**Comparative Government– Course Outline**

2014-08-13

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| Instructor | Ms. Pinyan |
| Time and Location | B Days: Block 7: 12:35-1:55  Room: 308 |
| Office Hours | Planning Periods: Monday and Wednesday 8:50-10:10 and 2:00-3:20. I am also available by appointment Tuesdays and Thursdays after school until 5pm. |
| Contact Information | kpinyan@qiss.org.cn |

Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to Ms. Pinyan’s Comparative Government class! This is my third year at QISS and my first year teaching Comparative Government. I am excited to be teaching this course. It will be challenging, demanding, and time consuming. I hope you are up for the challenge both as students taking the course, and parents who are supporting students who are taking the course. I hope to inspire my students to become masters of learning and to become independent thinkers. I also hope they will grow to have the ability to teach others the materials they cover in our class discussions, assignments, and other class work.

**Course Overview:**

The beginning of a college comparative politics course and the beginning of most textbooks in comparative politics introduce students to the study of politics by explaining how political scientists study politics and why it is important for students to be informed about politics abroad. It is useful to distinguish between normative, or value-related, questions and empirical or factual questions at this early stage, and to emphasize that political scientists are interested in both sorts of questions. In explaining how political scientists divide up their field of study, it is important to make clear what comparative inquiry has to offer.

We live in an interdependent world: what happens in Mexico, for example, impacts the United States. This point provides a good opportunity to introduce the theme of globalization and the general political and economic permeability of national borders. It is here that teachers will want to contrast the concepts of state, nation, regime, and government—a lesson inevitably leading to discussions about legitimacy, authority, and bases of political power, as well as the differences between these concepts. Thus, students might learn that the "state" is generally used to refer to the political power exercised over a defined geographic territory through a set of public institutions, in contrast to the "nation," which is often understood as a human community with a shared culture and history. This course treats governments as collections of individuals who occupy political office or exercise state power, whereas regimes are treated as the sets of rules and institutions that control access to, and exercise of, political power and that typically endure from government to government. Regime change occurs when these rules and institutions are replaced.

**Thematic Units:**

1. Introduction to Comparative Government
2. Sovereignty, Authority, and Power
3. Political Institutions
4. Citizens, Society, and the State
5. Political and Economic Change
6. Public Policy

**Behavior and Homework Expectations:**

Classroom behavior expectations will follow closely along with our school’s mission statement. I want passionate, active, courageous students who are sensitive communicators. I hope to create lifelong learners, and intellectual students who strive to be global citizens of the world. Students should hold a high level of respect for themselves and others. Disrespect and the violation of other people, or their property will not be tolerated in my classroom.

Homework and class work is expected to be complete, creative, clear, and comprehendible. In accordance with Q.I.S.S. policy, late work will be penalized 10% per day, up to 50% penalty.

**Assessments and Grading:**

The course will taught over the entire year with students receiving grades each academic quarter.  The grades will be reported using the A-F system with a percentage given out of 100%. Both formative (homework, papers, quizzes, daily participation) and summative (authentic, projects, key assignments, exams) assessment tasks will be given that assess both content and skill mastery.  Students will complete a lot of homework on their own as well as take notes on class lectures and discussions. Students will also be expected to take a test every Friday on the material we covered during the week. The repetition of taking tests every Friday will help students prepare for the nature of the AP Human Geography Exam.

Formative Assessments: 40%

Summative Assessments: 60%

Please feel free to contact me with any questions, comments, or concerns throughout the year.

Thank you,

Kelly Pinyan

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