

Mr. Luelsdorf

Course Syllabus- AP Comparative Government and Politics

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Fall 2014

### **Course Description**

This course is the equivalent to an introductory college course focuses upon the important themes and concepts in comparative government. The course will include specific case studies. Cross-country comparisons will be made throughout the semester. The course objective is three fold: prepare students to pass the AP Comparative Government and Politics exam on May 14<sup>th</sup>, preparation for the rigors of a college course and to increase student's global political awareness.

### **Course Outline**

One semester course 8 units:

- Unit 1- Introduction to Comparative Politics (3 weeks)
- Unit 2- Mexico (1.5 weeks)
- Unit 3- United Kingdom (2 weeks)
- Unit 4- European Union (1 week)
- Unit 5- Russia (2 weeks)
- Unit 6- China (2 weeks)
- Unit 7 – Iran (2 weeks)
- Unit 8- Nigeria (1.5 weeks)

### **Grades**

Grades earned by the student represent a cumulative points total for the semester. I do not give individual quarter grades. All grades received prior to semester final grade should be treated as a progress reports. Grades are based on coursework in the following 4 areas: (% are approximate)

- **Current Events (20%)**- Current event presentation, panel discussion, and any related blog responses.
- **Tests/quizzes (40%)**- Combination of multiple choice, short answer and essay at the conclusion of each unit.
- **Term Paper (15%)**- 6-12 pages typed. Due at end of the second week of November. Theme: Public Policy comparison
- **Final (15%)** – Presentation: Create a government.
- **Participation (10%)**- Journal responses, Socratic seminars, in class assignments, movie night, positive participation in class discussions

### **Late Assignments**

In general, **no late work** will be accepted. Assignments are considered on time if they are turned in the day they are due (presentations the period they are due). If a student is absent the day the assignment is due they can turn the assignment in upon their return assuming they have an excused absence. However there are exceptions. Any missed presentations will require the completion of alternate assignment due upon the return of the student (in the case of an excused absence). Late assignments because of unexcused absences will **not** be accepted.

### **Movie Night**

Throughout the semester there will be a chance for students to watch and discuss a movie that is related to the case studies. Unfortunately there is not enough time to accommodate viewing the films during regular class meetings. Please take note of the movie nights on the course calendars. Typically they will be on a Wednesday night at 6pm in room 305. For students who cannot attend the viewing and discussion session an alternate assignment will be made available. Some of the movies are "R" rated. If you object to your son or daughter viewing such films please indicate so on the bottom of the page. A list of the potential films is included with the syllabus.

### **Second Semester**

Students who are enrolled in AP Comparative Gov and Politics are required to remain in the same period for the second semester economics course that follows. The AP cohort will receive an economics course tailored to their AP Comparative Government and Politics needs, including review sessions and course material that will augment the 1<sup>st</sup> semester.

### **My Expectations/Class rules**

This is very simple: come to class prepared (always bring a notebook/journal to class, completed course readings), be a positive participant, and be respectful to your fellow students, the classroom, and me.

### **Discipline procedure**

Depending on the severity of situation, the following options exist:

- a) Go outside to "cool" off.
- b) Call home.
- c) Go to principal to "cool" off
- d) Go to principal and call home.
- e) Meeting with parents, counselor, and principal.

For more information such as a copy of this syllabus, major course assignments, class news, articles and course related links please visit my staff webpage at the Saint Helena Unified website ([www.sthelenaunified.org](http://www.sthelenaunified.org) and click on the staff directory link under the resources section at the bottom of the page). I look forward to working with all of you this upcoming school year. If you have any questions or comments please contact me at [mluelsdorf@sthelenaunified.org](mailto:mluelsdorf@sthelenaunified.org) or 967-2740 x2133.

Please sign the following acknowledging that you have read and understand the course syllabus.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

Check box for NO for "R" rated movies

## **Texts and Readings**

Students will be responsible for assigned readings in the following college level textbooks:

Mark Kesselman, Joel Krieger, William A. Joseph, Introduction to Comparative Politics AP\* Edition, sixth edition, Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2013

Readings available at my teacher webpage:

<http://saintshs.weebly.com/articlesreadings.html>

In addition to text assignments, photocopied handouts will be assigned.

## **Current Events**

It is critical to keep up with current events in comparative government. Some good sources of information are:

Newspapers: The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Financial Times, The Christian Science Monitor, The Washington Post, International Herald Tribune

Magazines: The Economist, Time, U.S. News and World Report, Foreign Policy, Foreign Affairs

Web: [bbc.co.uk](http://bbc.co.uk), [theguardian.com](http://theguardian.com), [NPR.org](http://NPR.org)

## **Movie List**

General: Syriana, PBS Commanding Heights, The Island President

Mexico: Traffic

UK: The Queen, Brassed Off, The Special Relationship, Yes, Minister

Nigeria: The Ambassador, Welcome to Lagos (bbc documentary)

Russia: Goodbye, Lenin, 12, Anna

China: To Live, Lost Girls of China, The Gate of Heavenly Peace, Tank Man (Frontline),

Up the Yangtze, Last Train Home, China on the Inside, Please vote for Me, Last Emperor

Iran: Persepolis, The Separation