**AP Comparative Government & Politics Conceptual Review**

\*\* This list is by no means the only thing you should study in preparation for the Exam. Be sure to know all comparative systems, as well as country-specific features. Try to anticipate the types of comparisons you will be asked to make.

**Advanced Democracies**

* “Industrialized Democracies,” “Durable Democratic Regimes,” “Early Developers” (formally “First World”)
* When authors or text writers use these terms they are usually talking about rich, Western countries with relatively long histories of political development
* These countries have some form of representative democracy

**Authoritarian Rule/Regime**

A system of rule in which power depends not on popular legitimacy but on the coercive force of the political authorities

**Authority**

The legal right to exercise power on behalf of the society and/or government

**Bonyads**

Quasi-private foundations and religious endowments that are charged with aiding the poor by managing many state-owned enterprises (Iran)

**Bureaucracy**

A hierarchically structured organization charged with carrying out policies determined by those with political authority

**Camarilla**

A complex organization of patronage typically lead by the president where you have to show loyalty to a higher ranking to curry favor (Mexico)

**Catch All Party**

A political party whose aim is to gather support from a broad range of citizens through a de-emphasis of ideology and an emphasis on pragmatism, charismatic leadership, and marketing

**Charismatic Authority**

A style of leadership based on the leader's exceptional personal qualities

**Checks and Balances**

A governmental system of divided authority in which coequal branches can restrain each other’s actions

**Civil Liberties**

Political rights and freedoms

**Civil Service**

A system of carefully describing tasks involved in performing government jobs, evaluating applicants for those jobs (civil service exams), and hiring people from among those applicants based on skills and experience rather than political factors

**Civil Society**

Refers to the space occupied by voluntary associations outside of the state

**Cleavages**

Factors that separate groups within a society (ethnicity, religion, social class, region, etc)

**Clientelism (also Patron/Client Politics)**

* An exchange system in which clients offer support and loyalty to patrons who offer material and intangible benefits
* An informal aspect of policymaking in which a powerful patron offers resources such as land, contracts, protection, or jobs in return for the support and services of lower-status and less powerful clients

**Code Law**

Law based on written rules/codes of law (China, Mexico, Russia)

**Command Economy**

An economic/political system in which government decisions rather than markets determine resource use and output (central planning)

**Common Law**

* Law based on tradition, past practices, and legal precedents set by the courts through interpretations of statutes, legal legislation, and past rulings (Britain)
* In short, “one application determines the next application of the law”

**Communism**

A system of social organization based on the common ownership and coordination of production

**Comparative Economic Sectors (Ethel Wood)**

* **Primary Sector (agriculture)**
  + The part of the economy that draws raw materials from the natural environment
  + Agriculture, raising animals, fishing, forestry, and mining
  + Is largest in low-income, pre-industrial nations
* **Secondary Sector (industry)**
  + The part of the economy that transforms raw materials into manufactured goods
  + This sector grows quickly as societies industrialize
* **Tertiary Sector (services)**
  + The part of the economy that involves services rather than goods
  + This sector grows with industrialization and comes to dominate post-industrial societies, or countries where most people are no longer employed in industry

**Comparative Politics**

Field within political science that focuses on domestic politics (internal) and analyzes patterns of similarity and difference

**Competitive Elections**

* Elections that are regular, free, and fair
* One broad, essential requirement for democracy

**Confederal System**

A system of government that spreads power among many sub-units (such as states), and has a weak central government

**Constitution**

A supreme law that defines the structure of a nation-state’s regime and the legal processes governments must follow

**Controlled Interest Group Systems**

There is a single group for each social sector.

**Corporatism**

* A state in which interest groups become an institutional part of the political structure
* A system of governance in which the government is dominated by representatives of groups within society; may or may not be democratic to some degree

**Corporatist Interest Group Systems**

* A single peak association normally represents each societal interest.
* Membership in the peak association is often compulsory and nearly universal.

**Correlation and Causation**

* **Correlation**

An apparent association between variables

* **Causation**

A correlation in which a change in one variable results in a change in others

**Coup d'état**

A forceful replacement of a regime or a government by a small elite group or groups

**Democracy**

A system of government by the whole population or all the eligible members of a state, typically through elected representatives

**Democratic Deficit**

A democratic deficit occurs when ostensibly democratic organizations or institutions in fact fall short of fulfilling what are believed to be the principles of democracy

**Democratization**

The spread of representative governments to more countries and the process of making governments more representative

**Developed Countries**

Nation-states which have industrial and post-industrial economies

**Developing Countries**

Nation-states which are industrializing

**Development**

A specified state of growth or advancement

**Devolution**

A process in a unitary system of delegating some decision making to local public bodies

**Economic Development Theories**

* **Modernization Theory/Westernization Model**
  + The copy Britain model…
  + Any country that wants its economy to grow should study the paths taken by the industrial nations, and logically they too can reap the benefits of modernization, or “Westernization”
* **Dependency Theory**
  + Holds that the economic development of many countries is blocked by that the fact that industrialized nations exploit them
  + Outgrowth of Marxism
  + Governments have responded by experimenting with forms of socialism with the intent of nationalizing industry and narrowing the gap between the rich and the poor

**Economic Liberalization**

Process of limiting the power of the state over private property and market forces

**Electoral System**

A legal system for making democratic choices

**Elite Recruitment**

The process by which people are encouraged or chosen to become members of the elite within a political system or state

**Empirical Data**

Research/data based on factual statements and statistics

**Executive**

The executive office carries out the laws and policies of the state

**Extraction**

Government efforts to gather valuable resources for public use (think taxes)

**Faction**

A group organized on the grounds of self-perceived common interest *within* a political party, interest group, or government

**Failed State**

A state within which the government has lost the ability to provide the most basic of public services or implement its policies

**Federal System**

A system of governance in which political authority is shared between the national government and regional or state governments

**First-past-the-post (also plurality/winner-takes-all)**

An electoral system in which winners are determined by which candidate receives the largest number of votes (regardless of whether or not a majority is received)

**Fragmentation**

The process or state of breaking or being broken into small or separate parts

**Free Market Economy**

A system in which government regulation of the economy is absent or limited

**Functions**

The things governments actually do

**Fusion of Powers**

A system of governance in which authority of government is concentrated in one body

Common pattern in parliamentary systems

**Gini Index**

* This index measures the degree of inequality in the distribution of family income in a country
* Measures relative degree of economic inequality within a country
* *The higher the number the more unequal a country’s income distribution*

**Glasnost**

Gorbachev’s policy of “openness” or “publicity”, which involved an easing of controls on the media, arts, and public discussion, leading to an outburst of public debate and criticism covering most aspects of Soviet history, culture, and policy

**Globalization**

The increasing interconnectedness and interdependence of people, cultures, economies, and nation-states facilitated by technology, trade, and cultural diffusion

**Government**

* The part of the state with legitimate public authority
* The group of people and organizations that hold political authority in a state at any one time

**Gross Domestic Product (GDP)**

The total value of goods and services produced by an economy in a given year, excluding income citizens and groups earned outside the country

**Gross National Product (GNP)**

* GNP is a measure of national economic development
* GNP is the total economic output of a country per person (includes income earned inside and outside of country)
* GNP per capita – divides GNP by population

**Head of Government**

* The office and the person occupying the office charged with leading the operation of a government
* The head of government deals with the everyday tasks of running the state and usually directs the activities of other members of the executive branch

**Head of State**

* The head of state is a role that symbolizes and represents the people, both nationally and internationally, and may or may not have any real policy making power
* The chief public representative of a state

**Human Development Index (HDI)**

Measures the well-being of a country’s people by factoring in adult literacy, life expectancy, and educational enrollment, as well as GDP

**Hypothesis**

* Speculative statement about a relationship between two or more variables

**Illiberal Democracy (also procedural democracy)**

* A procedural democratic regime where the citizenry does not benefit from the full array of rights and freedoms that one would expect in a democracy
* Example: competitive elections but lack of civil liberty and rights

**Import Substitution Industrialization**

Employs high tariffs to protect locally produced goods from foreign competition, govt ownership of key industries, govt subsidies to domestic industries

**Institutions**

* The specialized agencies within a government used to carry out the disparate activities of the government
* In order to carry out public policies, government structures such as parliaments, bureaucracies, and administrative agencies perform functions, which in turn enable the government to formulate, implement, and enforce policies

**Interest Aggregation**

Ways in which demands of citizens and groups are combined into proposed policy packages (leadership, political parties, etc.)

**Interest Articulation**

The methods by which citizens and groups can express their desires and make demands upon government (political participation, lobbying, protests, etc.)

**Iron Triangle**

* Mutually beneficial relationships between private interests, bureaucrats, and legislators
* Sometimes called an “integrated elite”

**Judicial Review**

The power of the judiciary to rule on whether laws and government policies are consistent with the constitution or existing laws

**Legitimacy (Political)**

* The ***citizens’*** belief that a government is a proper one and that it has the right to rule
* In the contemporary world, a state is said to possess legitimacy when it enjoys consent of the governed, which usually involves democratic procedures and the attempt to evenly distribute resources

**Linkage Institutions**

* Groups within a society that connect government to its citizens, such as political parties, interest groups, and print and electronic media
* Their size and development depends partly on the size of the population, and partly on scope of government activity
* The larger the population, and the more complex the government policymaking activities, the more likely the country is to have well developed linkage institutions

**Marxism**

* A theory of historical development that emphasizes the struggle between exploiting and exploited classes, particularly the struggle between the bourgeoisie (capitalists) and the proletariat (industrial working class)
* The theoretical foundation of communism based on the ideas of German philosopher Karl Marx

**Mass Line**

Mechanism or party platform line to deliver propaganda to masses in China

**Military Rule**

Military control of the government by armed forces

**Minimum Winning Threshold**

The minimum percentage of votes a party must receive in order to be seated in a legislature

**Mixed Presidential Parliamentary System**

* A democracy that has some characteristics of a presidential system and some characteristics of a parliamentary system
* Also referred to as “semi-presidential”

**Modernization**

* The major cultural trend that has transformed the world is modernization
* Worldwide more people are moving to cities and are exposed to modern political cultures, which have an impact on citizens’ attitudes

**Multiparty System**

A party system with several important political parties, none of which generally gains a majority of the seats in the national legislature

**Nation**

A group of people who identify themselves as belonging together because of cultural, geographic, or linguistic ties

**Nation-State**

An independent state that exists for a single nation; it is the ultimate goal of most nationalists

**Neoliberalism**

* A term used to describe government policies aiming to promote free competition among business firms within the market
* Includes privatization, reducing trade barriers, balancing government budgets, and reducing social spending

**Newly Industrialized Countries (NICs)**

* A term used to describe a group of countries that achieved rapid economic development beginning in the 1960s, largely stimulated by robust international trade (exports) and guided by government policies
* Core NICs: Taiwan, South Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore
* Also: Argentina, Brazil, Malaysia, Mexico, and Thailand
* Iran could also be considered here, but not as democratic

**Nomenklatura**

* A system of personnel selection under which the Communist Party maintained control over the appointment of important officials in all spheres of social, economic, and political life
* The term is also used to describe individuals chosen through this system and thus refers more broadly to the privileged circles in the Soviet Union and China

**Non-Government Organization (NGO)**

Private group that pursues self-defined goals outside of government

**Normative Research/Statements**

Research and data is used to make value judgments

**Oligarchy**

A system of governance dominated by a small powerful and wealthy group in a state

**One-Party Dominant System**

A party system in which one large party directs the political system, but small parties exist and may compete in elections (Russia)

**One-Party System**

A party system in which one political party controls the government and voters have no opinion to choose an opposition party (China)

**Parastatal**

A government-owned corporation to compensate for the lack of economic development or to ensure complete and equitable service to the whole country (can be anything from a national airline or railroad to a postal system or manufacturing and marketing operations)

**Parliamentary System**

* A system of governance in which the head of government is chosen by and serves at the pleasure of the legislature.
* The legislature rules over all!
* Prime Minister is NOT directly elected by people, but by the legislature.
* Because the prime minister and the cabinet are also leaders of the majority party in the legislature, no separation of powers exists between executive and legislative branches—instead they are fused together.
* Fusion of Power!
* Executive power is separated between Head of Government (PM) and the Head of State (royalty, president)
* Parliamentary system stands in contrast to a presidential system, in which the chief executive is elected in a national ballot and is independent of the legislative branch
* **Characteristics**:
  + High Party Discipline
  + Majority party almost always gets its policies implemented
  + Cabinet is VERY powerful—initiates legislation and makes policy

**Party System**

A label based on the number of prominent political parties in a country

**Patron-Client Networks**

* A usually informal alliance between a person holding power and less powerful or lower status people
* The powerful patron provides power, status, jobs, land, goods, and/or protection in exchange for loyalty and political support

**Perestroika**

* The economic policy of restructuring embarked on by Gorbachev in 1985
* Initially, the policy emphasized decentralization of economic decision making , increased enterprise autonomy, expanded public discussion of policy issues, and a reduction in the international isolation of the Soviet economy

**Pluralism**

A political theory or system of power sharing among a number of political parties

**Pluralist Interest Group Systems**

* Multiple groups may represent a single society interest
* Group membership is voluntary and limited
* Groups often have a loose or decentralized organizational structure
* There is a clear separation between interest groups and the government

**Plurality**

The number of votes cast for a candidate who receives more than any other candidate but does not receive an absolute majority

**Politburo**

The principal policymaking committee of the Communist Party

**Political Culture**

The collection of history, values, beliefs, assumptions, attitudes, traditions, and symbols that define and influence political behavior within a nation-state

**Political Efficacy**

* Political efficacy is a citizen’s belief that he or she can understand and influence government or political affairs
* It indicates a citizens' faith and trust in government and their own belief that they can understand and influence political affairs

**Political Liberalization**

Process by which a state goes from procedural democracy to substantive democracy (gets more democractic!)

**Political Participation**

The actions by citizens which involve them in the process of selecting leaders and making policies

**Political Parties**

Are groups or organizations that seek to place candidates in office under their label

**Political Recruitment**

Refers to the selection of people for political activity and government offices

**Political Socialization**

Involves schools, families, communications, media, religious organizations, and all the various political structures that develop, reinforce, and transform the political culture, the attitudes of political significance in the society

**Post Materialist Values**

* Beliefs in the importance of policy goals beyond one’s immediate self-interest, as well as one’s prosperity and security
* Examples: Environmentalism and cultural diversity

**Power**

* The ability to direct the behavior of others through coercion, persuasion, or leadership
* Contrasted/compared to “authority”

**Prebendalism**

The form of patron-client politics that legitimizes the exploitation of government power for the benefit of the office holders and their followers (Nigeria)

**Presidential System**

* An electoral system in which the chief executive is elected in a national ballot and is independent of the legislative branch
* The roles of the head of state and head of government are given to one person—the president
* Executive is directly elected by the people
* Three branches of government are therefore separate from one another and can check each other’s power
* **Characteristics**:
  + Separation of Power
  + Power shared equally between legislature and executive
  + Lower party discipline
  + Since power is diffused, policymaking process is slowed because one branch may question decision made by other groups (gridlock!)

**Privatization**

* The sale of state-owned enterprises to private companies or investors
* The process of putting ownership of productive resources into the hands of non-governmental organizations and people

**Proportional Representation (PR)**

* An electoral system in which voters select parties rather than individual candidates and parties are represented in legislatures in proportion to the shares of votes they win
* Leads to multiparty legislatures

**Purchasing Power Parity**

Economic measure, like GNP, that takes into consideration what people can buy using their income in the local economy

**Referendum**

A general vote by the electorate on a single political question that has been referred to them for a direct decision

**Regime**

* A political system with a specific pattern of relationship between the state, society, markets, and the world at large.
* A pattern of organization for a government (often described in a constitution or supreme law)
* Endure beyond governments or leaders

**Rentier State**

A country that obtains much of its revenue from the export of oil or other natural resources

**Rent-seeking**

The practice of political leaders who, for the purposes of remaining in a position of power, “rent” public access (resources or tax support services) to patrons who profit from those public assets

**Revolution**

A process by which a political regime is overthrown and replaced because of a broad popular support and participation in the process

**Rule of Law**

* A governance system operating predictably under a known and transparent set of procedural rules (laws)
* Also know as, constitutionalism

**Second World Countries**

* “Communist and Former Communist Regimes,” “Middle Developers”
* Most of the countries in this category share authoritarian/totalitarian political histories.
* These countries also shared command economies

**Separation of Power**

* An organization of political institutions within the state in which the executive, legislature, and judiciary have autonomous powers and no branch dominates the others
* Common pattern in presidential systems

**Shock Therapy**

* A variant of market reform that involves the state simultaneously imposing a wide range of radical economic changes, with the purpose of “shocking” the economy into a new mode of operation
* Shock therapy can be contrasted with a more gradual approach to market reform

**Single Member Districts**

* An electoral system in which voters choose an individual running for office in each legislative district (also called “first past the post if the winner is chosen by plurality)
* An electoral system in which candidates run for a single seat from a specific geographic district
* The winner is the person who receives the most votes, whether or not that is a majority
* Increase the likelihood of a two-party state

**Socialist Market Economy**

* The term used by the government of China to refer to the country’s current economic system
* Meant to convey a mix of state control (socialism) and market forces (capitalism) that China is now following

**Sovereignty**

* Independent legal authority over a population in a particular place;
* The degree in which a state controls its own territory and can independently make and carry out policy

**State**

A political system that has sovereignty (political power) exercised over a population in a defined geographic territory through a set of public institutions

**Strong State**

A state with extensive capacity to carry out policies adopted or a state in which there are few limitations on the actions of one or more parts of the state

**Structural Adjustment Programs**

World Bank programs which offer financial and management aid to poor countries while demanding privatization, trade liberalization, and governmental fiscal restraint

**Supranational**

Organizations or events in which nations are not totally sovereign actors (the European Union or global warming)

**Theocracy**

* A state dominated by the clergy, who rule on the grounds that they are the only interpreters of God’s will and law
* A political system in which religious leaders control political decisions and religious laws provides the basis for policy decisions

**Third World Countries**

* “Less Developed Countries or Developing Nations,” “Newly Industrializing Countries,” “Late Developers”
* Text writers and textbook authors usually are talking about countries that were once colonies of Western Industrialized countries
* Origin of term is rooted in Cold War where there was the capitalist/democratic world (“First World”) and the communist world (“Second World”)
* The “Third World” were a group of countries that didn’t want to participate in this rather childish, but critically important, game of polarization

**Totalitarian**

* A political system in which the state attempts to exercise total control over all aspects of public and private life, including, the economy, culture, education, and social organizations, through an integrated system of ideological, economic and political control.
* Usually rely on terror as a means to exercise power

**Transparency**

A transparent government operates openly; leads to less corruption

**Two Ballot System**

* An electoral system where two rounds of voting may take places to ensure a majority winner
* Several candidates may be on first ballot, if no majority is chosen, second ballot is run-off of top two vote-getters

**Two Party System**

* As system of governance where two parties have emerged as the only viable political forces
* Common in first past the post or single member district pluralities

**Unitary System**

Concentration of political power in a central government as opposed to federalism

**Vote of Confidence (also Vote of No Confidence)**

* A vote in parliament expressing support for a government
* A government losing a vote of confidence is often expected to resign

**Weak State**

A state with little capacity for carrying out policies adopted or a state in which the powers of the state are limited

**Welfare State**

A state which provides a wide array of social services to its members