AP Comparative Government and Politics
FWHS Summer Reading 2026
Google Classroom Code: 3vz2hj5

"The 21st century has taught us that we cannot ignore the world around us. Happenings around the globe now directly impact our lives, and social studies teachers and students around the country face the challenge of interpreting complex, puzzling events. The AP Comparative course focuses on government and politics in other countries and provides a theoretical framework to compare political systems around the world." – Ethel Wood

Course Description: This is a one year course designed to give students an analytical perspective on global politics. Students will focus on the governments of the United States as well as the diverse political structures of the **United Kingdom, Russia, China, Mexico, Nigeria, and Iran.** Comparisons will be made in terms of power structures, political institutions, citizen participation, political and economic change, and public policy. Students will be exposed to different theoretical and practical frameworks that are the foundations for a variety of political systems.

Summer Assignment (Required):
In your textbook, *Comparative Government: Stories of the World (Waples),* read the first two chapters (pages 2-61). Warde students will take handwritten notes in their AP Comparative Government Composition Notebook and bring it on the first day of class. Note outlines are attached at the end of this assignment. ***These notes will be collected on the first day of class!***

Summer Reading Opportunities (Optional):
During the summer pay close attention to events in the **United Kingdom, Russia, China, Mexico, Nigeria, and Iran**. This pre-reading will help form a strong foundation for the upcoming school year. The articles should provide you with information about the political, economic, and/or foreign policy issues confronting each nation. Articles may come from newspapers, periodicals, magazines, and/or the Internet.
Possible sources include but are not limited to:

BBC – www.news.bbc.co.uk
The Economist- http://www.economist.com/
Foreign Affairs Magazine https://www.foreignaffairs.com
The Wall Street Journal http://www.wsj.com/
New York Times – http://www.nytimes.com/
The Guardian- http://www.theguardian.com/international

Waples Chapter Outlines - FWHS

Expectations for student notes:

- Handwritten in composition notebook
- Labeled with chapter number, name and big question (you may even cut and glue the outline in your composition notebook)
- **Completely and accurately express the learning objectives and vocabulary**
- Organizes information in a way that makes sense to the individual student
    - Visuals, color coding, etc.

Unit I: Introduction to Comparative Politics

Waples Chapter 1, pages 4-25 - *Introduction*

Big Question: WHAT IS COMPARATIVE POLITICS?

After reading you should be able to:

- ✓ Describe the field of comparative politics and identify the important questions studied in comparative politics.
- ✓ Explain how scholars use the comparative method to examine the same phenomenon in several cases and reach conclusions.
- ✓ Describe the economic indicators political scientists use to compare countries and their advantages and disadvantages.
- ✓ Identify the commonly used indicators of political development to help draw conclusions about the level of political development within a country.

Vocabulary words you should focus on:

comparative politics, comparative method, causation, correlation, empirical and normative statements, quantitative and qualitative data, source analysis, Human Development Index (HDI), gross domestic product (GDP), GDP per capita, GDP growth rate, Gini index, Freedom House, democratic consolidation, transparency, corruption, Corruption Perceptions Index, strong state, failed state, Fragile States Index

Unit I: Introduction to Comparative Politics

Waples Chapter 2, pages 30-61 - *Political Systems*

Big Question: How do states secure power and legitimacy, and what differentiates democracy from authoritarianism?

After reading you should be able to:

- ✓ Know that states, governments, regimes, and nations are building blocks in comparative government and their specific meanings unique to political science.
- ✓ Describe the differences between democratic and authoritarian states, including why some states democratize and some backslide into authoritarianism.
- ✓ Describe the sources of state power and how they maintain sovereignty.
- ✓ Describe the sources of legitimacy and explain how they maintain legitimacy.
- ✓ Explain the difference between federal and unitary systems.

Vocabulary words you should focus on:

state, government, bureaucracy, sovereignty, international recognition, regimes, regime change, coup d'etat, revolution, change in government, nation, nationalism, liberal democracy, authoritarian states, totalitarian state, illiberal, flawed, or hybrid democracies, rule of law, rule by law, transparency, differences between democratic and authoritarian states (table 2.1, page 35), repression, cooptation, democratization, democratic consolidation, democratic backsliding, power, authority, theocracy, coercion, legitimacy, political efficacy, traditional, charismatic and rational-legal legitimacy, stability, unitary and federal systems, devolution