

Comparing Governments (Organized by Theme)

CHAPTER 1: THE COMPARATIVE STUDY OF POLITICS

Freedom House

This assignment analyzes degrees of freedom throughout the world based on political rights and civil liberties.

Debunking Statistical Myths

Swedish professor Hans Rosling analyzes global statistics in this entertaining presentation given at TED in 2006.

Comparing Facts

Using the CIA World Factbook, this assignment explores statistics-based comparisons.

Comparing Maps

How are maps used to compare country data and trends?

Leadership in Iran

How does the Ayatollah's role in Iranian politics affect the legitimacy of the government? The following sources explore the relationship between charismatic leadership and institutional authority.

Oligarchy: Mexico and Brazil

Using a selection from "Rural Incorporation and Regime Durability in Brazil" by Ana Cristina Araújo Alves, this assignment explores the differing fates of oligarchies in Mexico and Brazil.

Nigeria's Political Actors

Nigeria presents a case study of how people use politics to get what they want, or how they are prevented from doing so. This article explores the role of political parties and sponsors in agenda formation.

Naming the Seige

The Chinese call Japan's 1937 siege on Nanjing a massacre, but recently Japan has named it "an incident" in their text books, and relegated it to the margin of a single page. The Chinese are outraged.

Darfur

A video documentary produced by the Washington Post that tells the story of those ravaged by the violence in Darfur.

CHAPTER 2: THE SETTING OF POLITICS

Sharia Law

What is the ongoing battle between Nigeria's Christian and Muslim populations? Does religious identity promote or hinder national identity?

China's Space Program

This assignment investigates the role propaganda plays in political agendas and in garnering public support for government projects.

NAFTA's Effect on Mexico

Has the North American Free Trade Agreement been good for Mexico?

Lagos

A short documentary examines life in Lagos, Nigeria, the fastest growing megacity in the world.

The Communist Manifesto

In an excerpt from The Communist Manifesto, Marx and Engels explore the relationship between religion and policy.

Good Cop, Bad Cop in Mexico

Mexico's drug wars exacerbate rifts between local and federal law enforcement agencies. This news article demonstrates the challenges of working within multi-tiered political systems.

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CHAPTER 3: ECONOMIC CLASS, DEVELOPMENT, AND GLOBALIZATION

China's Wealth Gaps

A video exploration of the Chinese government's role in urban development, and how some Chinese citizens are affected by their government's policies.

Economic Development

A documentary exploring how French legislation meant to protect worker's benefits has affected a younger generation of job seekers.

Global Health Equity

This excerpt from a World Health Organization report investigates the connection between public health and social conditions.

Land Occupation

A documentary on land reforms in Brazil examines the notion of property ownership in a nation known for its stark division between rich and poor.

Labor and the Informal Economy

How does the informal economy affect economic rights? This video footage explores the relationship.

Maquiladoras

Along the north border of Mexico, electronics assembly plants provide jobs for some Mexicans. Workers tell their stories.

India's Growing Pains

With an abundance of technology jobs available to India's college educated, what could be bad about modernization there? These stories reveal the shortcomings.

Russian Economics

Some city dwellers have struck it rich since the collapse of communism in Russia, while many rural residents suffer in poverty. How has democracy changed Russia's economy?

Russia's Growing Economy

Stories on the effect of Russia's oil reserves on foreign policy, and the environmental concerns raised by oil mining.

Post-Apartheid Apartheid

If black South Africans don't trust each other, is there any chance for blacks to rise to power in South Africa?

CHAPTER 4: POLITICAL CULTURE AND IDEOLOGY

Comparing Cultural Dimensions

This assignment uses Geert Hofstede's model of Cultural Dimensions to compare and contrast the cultures of China and India.

Scientology in Germany

A short video story describes the German government's concerns about the Church of Scientology.

Immigration

As Paris celebrates its history of immigration with a new museum, a strict immigration bill makes its way through parliament.

Religious Tensions

The Babri Masjid mosque in Ayodha, India, has been a source of conflict between Muslims and Hindus for over 150 years. This timeline tracks the development of tensions between these religious groups.

London Mosque

Plans to build Europe's largest mosque in London stir controversy and racial tension.

Banning the Hijab

A French law threatens to ban Muslim headscarves from schools. This assignment explores the tension between religious expression and secular authority.

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Socialization Factors in Brazil

Does an examination of family life in Brazil expand our understanding of socialization processes? What is the relationship between economic growth and family life?

CHAPTER 5: IDENTITY STRUCTURE

Islam in Xingjian

This short film documents the ways that the Uyghur independence movement is complicating the position of other Chinese Muslims and how the Chinese government is responding.

Dividing India

How have religious and ethnic divisions shaped India's history? Was Partition inevitable after the British granted India its independence?

Citizenship in Slovenia

Slovenia, once part of the former Yugoslavia, is one of the smaller members of the European Union. How do issues in Slovenia affect the E.U.?

Redefining Scotland

The Scottish National Party is seeking to redefine Scotland's relationship to England. What factors influence this movement towards independence?

CHAPTER 6: POLITICAL SYSTEMS AND RULES

Civil Rights and Liberties

As China seeks to become more globally integrated, its policies on civil liberties have come under scrutiny.

Nazi Propaganda

This chilling film from the 1930's shows the connections between anti-Semitism and the Nazi form of totalitarianism.

Debate in Parliament

This glimpse inside the British Parliament gives a look at the Queen's Speech, in which the British government outlines its policies for the coming year.

Democracy in Russia

Though Russia has officially become a democracy, Vladimir Putin holds more power than his formal government duties would suggest is appropriate.

Occupied France

After the French defeat in 1940, Germany occupied much of France. But a new French government at Vichy had its own policy agenda.

The Role of the EU

A Dutch fisherman votes in favor of the 2005 European Constitutional Treaty because he wishes to continue fishing in German and Danish waters. But many others in his hometown and in Europe don't want a European Constitution. Why?

CHAPTER 7: LEGISLATURES AND EXECUTIVES

Regime Seeks Leader

This online lecture looks at France's foreign policy during the transition from the Fourth to the Fifth Republic. A special emphasis is given to France's relationships with her colonies.

Putin on Term Limitations

Vladimir Putin's increasing power may be a sign of creeping authoritarianism. How much power should a president have in deciding term limits?

Ahmadinejad's Perspectives

Some revere President Ahmadinejad as a populist, while much of the world distrusts him. This assignment explores competing assessments of Iran's controversial president.

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Re-inventing India's Government

How does India's interest in redefining the government affect the future of the country? This assignment features a May 2009 article discussing the new coalition government.

CHAPTER 8: THE UNELECTED COMPONENTS OF GOVERNMENT

Habeas Corpus Suspended

For nearly 2 years during the 1970's, India was governed under a state of emergency. Civil liberties protections like habeas corpus were suspended. How did this affect the nation as a democracy?

Post-World War II Inflation

A brief documentary explores Germany's post-war economic recovery.

Nigeria's Oil

A documentary discusses Nigeria's abundant oil supplies, growing popular unrest in the face of widespread poverty and corruption, and the use of military force.

The Chinese Bureaucracy

This assignment discusses the Chinese bureaucracy, from both theoretical and functional perspectives.

Brazil's Indigenous Peoples

Although Brazilian law provides land rights for indigenous peoples, these rights are often nullified by administrative decisions. Is there an appropriate balance?

CHAPTER 9: PARTICIPATION, CLIENTELISM, AND INTEREST GROUPS

Protests in France

These clips identify two forms of French political protest and explore the differing levels of power between some citizens and 'elites'.

Voicing their Dissent

In the projects of France, many have lost hope, but some musicians have come together to promote change.

Clientelism in Mexico City

This essay explores how clientelism in Mexico City is affecting the legitimacy of the government.

Jewel of the Amazon

The Brazilian government's efforts to put a stop to a thriving black market in diamonds mined on a Cinta Larga Indian reservation is the focus of this assignment.

Fighting for the Environment

American Politicians are caught between the huge costs of implementing pollution restrictions, and constituents' desire for air and water quality.

Whistleblowing on You Tube

A disgruntled employee tapes himself and posts the video on You Tube to make his complaints public. Is this a uniquely American way of being heard?

Nigeria's Transition

The transition from military rule in Nigeria has involved shifts in elite politics. What role do political elites play in society, politics, and policy?

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CHAPTER 10: POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL SYSTEMS

Conservatives in Britain

These short videos explore how British conservatives are cooperating with and learning from other European conservative parties.

Mexico Candidacy Battle

After generations of political domination, PRI—Mexico's leading political party—embraces change.

United Russia

As former president Putin devises new ways to retain power, the political role of his own party, United Russia, simultaneously shifts.

German Election

The complications of the 2005 election reveal the idiosyncrasies of German politics.

CHAPTER 11: LEADERSHIP AND INDIVIDUAL POLITICAL CHOICES

Helmut Kohl

A *Washington Quarterly* article examines the legacy of Chancellor Helmut Kohl of Germany.

Khomeini Returns

Iranian leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini returns to the country after 14 years in exile. BBC chronicles Iran's response.

Brazil's President

Brazil's president Lula da Silva has become very influential in Latin America and the developing world. In this interview he speaks of his role in Brazil's future.

China's Political Art

Political posters from China provide an opportunity to examine the strategies and policy goals of the Chinese government.

CHAPTER 12: REGIME TRANSITIONS

Economic Heresy in the USSR

A documentary chronicles economic reforms in the Soviet Union instituted by Mikhail Gorbachev.

The Collapse of the Soviet Union

This assignment traces the collapse of the Soviet Union and its transition to a new political and economic system.

Denazification

A report on denazification and an interview with Konrad Adenauer shed light on regime change in post-war Germany.

France's Fifth Republic

A journal article from 1960, two years after the founding of the French Fifth Republic, analyzes French politics from a socialist point of view.

Remaking Politics and Society

Although South Africa made the transition from apartheid to democracy without full-scale revolution, the income gap between rich and poor is widening. Can South Africa pursue economic justice and political justice at the same time?

CHAPTER 13: PUBLIC POLICY AND GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

Coal and the Environment in China

A short documentary on the environmental effects of coal mines on villages in China.

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Death by Privatization

Privatization has had a tremendous impact on the Russian people. How has Russia's government responded to this phenomenon?

Oil for Iran

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmedinejad attempts to use oil revenues for social purposes, but is constrained by both internal and external factors.

Iran's Nuclear Program

Amidst great controversy over Iran's nuclear capabilities, the country insists its nuclear centrifuges are necessary. Is it right for some countries to have nuclear weapons, but not Iran?

A Shadow Minister's Thoughts

This assignment explores the British National Health System from the perspective of the British Conservative Party as well as the Labour Party.

China's Economic Growth

China's economic growth has led to a massive migration of workers from the countryside into cities, creating serious instability. This documentary looks at the effects.

CHAPTER 14: DESCRIPTIVE DATA AND INDIVIDUAL NATIONS

Fourteen assignments exploring descriptive data related to the following: Brazil, Britain, China, the European Union, France, Germany, India, Iran, Japan, Mexico, Nigeria, Russia, South Africa, the United States.

CHAPTER 15: MAPPING INDIVIDUAL NATIONS

Fourteen assignments exploring maps related to the following: Brazil, Britain, China, the European Union, France, Germany, India, Iran, Japan, Mexico, Nigeria, Russia, South Africa, the United States.