

**POLS 131**  
**Comparative Government**  
3 Credits

Community College of Baltimore County  
Common Course Outline

**Description**

**POLS 131 – Comparative Government:** is a course which introduces students to major concepts and theories in comparative politics. Students gain analytical knowledge and practical skills to understand the development and outcomes of governments and politics in a variety of countries. Students examine how countries vary in their political institutions and why these variations matter. Students examine the diversity of government and politics globally, including the formation of the nation-state, economics, political culture, nationalism, globalization, democracies, developing democracies, and authoritarian governments. Students examine selected governments from around the globe and across time to answer the question: Why are some countries stable democracies and not others?

**Pre-requisites:** ACLT 052

**Co-requisites:** ACLT 053 or (ESOL 052 and ESOL 054)

**Overall Course Objectives**

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. describe the origins, concepts, and purpose of the field of comparative government and politics;
2. investigate contemporary politics and political trends in selected countries and regions around the world;
3. examine how the geographic location of a country influences the political history and role nations play globally;
4. analyze the development of the modern nation-state, including the organization of institutions that comprise the nation-state;
5. define the major elements of political culture as related to the evolution of political ideologies;
6. analyze the basic elements of modern constitutional democracies, modern authoritarian states, and developing nations;
7. describe the organizational structures of various governmental institutions and their ethics at the executive, legislative, and judicial levels and the application of laws;
8. investigate historical, cultural, and geographical factors that have contributed to the economic development and educational policies of governments;
9. assess how non-governmental agencies, including the media, political parties, interest groups, and individual citizens influence public policy;
10. analyze the sources of conflict and political unrest in the world;
11. assess the public policies countries have adopted to address common problems including the challenges of globalization, human rights, preservation of natural resources, climate change, poverty, terrorism, and ethnic and religious tolerance;

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For more information, see your professor's syllabus.

12. compare the American political system to other nations;
13. analyze government decisions and political issues related to local or global diversity;
14. demonstrate effective written and oral communication skills, using contemporary technology to solve problems, validate information, and to meet challenges as a member of an evolving technological society; and
15. find, evaluate, use, and cite academic sources on political issues and events based on criteria discussed in the course according to timeliness, credibility, and reliability.

## **Major Topics**

- I. The comparative study of government and politics
  - a. What is a country?
  - b. What is a nation?
  - c. What is a state?
- II. The organization and function of national political systems
  - a. Executive leadership
  - b. Legislative/Parliamentary government
  - c. Judicial court systems
- III. Domestic politics in national political systems
  - a. Political culture and civic society
  - b. Interest groups and citizen participation
  - c. Political parties and voting
- IV. Domestic and foreign policy outcomes
  - a. The roles of countries/states on the world stage
  - b. How countries interact with each other
- V. Contemporary political systems
  - a. Modern constitutional industrial democracies
  - b. Transitional post-communist systems
  - c. Authoritarian systems

## **Course Requirements**

Grading will be determined by the individual faculty member, but shall include the following, at minimum:

- Participation in the following: Debates, oral presentations, and/or online discussion forums about current political events and topics
- Four exams
- Research assignment or project

Written assignments and research projects: Students are required to use appropriate academic resources in their research and cite sources according to the style selected by their professor.

## **Other Course Information**

This course is an approved 3–credit General Education course in the Social and Behavioral Sciences.

Assignments will infuse CCBC General Education Program objectives; at least one assignment (minimum of 5 pages) worth a minimum of 10% of the total course grade will allow students to demonstrate at least 5 of the 7 General Education Program outcomes.

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This course is approved for General Education Diversity and Global Education programs.

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