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Course Profile: Comparative Government AP

Department	Social Studies		
Course Name	Advanced Placement Comparative Government		
Course Length	1 Year		
High School Credits	1 Credit Social Studies		
Description	This course is designed to provide students with the opportunity to develop comprehensive knowledge about the workings of government in different parts of the world. Six core countries, Britain, Iran, Russia, China, Mexico, and Nigeria, are the case studies in which students will examine various political processes and policy outcomes. By the end of this course, students will understand comparative political concepts and themes, be able to analyze and interpret data essential to comparative politics, gain an understanding of political behavior and consequences in various countries, and compare and contrast political institutions and processes across the countries. The course begins with an introduction to comparative politics with an explanation of why we study comparative politics and how we study comparative politics. Then the curriculum follows a country by country approach in which the topics of sovereignty/power, political institutions, civil society, political and economic change, and public policy are explored for each country. Students are required to think back to the previous countries studied so that they can understand a countries' political process in its own context as well as in comparison to the other countries studied.		
Target/eligible students	11th/12 th Grade students with demonstrated interest in studying foreign governments and international relations.		
Primary texts and materials	College Board: AP Comparative Government Course and Exam Description Woods, Ethel. <i>AP Comparative Government and Politics: An Essential Coursebook</i>. 7th ed., Germantown, NY: WoodYard Publications. 2105		
Scope/Sequence	*Standards/Themes	Key Ideas, Term, and Concepts	
Unit 1: Political Systems, Regimes, and Governments	Comparative political scientists seek to understand similarities and differences between states, evaluating political realities and understanding political change. This first unit sets the foundation for students to think like comparative political scientists by teaching them to read and analyze qualitative and quantitative data related to the six required course countries (China, Iran, Mexico, Nigeria, Russia, and the United Kingdom) and helping them understand concepts and examples they can use to support an argument about the countries. Understanding the similarities and differences in political systems, regimes, and governments—how they function and how they gain and maintain power and legitimacy — as well as the	1.1 The Practice of Political Scientists 1.2 Defining Political Organizations 1.3 Democracy v. Authoritarianism 1.4 Democratization 1.5 Sources of Power and Authority 1.6 Change in Power and Authority 1.7 Federal and unitary Systems 1.8 Political Legitimacy 1.9 Sustaining Legitimacy 1.10 Political Stability	p. 31

	terminology used to describe them provides students with the foundational knowledge needed to be able to compare course countries throughout future units.		
<u>Unit 2: Political Institutions</u>	This unit first looks at the political structure in each course country and then the executive, legislative, and judicial systems within the political structure. Students develop an understanding of the various structures of the branches of government as well as how each uses the structure to wield and maintain power. Knowing and applying country-specific terminology allows students to understand the similarities and differences between different systems of authority in the context of the six course countries. At the end of this unit, students should be able to characterize the advantages and disadvantages of different institutional arrangements and the implications of having one system over another in regard to stability, legitimacy, and policy making.	2.1 Parliamentary, Presidential, and Semi-Presidential Systems 2.2 Comparing Parliamentary, Presidential, and Semi-Presidential Systems 2.3 Executive Systems 2.4 Executive Term Limits 2.5 Removal of Executives 2.6 Legislative Systems 2.7 Independent Legislatures 2.8 Judicial Systems 2.9 Independent Judiciaries	p. 51
<u>Unit 3: Political Culture and Participation</u>	Politics hinges on the interactions between the state and society. A country's political patterns are influenced by the characteristics and demands of its population. Citizens participate in politics both individually and in groups. Cleavages within the population, such as ethnicity, religion, or class, become politically relevant. This unit includes civil society, a range of voluntary associations that are autonomous from the state and that can help mediate state power and enhance the power of citizens. Students learn about participation in both authoritarian and democratic regimes and how the type of regime impacts the type of participation.	3.1 Civil Society 3.2 Political Culture 3.3 Political Ideologies 3.4 Political Values and Beliefs 3.5 Nature and Role of Political Participation 3.6 Forces that Impact Political Participation 3.7 Civil Rights and Civil Liberties 3.8 Political and Social Cleavages 3.9 Challenges from Political and Social Cleavages	p. 69
<u>Unit 4: Party and Electoral Systems and Citizen Organizations</u>	Individuals and groups use various ways to gain influence and power within a government and its political institutions. This unit breaks down the larger concepts about political institutions studied in Unit 2 and considers how individuals, parties, and citizen organizations influence power. The exercise of political power in the six course countries occurs in a variety of ways. For example, the rules of electoral systems, both formal and informal, have a profound impact on citizen participation. Studying how and why a regime grants or limits access to sources of power helps students understand and explain how this control ultimately impacts policy making in a global context.	4.1 Electoral Systems and Rules 4.2 Objectives of Election Rules 4.3 Political Party Systems 4.4 Role of Political Systems 4.5 Impact of Social Movements and Interest Groups 4.6 Pluralist and Corporatist Interests	p. 91

<u>Unit 5:</u> <u>Political and Economic Changes and Development</u>	The interaction of political and economic changes within and across the course countries and how these changes impact political policies and behaviors is particularly important for students to understand. They need to connect what they learned about the domestic political power structure in previous units with how that structure plays out in an interconnected global context. Every country studied in this course has had profound economic and political change over the past 30 years. Students will study political changes through the lens of democratization and the relative success or failure of these efforts to take hold. The economic impact of globalization on local citizens, relationships between countries, and the response to challenges presented in this economic reality are the focus of the unit.	5.1 Impact of Global Economic and Technological Forces 5.2 Political Responses to Global Market Forces 5.3 Challenges from Globalization 5.4 Policies and Economic Liberalization 5.5 International and Supranational Organizations 5.6 Adaptation of Social Policies 5.7 Impact of Industrialization and Economic Development 5.8 Causes and Effects of Demographic Change 5.9 Impact of Natural Resources	p.109
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