



KING SCHOOL

2017 Summer Assignment

SOC 520: AP Comparative Government and Politics

Summer Assignment SOC 520: AP Comparative Government and Politics

Welcome. By enrolling in this class, you have decided that not only do you want to become a more informed American citizen, but also you have shown a willingness to understand the multitude of threats facing the human race while increasing your ability to help solve the world's most fundamental problems. You are a future leader, and to be effective in this leadership you must develop a myriad of political tools and a depth of political expertise that will allow you to achieve a global perspective. Taking AP Comparative Politics is an important first step in your growth as a citizen of this world and for all our futures.

Required Summer Reading:

Fareed Zakaria, *The Future of Freedom*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007.

It is also highly recommended that you buy and start reading the *AP Comparative Government and Politics Essential Coursebook and Study Guide* by Ethel Woods. This can be found on Amazon. Make sure you buy the most recent edition.

Assignment: Part One

First, begin reading Zakaria's book while carefully considering the questions on the next page. Even though this book was written in 2007 and is admittedly problematic in many respects, it contains vitally important arguments and ideas that we will keep returning to throughout the school year.

While reading the book you will take notes using a dialectical journal. This is a double-entry note-taking process that will help you read actively while seeking to answer the questions below. It is an attempt to transfer your interior monologue to paper by providing two columns that are in dialogue with one another. Not only does this develop a method of critical reading, but also it encourages habits of reflective questioning and thinking. It also forces you to identify and address new and unfamiliar concepts.

To begin, take a standard notebook and draw a vertical line down the middle of the page. In the left-hand column, record important quotes, political science vocabulary words you do not know, new terms that you do not understand, and important ideas. In the right-hand column, "comment" on the important text that has been identified. In other words, attempt to assess the significance of Zakaria's arguments, or use the space to highlight a question you may have. By keeping a dialectical journal, you are forced to make interpretations about the text, to read critically, and to analyze for deeper meaning.

I have attached a sample page from a dialectical journal used for an English class at the end of this assignment sheet. All entries in the left-hand column of the journal **MUST** include



page numbers. When you finish, you will have a summary of the material you have read, **and this will be very helpful for the test you will have to take on this book during the first week of class.** You should have at least *one page of notes per chapter*. Thus, you will have at least *eight total pages of notes*, but keep in mind that the introduction and conclusion are very important, so these might require more attention. **HOWEVER**, you should **NOT** have more than *twelve-to-sixteen total pages of notes*. Limiting your notes will help you consolidate your learning: read the chapter, think about its broad themes, and then pick the *most important* quotes and ideas that Zakaria uses to try to prove his argument. Use the dialectical journal to think about the questions below.

THIS DIALECTICAL JOURNAL IS DUE ON THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS.

Assignment: Part Two

While reading the book and making your dialectical journal, consider the questions below. These are the questions that we will use to start class discussions when you return to school, and you should be able to draw specific examples and quotes (using your dialectical journal) to answer these questions in class. Some of these questions will also be found on the first test that you will take in this class. Therefore, you should be reading Zakaria from the first page with these questions in mind.

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? Cite three specific examples that Zakaria uses to illustrate the phenomenon of illiberal democracy.
2. According to Zakaria, what is the relationship between economic growth and democratization? Refer to two contrasting examples from the text. Does democratization lead to economic growth, or does economic growth lead to democratization? Are you persuaded by his explanation? Why/why not?
3. How does Zakaria differentiate between “democracy” and “liberty”? Do you find this distinction useful? Why/why not? Cite specific examples that Zakaria uses to illustrate this point.
4. Why did liberal democracies flourish in Europe and North America earlier than in other countries? How did liberal democracy evolve in Europe and North America? Cite three specific turning points that Zakaria uses in this argument. Do you agree with Zakaria’s reasoning? Why/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? What possible factors for the rise of Islamic fundamentalism are absent from his arguments?



6. To what extent is the United States becoming an illiberal democracy? What forces might be pushing the United States in an illiberal direction? Cite three specific challenges facing America that Zakaria discusses. Given the current political atmosphere in America, what are we to make of Zakaria's argument in 2017?

Assignment: Part Three

Start following the news, especially in these six countries: **United Kingdom, Russia, China, Mexico, Iran, and Nigeria.** Good news sources include: The Guardian, the Wall Street Journal, the New York Times, the Washington Post, The Economist, ForeignPolicy.com, BBC, Al-Jazeera. Pay attention to the issues facing these countries. Also, you can watch Fared Zakaria: his show is called GPS, which is on CNN – clips are also available on the web.

In general, if you want to succeed in this course, you must be attuned to the world.

GOOD LUCK, please feel free to email me (ilear-nickum@kingschoolct.org) over the summer with any questions, and congratulations on accepting the challenge of AP Comparative Politics.



Dialectical Journal – Example Note Page

Things Fall Apart Dialectical Journal Sample Entries

Quotes from the Text (concrete)	Commentary (abstract)
"fame rested on solid personal achievements . . . brought honor to his village by throwing Amalinze the Cat." pg. 3	Okonkwo is physically strong and very popular because of it; shows cultural pride in strength/power
"He was tall and huge, and his bushy bushy eyebrows and wide nose gave him a very <u>severe</u> look . . . he seemed to walk on springs, as if he was going to pounce on somebody. And he did pounce on people quite often." pg. 4	physical traits; "severe" has a negative connotation - possibly a mean personality; he's obviously violent or hot-tempered to "pounce" on people
"He had had no patience with his father." pg. 4	I wonder what his father did.
"Unoka . . . was lazy and improvident and incapable of thinking about tomorrow." pg. 4	This doesn't sound like Okonkwo; foil (exact opposite) characters; could be motive for Okonkwo's intolerance for others

