesson with integrated quizzes*)
- **TSW3** explain the methods used by political scientists to construct knowledge and communicate inferences and explanations about political systems, institutional interactions, and behavior. (*Lesson with integrated quizzes*)

#### WEEK 2

- **TSW4** analyze the demographics of each of the six course countries, including elements such as: population size and distribution, age-sex pyramids, major ethnic and religious groups, or economic inequality. (*Infographics*)
- **TSW5** map the six course countries, including elements such as: bordering countries, major cities, population distribution, or major physical landforms which impact the country socially or politically. (*Maps*)

- **TSW6** discuss the recent history of each of the six course countries. (*Timelines*)
- **TSW7** evaluate rationales for including each of the six countries in the AP course.
- **E01 Test**

### **E02: Focus on Course Countries**

This is a yearlong unit, allowing the student to apply what is introduced in the subsequent units (E03-E09) to real-world contemporary issues in the context of the 6 course countries, while developing the necessary disciplinary practices for the AP Exam. ***Weekly E02 assignments will be integrated into the subsequent essential units to assess concepts in context.***

- **TSW1** discuss current issues and news stories affecting the six course countries, especially as they relate to course concepts.
- **TSW2** develop questions which specifically interest them about one or more of the six course countries.
- **TSW3** locate appropriate sources which will allow them to investigate their questions.
- **TSW4** select relevant details from the gathered sources through annotation or note-taking.
- **TSW5** formulate claims in response to the questions and gathered sources.
- **TSW6** synthesize evidence to support or refine their claims.
- **TSW7** create a final product which presents an argument to answer the question.
- **TSW8** share the results of their findings with the class or a larger audience.

### **E03: Political Systems, Regimes, and Governments**

#### WEEK 1

- **TSW1** differentiate between regimes, states, nations, and governments.
- **TSW2** compare democracy and authoritarianism.
- **TSW3** explain the process and goals of democratization.
- *Annotation & Source Analysis: Regime Type & Democratization (E02 integrated assessment assignment)*

#### WEEK 2

- **TSW4** analyze sources of power and authority in political systems.
- **TSW5** categorize course countries as federal or unitary systems, providing evidence to support the categorization.
- **TSW6** assess the advantages and disadvantages of adopting a federal or unitary system.
- *E02 integrated assessment assignment*

#### WEEK 3

- **TSW7** describe the sources of political legitimacy for different types of regimes among course countries.
- **TSW8** evaluate methods governments use to maintain legitimacy.
- **TSW9** discuss the influence of internal actors on state authority noting ways this can either enhance or threaten stability.
- *E02 integrated assessment assignment*

#### WEEK 4

- *E03 Assessment: Concept Map & Reflection*
- *E03 Test in AP Classroom*

## **E04: Political Institutions I**

### WEEK 1

- **TSW1** differentiate between parliamentary, presidential, and semi-presidential systems.
- **TSW2** compare institutional relations among parliamentary, presidential, and semi-presidential systems.
- *E02 integrated assessment assignment*

### WEEK 2

- **TSW3** analyze the structure, function, and change of executive leadership in course countries.
- **TSW4** describe procedures for the removal of executive leadership by other institutions.
- **TSW5** compare the executive leadership structures of the six course countries.
- **TSW6** evaluate the effectiveness of executive systems of the six course countries.
- *E02 integrated assessment assignment*

### WEEK 3

- *E04 Assessment: Concept Map & Reflection*
- *E04 Test in AP Classroom*

## **E05: Political Institutions II**

### WEEK 1

- **TSW1** describe legislative structures and functions in course countries.
- **TSW2** discuss methods through which legislative powers are constrained by other institutions and/or processes, which can affect legislative independence.
- **TSW5** compare the legislative systems of the six course countries.
- *E02 integrated assessment assignment*

### WEEK 2

- **TSW3** analyze the structure and functions of judiciaries.
- **TSW4** explain the importance of independent judiciaries relative to other political institutions.
- **TSW7** compare the judicial systems of the six course countries.
- *E02 integrated assessment assignment*

### WEEK 3

- **TSW6** evaluate the effectiveness and independence of the legislative systems of the six course countries.
- **TSW8** evaluate the effectiveness and independence of the judicial systems of the six course countries.
- *E02 integrated assessment assignment*

### WEEK 4

- *E05 Assessment: Concept Map & Reflection*
- *E05 Test in AP Classroom*

## **E06: Political Culture**

### WEEK 1

- **TSW1** define and provide examples of civil society.
- **TSW2** explain the role of civil society among course countries.
- **TSW3** formulate hypotheses about the relationship between political culture, citizen behavior, and the role of the state.

- *E02 integrated assessment assignment*

#### WEEK 2

- **TSW4** assess the ways political values and beliefs frame policy choices to address particular political problems.
- **TSW5** differentiate between specific political attitudes and ideologies.
- **TSW6** compare course countries on the basis of dominant political culture, attitudes and ideologies.
- *E02 integrated assessment assignment*

#### WEEK 3

- *E06 Assessment: Concept Map & Reflection*
- *E06 Test in AP Classroom*

### **E07: Political Participation**

#### WEEK 1

- **TSW1** discuss the nature and role of political participation as related to a regime's use of authority and power.
- **TSW2** analyze ways in which political participation affects and is affected by democratic or authoritarian regime types.
- **TSW3** assess the extent to which civil rights and civil liberties are protected or restricted in different regimes.
- **TSW6** compare course countries on the degree of political participation in each.
- *E02 integrated assessment assignment*

#### WEEK 2

- **TSW4** describe politically relevant social cleavages.
- **TSW5** compare political and social cleavages in course countries to determine their effects on citizen relationships and political stability.
- *E02 integrated assessment assignment*

#### WEEK 3

- *E07 Assessment: Concept Map & Reflection*
- *E07 Test in AP Classroom*

### **E08: Party & Electoral Systems & Citizen Organizations**

#### WEEK 1

- **TSW1** describe and compare electoral systems and election rules among course countries.
- **TSW2** evaluate whether election rules serve different regime objectives regarding ballot access, election wins, and constituency accountability.
- *E02 integrated assessment assignment*

#### WEEK 2

- **TSW3** analyze characteristics of political party systems and party membership.
- **TSW4** explain the role of political party systems and memberships in linking citizen participation to policy making.
- *E02 integrated assessment assignment*

#### WEEK 3

- **TSW5** assess the ways in which social movements and interest groups affect social and political change.

- **TSW6** discuss the efficacy of pluralist and corporatist interest group systems.
- *E02 integrated assessment assignment*

#### WEEK 4

- *E08 Assessment: Concept Map & Reflection*
- *E08 Test in AP Classroom*

### **E09: Political & Economic Changes & Development**

#### WEEK 1

- **TSW1** evaluate the influence global economic and technological forces have on political policies, behaviors, and culture.
- **TSW2** compare political responses to global market forces.
- **TSW3** illustrate the challenges that globalization can create for regime sovereignty.
- **TSW4** discuss economic and political liberalization policies.
- *E02 integrated assessment assignment*

#### WEEK 2

- **TSW5** explain the adoption of and consequences associated with economic liberalization policies.
- **TSW6** critique the ways in which international and supranational organizations influence domestic policymakers and national sovereignty.
- **TSW7** provide examples of situations in which governments have adapted social policies to address political, cultural, and economic changes.
- *E02 integrated assessment assignment*

#### WEEK 3

- **TSW8** demonstrate the role rapid industrialization and economic development have played in producing radical changes in governmental policies.
- **TSW9** explain political causes and consequences of demographic changes.
- **TSW10** debate the effects of natural resources on political and economic development.
- *E02 integrated assessment assignment*

#### WEEK 4

- *E09 Assessment: Concept Map & Reflection*
- *E09 Test in AP Classroom*

### **Selective unit (Unit 10):**

- **S01: AP Exam Preparation**
  - **TSW1** Review Notes
  - **TSW2** Practice MCQs (*integrated into essential unit assignments & tests*)
  - **TSW3** AP Classroom activities (*integrated into essential unit assignments & tests*)
  - **TSW4** Analyze Sample FRQs
  - **TSW5** Mock Exam
  - **TSW6** Reflection on Mock Exam

## **Tentative Course Schedule**

Students complete IOL prior to being enrolled into their main QVS course.

Welcome to QVS APCoGo/Mock Exam: Sept. 6-10

E01: Sept. 12-23  
E02: yearlong weekly unit  
E03: Sept. 26-Oct. 21  
E04: Oct 31-Nov 18  
E05: Nov. 21-Dec. 16  
E06: Jan. 9 – Feb 3  
E07: Feb 6 – Mar 3  
E08: Mar. 6-31  
E09: Apr 3 - 28  
S01: Sep 5 – May 3  
Other selective unit(s): May

### Attendance Policy

5 periods per week (or equivalent for students with a block schedule). Students should expect to spend at least 60 additional minutes per day on this course and are advised to spend at least another 30 minutes per day following current events (more specifically about the case study countries).

Students are expected to follow planned pacing or communicate plans for adjusted pacing with instructor. When assignments are submitted in bulk feedback time increases (1 assignment graded per day).

### Classroom Expectations

For synchronous communication:

school appropriate attire, camera on at all times, microphone muted on login

For asynchronous communication:

Be polite and respectful when communicating with other students; bullying will not be tolerated. All content posted needs to be considered appropriate for an academic setting.

### Academic honesty

When working in groups, students are expected to collaborate fairly in a way that ensures that each student masters the material.

In any type of assignment, you are expected to avoid all forms of plagiarism, and use appropriate referencing to give credit to any and all sources that you use.

Students are responsible for being informed about what plagiarism is and how to avoid it and will be given the chance to do in the Introduction to Online Learning (IOL) course when starting QVS.

### Other Information

Students, parents, and monitors can see how students are doing in this course by checking the QVS grade book and QSI Unit Grades/Rubrics, which are updated regularly to provide an accurate picture of student progress.

Parents can contact the instructor via email ([jennifer-sedmak@qvs.qsi.org](mailto:jennifer-sedmak@qvs.qsi.org)) to set up a parent-teacher conference at any point in the school year.

Students are encouraged to maintain consistent and frequent communications with the instructor to help them succeed in this course.





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*QSI Virtual School is a diverse international, multicultural, online learning community, offering meaningful standards-based education through mastery learning.  
We prepare and develop students to have confidence to pursue their dreams and to positively impact the world.  
We challenge. We question. We care.*