

AP Comparative Government & Politics (AP CoGoPo)

Ms. Miller

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Welcome to AP Comparative Government and Politics! By the time you finish the first several weeks of this course you will be well on your way to being in an elite class of well-informed Americans. The course is a yearlong advanced elective that focuses on comparative analyses of global political systems and government institutions grounded in history. This is a current events course as well; students should be aware of current issues related to global political movements, social uprising, international elections, and global government systems. This is NOT a course about American politics though occasionally we will compare/contrast international systems to the US system.

Throughout the course you will learn about the history, economic and political systems of the “AP6” - **UK, Russia, China, Mexico, Iran and Nigeria**. We will also briefly study the European Union. Come with an open mind and be prepared to be challenged by the course!

It is essential that you understand that this course will be challenging. Do not expect to understand all the concepts the first time you read them. **DO NOT BECOME DISCOURAGED BY THIS!!!!** The summer assignments are intended to introduce you to concepts that we will explore together as a class.

Summer Communication

- Feel free to contact me via email if there is something you do not understand regarding the assignment. I cannot guarantee that I will check my email on a daily basis but I typically check it a few times over the summer.
- Join Remind: Text @wrhsgopo to 81010 – this is an extremely easy way for you to communicate with me or for me to send information out to you all as well.

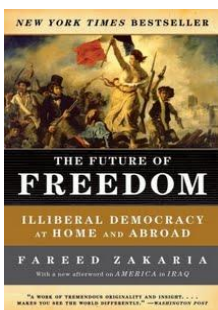
Summer Current Event Assignment – Due the first day of school.

Over the course of the summer, you will need to collect and create a “journal” of current events related to each of the AP6 countries (listed above). You should collect at least 3 current news events for each of the 6 countries we study. As I mentioned above, this is a current events course as well as a history course (as well as a government and politics course); understanding the events that are happening now will provide a greater overall understanding of each of the countries and better prepare you for the AP exam.

You will print each article and include it with the following information:

1. Significance of the event (why is it important)? (paragraph in length)
2. Predictions based on the event. (paragraph in length)
3. 2 questions that could promote discussion in the classroom. (Do not need to provide answers – what questions do you have about the event, country, people, etc.)

Summer Reading Assignment – Due the first day of school.



Over the course of the summer you are expected to read *The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad* by Fareed Zakaria. Purchase a copy of the Zakaria text (either the 2003 or 2007 edition will work fine, but it needs to be paperback—(available online/bookstores + copies at public libraries).

After reading the book, type a response of no more than 250 words to *each* of the questions below (five total). Please be thorough yet concise in your responses, drawing specific examples from the text each time. Additionally, include a page reference and a short

supporting quotation for each question (your quotation will not count toward your word limit). Finally, include a word count. **Your total word count may not exceed 1250 words.**

The assignment should be typed in MLA format.

1. What does Zakaria mean by “illiberal democracy”? Why does he think that the number of governments that can be characterized as illiberal democracies is increasing?
2. According to Zakaria, what is the relationship between economic growth and democratization? Refer to two contrasting examples from the text. Are you persuaded by his explanation? Why or why not?
3. How does Zakaria differentiate between “democracy” and “liberty”? Do you find this distinction useful? Why or why not?
4. Why did liberal democracies flourish in Europe and North America earlier than in other countries? Do you agree with Zakaria’s reasoning? Why or why not?
5. How does Zakaria account for the failure of liberal democracy to flourish in the Middle East? Why does he think that Islamic fundamentalism has become increasingly influential?

Helpful Tips:

- AP Comparative requires students to examine and analyze countries that the majority of students are not familiar with. Taking some time over the summer to get to know these countries, paying attention to news coverage, or just discovering where they are on a map will go a long way to prepare you to evaluate the political system and culture of the countries we will study.
- Pay attention to vocab you don’t know now – this course, as well as US Govt, is very vocab heavy.
- Have a great summer!!! I look forward to working with all of you over the course of the next school year!