

# An Analysis of Advanced Placement (AP<sup>®</sup>) Examinations in Economics and Comparative Government and Politics

Hunter M. Breland and Philip K. Oltman

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## Abstract

Advanced Placement Program® (AP®) Examinations in Macroeconomics, Microeconomics, and Comparative Government and Politics were studied to examine college course performance and gender differences. It was concluded that students who had received college credit for AP performed as well or better in higher-level college courses in Macroeconomics and Microeconomics than students who had not taken AP courses. Gender differences in performance were observed in all three examinations, but the greatest gender differences, favoring male students, were observed for Comparative Government and Politics. A survey of instructors of Comparative Government and Politics indicated that only a small percentage of instructors had observed gender differences in performance in their courses, however.

*Keywords:* Advanced Placement Examinations, gender differences, faculty survey, college credit, economics, government.

## Introduction

Two concerns about Advanced Placement (AP) Examinations stimulated this study: (1) the possibility that students who had received credit for introductory college courses through Advanced Placement Examinations taken in high school were not performing as well in intermediate college courses as students who had taken the regular introductory college courses, and (2) gender differences in Advanced Placement Examination performance which have been observed over a number of years.

The first concern resulted from an earlier study in which the performance of regular students in intermediate college courses was compared with the performance in the same courses by students who had received credit for an introductory course through Advanced Placement. This study, Morgan and Ramist (1998), indicated that AP students may not have performed as well as non-AP students in intermediate college courses in a number of subjects. The data were collected for students entering 20 colleges in 1991 and taking AP-related courses between 1991 and 1994. A total of 26 different AP-related courses were studied. Most previous studies that compared AP and non-AP students have concluded that AP students perform better in higher-level college courses than non-AP students (e.g., Burham and Hewitt, 1967; Casserly, 1986; Morgan and

Crone, 1993). Other studies have concluded that students with AP grades of 3 or better were sufficiently prepared for upper-level college courses (Simms, 1982) and that AP students had more college coursework in the subject areas of their AP Exams than did their peers (Willingham and Morris, 1986).

As noted above, the second concern has existed for some time. Although male students typically obtain higher average scores than female students on the multiple-choice portions of AP Examinations, the same degree of difference is not observed in the free-response portions. Mazzeo, Schmitt, and Bleistein (1990) analyzed several AP Examinations and showed that, more often than not, the gender differences on the multiple-choice portions of the examinations were larger than those on the free-response portions. Breland, Danos, Kahn, Kubota, and Sudlow (1991) and Breland, Danos, Kahn, Kubota, and Bonner (1994) explored gender differences for AP U.S. and European History Examinations and concluded that the free-response and multiple-choice portions of the examinations assessed different skills, but that these skills are important in history. It was suggested that the multiple-choice parts of the examinations assess a broad range of historical knowledge, while the free-response parts assess the ability to work with historical materials, most of which are in written form. Some research has shown that women perform as well as men in college history courses despite somewhat lower performance than men on the multiple-choice part of AP History Examinations (Bridgeman and Lewis, 1991).

Several AP Examinations (Biology, European History, Comparative Government and Politics, Macroeconomics, Microeconomics, Physics, U. S. History) have historically shown significant gender differences (favoring male students) in performance on multiple-choice sections but smaller differences for free-response sections (Willingham and Cole, 1997, p. 262). Additionally, Morgan and Ramist (1998) found AP students to have lower observed grades in higher-level courses than non-AP students for several examinations. AP students with AP grades of 4 in Macroeconomics obtained lower observed course grade averages than non-AP college students in higher-level college courses in Macroeconomics. AP students with AP grades of 3 in Microeconomics and Comparative Government and Politics obtained lower observed course grade averages than non-AP college students in higher-level courses in Microeconomics and Comparative Government and Politics. The Comparative Government and Politics examination was of special interest also because it was one of a cluster of four AP Examinations (all either history or government) identified by Willingham and Cole (1997) as having pronounced format effects in the pat-

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terns of mean gender differences. More specifically, male students performed substantially better on the multiple-choice part of these examinations while, for the free-response part, there were essentially no gender differences in performance.

The observed gender differences for different test formats in history and government examinations, as well as the performance differences for AP and non-AP students in subsequent courses in some of these examinations, raise construct issues. Do the multiple-choice and free-response parts of each AP Examination assess the same construct? Are the content and standards of these examinations, and parts thereof, closely aligned to content and standards in college courses? How does the test format of AP Examinations compare with the format of college course examinations? What are the implications of these construct issues for AP test development?

Because of the observed performance differences for AP and non-AP students in Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, and the gender differences in Comparative Government and Politics, it was proposed to investigate these three examinations more thoroughly to determine the nature of these differences and what explanations for them might be revealed. Additionally, it was proposed that one of the three examinations be selected for more thorough study through a survey of college faculty teaching introductory or intermediate courses in the discipline.

## Methods

The objectives of the study were: (1) to analyze existing data on the performance of AP and non-AP students in intermediate college courses in Macroeconomics, Microeconomics, and Comparative Government and Politics, (2) to analyze existing data on gender differences in these three AP Examinations, and (3) to select one of the three AP Examinations for further study through a survey of college instructors who teach courses in that area.

### *Analyses of Existing Data*

The data file used in the Morgan and Ramist (1998) study was obtained and analyses were conducted to determine more specifically the nature of the performance differences which had been reported in summary form. If the observed differences could be shown to be statistically significant and effect sizes of sufficient magnitude, a secondary analysis had been planned to match the abilities of the AP and non-AP students to determine

if any observed differences might be accounted for by differences in student abilities. Control for student abilities had been planned through a match with PSAT/NMSQT™ files, but this matching was not conducted because of the small sample sizes available and because the matching process would have reduced the sample sizes even further. Additional analyses were planned to determine the degree to which performance in intermediate-level courses might be predicted from AP grades, but these analyses were not conducted because of sample size limitations.

Analyses of mean course grade differences for AP and non-AP students reported in Morgan and Ramist (1998) were conducted to obtain estimates of the magnitude of effects reported. Estimates of group standard deviations were used because standard deviations were not included in the report. Since the Morgan and Ramist procedures resulted in hypothetical, estimated mean grade averages, the usual significance tests were inappropriate and thus were not conducted.

A secondary analysis of mean course grade differences for AP and non-AP students was also conducted using the data from the Morgan and Ramist (1998) study but without exclusions of data and without the use of special weighting procedures as had been done in that study. In that study, students were excluded if there were not at least five students in a college who had taken both the first and second courses in a course sequence. Second, at least one student with an AP grade of 3 or higher on the relevant AP Exam must have taken the course without previously taking a lower-level course. Third, a special course grade weighting procedure was used because it was believed that ordinary weighted averages underestimated differences between AP and non-AP student grade averages since courses with the highest proportion of AP students were also the courses with the most stringent grading standards. These procedures, while intended to avoid biases resulting from different grading standards for different courses, produced results that appear unstable because of the small numbers of cases remaining after data exclusions. It was therefore reasoned that analyses without the exclusions and special weightings might yield more stable results, although the methods used would be less rigorous. Additionally, the more straightforward reanalyses allowed for significance tests to be conducted using a *t*-ratio procedure for unequal population variances and sample sizes described in Hayes (1963, pp. 320–322).

Existing AP Program data for several years were also examined for gender differences in performance, especially gender performance differences for the multiple-choice and free-response components of the three examinations.

## National Survey of Faculty

Based on the results of the analyses of existing data, the Comparative Government and Politics examination was selected for further study by means of a faculty survey. The choice of this examination was made in part because analyses of existing data for performance differences between AP and non-AP students were inconclusive but primarily because of a pattern of gender differences (Willingham and Cole, 1997). The pattern of gender differences was repeated in program data over a number of years and showed male students consistently performing better on the multiple-choice component of the examination while gender differences for the free-response component were practically non-existent.

A listing of institutions that offer AP credit for introductory courses in Comparative Government and Politics was obtained, and the 400 institutions with the most AP students were selected for the survey. A questionnaire was developed and then mailed (in April 2000) to the chair of the department of political science in each of these institutions with a request to distribute the questionnaire to a faculty member who taught either an introductory course or an intermediate course in Comparative Government and Politics. The questionnaire is included in this report as Appendix A.

## Results

### *Results of the Analyses of Existing Data*

**Reported course performance differences.** Table 1 presents results from an analysis of performance differences reported in the Morgan and Ramist (1998) study for AP courses in Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, and Comparative Government and Politics. For each course, the mean course grade in higher-level college courses is shown for non-AP students and for AP students who received AP grades of 5, 4, and 3, as well as for the total group of students with grades of 5, 4, or 3. Also shown are the numbers of cases used for computing the means and an estimate of the standard deviation based on secondary analyses of the data (the Morgan and Ramist report did not provide this information). The last two columns of the table report the mean grade difference between AP and non-AP students and the effect size in standard deviation units. (Tests of statistical significance are not reported in Table 1 because the means for AP students are not actual means but rather hypothetical estimates. Testing the significance of the difference between a hypothetical, estimated mean and the actual mean for non-AP students is not appropriate.)

TABLE 1

**Differences in Performance in Higher-Level Courses for AP and Non-AP Students<sup>1</sup>**

<i>Course/Group</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>AP Grade</i>	<i>Mean Course Grade</i>	<i>SD<sup>2</sup></i>	<i>Mean Grade Difference</i>	<i>Effect Size</i>
<b>Microeconomics</b>						
Non-AP Students	2,913	–	3.03	.92	–	–
AP, Grade of 5	39	5	3.39	–	.36	.39
AP, Grade of 4	26	4	3.11	–	.08	.09
AP, Grade of 3	9	3	2.72	–	-.31	-.34
All AP	74	5,4,3	3.21	–	.18	.20
<b>Macroeconomics</b>						
Non-AP Students	2,387	–	3.04	.92	–	–
AP, Grade of 5	48	5	3.47	–	.43	.47
AP, Grade of 4	35	4	2.84	–	-.20	-.22
AP, Grade of 3	8	3	3.25	–	.21	.23
All AP	91	5,4,3	3.21	–	.17	.18
<b>Comparative Government and Politics</b>						
Non-AP Students	418	–	3.13	.82	–	–
AP, Grade of 5	7	5	3.28	–	.15	.18
AP, Grade of 4	22	4	3.16	–	.03	.04
AP, Grade of 3	16	3	3.04	–	-.09	-.11
All AP	45	5,4,3	3.14	–	.01	.01

<sup>1</sup>Based on data reported in Morgan and Ramist (1998).

<sup>2</sup>Estimated.



For Microeconomics, Table 1 shows that AP students with AP grades of 5 outperformed non-AP students by an average of .36 grade points. This difference translates to an effect size of .39 when the standard deviation for non-AP students is used. (Note that the standard deviation for AP students is not used in this effect size estimate for the same reason that significance tests of differences were not conducted.) AP students with AP grades of 4 received about the same mean course grades as did non-AP students. The mean grade difference for AP students with AP grades of 3 (-.31) is based on only nine AP students and is thus probably not meaningful. When all AP students in Microeconomics are combined and compared with non-AP students, the mean grade difference is .18 grade points, with an effect size of .20. This is a small effect. Generally, effect sizes (*d*'s) less than .20 are considered to be "small" (Cohen, 1988, 1992).

For Macroeconomics, AP students with AP grades of 5 outperformed non-AP students by an average of .43 grade points (effect size of .47). The 35 AP students with AP grades of 4 appear to have performed less well than non-AP students, but the effect size is only -.22, and with only 35 cases this result could be due to chance. There were only 8 AP students with AP grades of 3 for Macroeconomics, so any differences may be a result of chance. When all AP students in Macroeconomics were combined, the total of 91 students performed slightly better than non-AP students (effect size of .18).

For Comparative Government and Politics the numbers of cases available were too small for meaningful analysis.

*Course performance differences based on secondary analyses.* Secondary analyses of the data from the Morgan and Ramist (1998) study were conducted

because the erratic nature of the results in Table 1 suggested that bringing more data into the analyses might provide more stable results. Moreover, statistical tests of significance for observed differences would be appropriate if actual rather than hypothetical means were computed. Nevertheless, it was recognized that biases might be introduced because the data controls used by Morgan and Ramist would not be in effect.

Table 2 gives the results of secondary analyses based on the same data file that was used for the Morgan and Ramist (1998) analyses, but without the controls used in that study. The analyses reported in Table 2 are limited to Microeconomics and Macroeconomics because the numbers of cases available for Comparative Government and Politics were too small for meaningful analysis. Table 2 shows that over 1,000 non-AP students were excluded from both the Microeconomics and Macroeconomics analyses that Morgan and Ramist conducted and that over 20 AP students were excluded from each analysis.

For Microeconomics, the secondary analyses reported in Table 2 yielded higher mean grades for AP students than did Morgan and Ramist analyses, suggesting that their concern that grading standards are more stringent in courses with AP students does not appear to be operating in this particular course. And the mean course grade for non-AP students was slightly lower in the secondary analyses than in the Morgan and Ramist analyses. The result is slightly greater mean grade differences for the two groups as shown in Table 2. For AP students with grades of 5, the effect size increased to .64 from the .39 estimate reported in Table 1 (effect sizes were computed using standard deviations weighted by numbers of cases, which means that the standard deviations primarily reflect the variation for the non-AP students because of their larger

TABLE 2

**Differences in Performance in Higher-Level Courses for AP and Non-AP Students<sup>1</sup>**

Course/Group	N	AP Grade	Mean Course Grade	SD	Mean Grade Difference	t	Effect Size
<b>Microeconomics</b>							
Non-AP Students	4,158	–	2.91	.92	–	–	–
AP, Grade of 5	42	5	3.50	.64	.59	5.91*	.64
AP, Grade of 4	31	4	3.06	.75	.15	1.11	.16
AP, Grade of 3	25	3	2.95	.81	.04	.25	.04
All AP	98	5,4,3	3.22	.72	.31	3.60*	.34
<b>Macroeconomics</b>							
Non-AP Students	3,452	–	2.94	.92	–	–	–
AP, Grade of 5	47	5	3.45	.60	.51	5.74*	.55
AP, Grade of 4	48	4	2.98	.86	.04	.32	.04
AP, Grade of 3	20	3	3.16	.89	.22	1.10	.24
All AP	115	5,4,3	3.20	.76	.26	3.57*	.28

\*p < .01

<sup>1</sup>Based on secondary analyses.

numbers of cases). Additionally, the negative mean grade difference for AP students with AP grades of 3 disappears, indicating more stability in the data. Finally, the secondary analyses allow for tests of the statistical significance of the observed differences. These tests indicated that AP students with AP grades of 5 outperformed non-AP students, but that the performance of AP students with AP grades of 4 or 3 did not differ significantly from non-AP students.

The results for Macroeconomics shown in Table 2 are similar to those for Microeconomics, with the exception that mean grades for AP students appeared to increase only for students receiving a grade of 4. Mean course grade for non-AP students was slightly lower, however. AP students with AP grades of 5 significantly outperformed non-AP students, and the effect size increased from the .47 value reported in Table 1 to .55 as shown in Table 2. This difference was statistically significant at the .01 level. And, as for Microeconomics, the mean grade differences of students with AP grades of 4 and 3 were not significantly different from the mean course grade for non-AP students.

Both the Morgan and Ramist (1998) results and the secondary analyses yield the same conclusion. AP students with AP grades of 5 outperformed non-AP students, although the difference in performance was not large. AP students with AP grades of 4 and 3 did not perform significantly differently in higher-level courses than non-AP students. The advantage of the secondary analyses is that the analyses based on more cases seem much more stable and consistent, and statistical tests of mean differences were possible. While it may be that the secondary analyses introduce biases resulting from different grading standards for different courses, any such biases do not appear to be very large and, if they are exerting an influence, the results are not always in the direction expected. Neither analysis suggests that performance in higher-level courses in economics should be a concern for the AP Program.

*Gender differences in AP performance.* Table 3 summarizes gender differences in AP Examination scores for Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, and Comparative Government and Politics for 1992–1998. These differences are given separately for the multiple-choice and

TABLE 3

**Analysis of Gender Differences in Performance for Advanced Placement Examinations in Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, and Comparative Government and Politics**

Exam/Year	Standard Mean Difference ( <i>d</i> )		Difference in <i>d</i> Between MC and FR	Number of Candidates	
	Multiple-Choice (MC)	Free-Response (FR)		Female	Male
<b>Microeconomics</b>					
1992	.16	.13	.03	1,987	3,541
1993	.32	.17	.15	2,466	4,101
1994	.27	.21	.16	3,114	4,806
1995	.30	.15	.15	3,862	5,633
1996	.33	.06	.27	4,030	5,995
1997	.32	.26	.16	4,581	6,894
1998	.28	.14	.14	5,350	7,404
<b>Macroeconomics</b>					
1992	.40	.28	.12	2,522	4,243
1993	.40	.21	.19	2,999	4,833
1994	.33	.20	.13	3,728	5,801
1995	.35	.24	.11	5,014	7,141
1996	.43	.22	.21	5,561	7,691
1997	.36	.19	.17	6,375	8,920
1998	.41	.28	.13	7,303	9,763
<b>Comparative Government and Politics</b>					
1992	.31	.02	.33	2,440	3,292
1993	.25	.07	.32	2,301	2,798
1994	.29	.01	.28	2,460	2,937
1995	.30	.05	.25	2,813	3,295
1996	.31	.04	.27	2,595	3,186
1997	.26	-.02	.28	2,950	3,524
1998	.31	.09	.22	3,082	3,658

free-response components of the examinations expressed as standardized mean differences ( $d$ ). (The  $d$ 's in Table 3 are based on the average of male and female standard deviations, unweighted for differences in the numbers of cases.) Also given, in the fourth column, is the difference in  $d$  between multiple-choice and free-response components. Positive differences indicate that male students had higher mean scores, and negative differences indicate that female students had higher mean scores.

The standardized mean differences in AP performance for Microeconomics indicate that male students perform better, on average, than female students on both the multiple-choice component and on the free-response component. The higher performance for male students on the multiple-choice component is generally greater, however, than for the free-response component. The gender difference in AP performance for Macroeconomics is quite similar to that for Microeconomics, and there is considerable consistency in the gender differences over time.

The gender differences for Comparative Government and Politics shown in Table 3 are somewhat different than those observed in the other two AP Examinations. While the gender differences for the multiple-choice component are similar to those for the other two AP Examinations, the gender differences for the free-response component of Comparative Government and Politics are quite small. In fact, the differences for the free-response component are so small and inconsistent as to suggest that there is no real gender difference on this component of the examination. A gender pattern of AP Examination performance similar to this has been observed in AP Examinations in United States History and European History (Breland et al., 1994).

## Results of the Faculty Survey

Of the 400 surveys mailed, 138 were received that contained usable data, giving a net yield of 35 percent. Those surveyed and responding were similar to percentages surveyed as indicated by institutional type (public versus private) and regional comparisons (see Table 4).

Detailed results for closed questions are presented in Tables 5 through 9. Responses to open-ended questions are given in Appendix B. The percentages shown in the tables are based on the total sample of 138; when percentages do not add to 100, it is because some respondents skipped the question.

**Institutional characteristics.** Table 5 indicates that respondents came almost equally from public and private institutions, and that they were broadly distributed across locations of various sizes and regions of the country.

TABLE 4

### A Comparison of Percentages of Institutions Surveyed and Responding by Institutional Type and Region

<i>Institutional Type/Region</i>	<i>Percentage Surveyed</i>	<i>Percentage Responding</i>
<b>Institutional Type</b>		
Public	47	46
Private	52	54
<b>Region</b>		
New England	9	7
Middle States	20	21
South	20	20
Midwest	20	22
Southeast	6	5
West	25	24

**Instructor characteristics.** Table 6 shows that 75 percent of respondents were male and 25 percent female. Teaching experience spanned a wide range, with the least experienced quarter of the group having taught from 1 to 4 years, and the most experienced quarter having taught for 21 or more years. A sizable proportion of faculty had taught courses at all levels of Comparative Government and Politics.

**Course characteristics.** Table 7 indicates that respondents characterized their introductory courses as emphasizing a broad range of subject matter, and their intermediate courses as more often emphasizing selected topics. Consistent with these responses, they indicated that students in introductory courses were expected

TABLE 5

### Institutional Characteristics

<i>1. Is your institution public or private?</i>	
A. Public	47%
B. Private	52%
<i>2. Location</i>	
A. Very large city (500,000 +)	28%
B. Large city (250,000–499,999)	10%
C. Small city (50,000–249,999)	28%
D. Large town (10,000–49,999)	20%
E. Small town (2,500–9,999)	10%
F. Rural community (<2,500)	2%
<i>3. Region</i>	
A. New England: CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT	9%
B. Middle States: DE, DC, MD, NJ, NY, PA	20%
C. South: AL, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, VA	20%
D. Midwest: IL, IN, IA, KS, MI, MN, MO, NE, ND, OH, SD, WV, WI	20%
E. Southwest: AR, NM, OK, TX	6%
F. West: AK, AZ, CA, CO, HI, ID, MT, NV, OR, UT, WA, WY	25%

TABLE 6

Instructor Characteristics	
4. <i>What is your gender?</i>	
A. Female	25%
B. Male	75%
5. <i>How many years have you taught comparative government and politics?</i>	
A. 1–4 years	22%
B. 5–9 years	25%
C. 10–20 years	28%
D. 21 or more years	25%
6. <i>What level of courses in comparative government and politics have you taught? (circle all that apply)</i>	
A. Introductory courses	50%
B. Intermediate courses	37%
C. Both introductory and intermediate courses	64%
D. Advanced courses	69%

to master a broad range of factual information, while students in intermediate courses were more likely to be held responsible for course materials in a few limited topic areas.

Examinations at both course levels emphasized essay questions, with considerably less use of short-answer, multiple-choice, and true-false questions, in that order. Course grades for both levels were determined most by examinations, followed by papers, with class participation and presentations being given lesser weights. For reference, descriptions of AP courses and Examinations, as provided by the AP Program, are included in this report as Appendix C.

**Gender issues.** Table 8 contains the results of several questions dealing with gender issues. The majority of introductory courses did not include the politics of gender (54 percent), while somewhat more intermediate courses included this topic (46 percent). Regarding observation of performance differences by gender in courses, a large percentage (70 percent) of the respon-

TABLE 7

Course Characteristics				
7. <i>How would you characterize the content of introductory and intermediate courses in comparative government and politics taught at your institution?</i>				
Introductory Courses (choose one of the following)				
A. The courses emphasize a broad coverage of the subject matter.	82%			
B. The courses emphasize selected topics of the subject matter.	15%			
Intermediate Courses (choose one of the following)				
A. The courses emphasize a broad coverage of the subject matter.	24%			
B. The courses emphasize selected topics of the subject matter.	65%			
8. <i>Which of the following better characterizes your expectations of students who take comparative government courses at your institution?</i>				
Introductory Courses (choose one of the following)				
A. Students are expected to master a broad range of factual information.	70%			
B. Students are expected to demonstrate an ability to work with course materials in a few limited topic areas, but are not expected to master a broad range of factual information.	26%			
Intermediate Courses				
A. Students are expected to master a broad range of factual information.	30%			
B. Students are expected to demonstrate an ability to work with course materials in a few limited topic areas, but are not expected to master a broad range of factual information.	59%			
9. <i>Please indicate the proportion of examination questions of the types indicated below that are used in typical comparative government and politics course examinations at your institution. Additionally, please indicate the weight of each question type in assigning examination scores.</i>				
	<i>Proportion</i>		<i>Weight</i>	
	<i>Mean %</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean %</i>	<i>SD</i>
Introductory Courses				
A. essay	47%	34	45%	32
B. short-answer	23%	23	21%	22
C. multiple-choice	15%	22	13%	21
D. true/false	4%	13	4%	12
Intermediate Courses				
A. essay	54%	39	54%	38
B. short-answer	19%	23	17%	20
C. multiple-choice	5%	13	5%	14
D. true/false	2%	10	2%	10

TABLE 7 (CONT'D)

10. In assigning course grades, what is the relative weight given to examinations, papers, class participation, and presentations in courses that you teach in comparative government and politics?

	Mean %	SD
Introductory Courses		
A. Examinations	55%	23
B. Papers	27%	17
C. Class participation	9%	8
D. Presentations	5%	9
	Mean %	SD
Intermediate Courses		
A. Examinations	40%	23
B. Papers	31%	18
C. Class participation	10%	8
D. Presentations	6%	7

dents reported that they had observed no gender differences. When a difference was reported, it favored female students (20 percent for introductory courses and 15 percent for intermediate courses). None of the instructors responding reported that they had observed male students performing better in introductory courses, and only one percent of the responding instructors reported that they had observed male students performing better in intermediate courses.

A similar pattern of responses was repeated for questions concerning specific kinds of performance (on essay exam questions, short-answer exam questions, multiple-choice exam questions, papers written outside of class, class participation, and presentations). The largest proportion of respondents (36–51 percent) indicated that males and females performed about the same in each of these areas. Smaller proportions of respondents indicated that females performed better on essay exam questions (17–19 percent), short-answer exam questions (8–10 percent), papers written outside of class (17 percent), and presentations (9–12 percent). The only area for which respondents indicated superior performance for males was in class participation (12–14 percent), although this proportion was not much higher than the proportion who indicated superior performance for females (8–10 percent).

**AP versus regular introductory students.** When asked to compare the preparation of students in intermediate courses who qualified for AP credit with students who took the regular introductory course, the largest proportion of respondents (47 percent) reported that they didn't know whether AP students were equivalent, superior, or inferior to non-AP students in their preparation (see Table 9). The next largest proportion of respondents (25 percent) indicated that students who

TABLE 8

**Gender Issues**

11. Is the politics of gender included in courses in comparative government and politics at your institution?

Introductory Courses	
A. Yes	38%
B. No	54%
Intermediate Courses	
A. Yes	46%
B. No	38%

12. Have you observed gender differences in performance in comparative government and politics courses at your institution?

Introductory Courses	
A. No	73%
B. Yes, female students perform better	20%
C. Yes, male students perform better	0%
Intermediate Courses	
A. No	70%
B. Yes, female students perform better	15%
C. Yes, male students perform better	1%

13. Concerning student performance in your classroom, what is the relative performance by gender for the various examination types and class assignments indicated below? (1 = Female and male students perform about the same, 2 = Female students perform better than male students, 3 = Male students perform better than female students.) Please enter checkmarks in the appropriate columns.

	Percent Endorsement		
	1 (F=M)	2 (F>M)	3 (M>F)
Introductory Courses			
A. Essay exam questions	51%	19%	2%
B. Short-answer exam questions	53%	10%	1%
C. Multiple-choice exam questions	41%	7%	4%
D. Papers written outside of class	50%	17%	1%
E. Class participation	46%	10%	14%
F. Presentations	38%	12%	4%
Intermediate Courses			
A. Essay exam questions	49%	17%	1%
B. Short-answer exam questions	51%	8%	0%
C. Multiple-choice exam questions	36%	4%	4%
D. Papers written outside of class	47%	17%	1%
E. Class participation	47%	8%	12%
F. Presentations	44%	9%	5%

had completed regular introductory courses were superior in their preparation. Only five percent of respondents indicated that AP students were superior in their preparation, and only seven percent indicated that AP and non-AP students were equivalent in their preparation.

TABLE 9

### Advanced Placement Versus Regular Introductory Students

14. In intermediate courses in comparative government and politics at your institution, participating students may have received credit for a prerequisite course through Advanced Placement. Or, participating students may have completed a regular introductory course. In general, how do you believe these two kinds of students compare? (Choose one of the following.)

A. They are equivalent in their preparation.	7%
B. Students with Advanced Placement credit are superior.	5%
C. Students who completed regular introductory courses are superior.	25%
D. Don't know.	47%

## Discussion

### College Course Content

The results of the survey of college instructors of Comparative Government and Politics courses were very clear in indicating that introductory courses emphasize a broad coverage of subject matter, while intermediate courses emphasize more selected topics. Thus, it would appear that AP courses and Examinations, which also emphasize a broad coverage of subject matter, are appropriately designed as substitutes for introductory college courses.

### College Examinations and Grading

The survey of faculty indicated that course examinations were primarily of the essay or short-answer type in both introductory and intermediate courses. Multiple-choice tests appear to be used much less, especially in intermediate courses. Since AP Examinations are usually about half essay and half multiple-choice, they are not in this sense equivalent to the kinds of examinations used in college. Of course, much less testing time is available for AP Examinations than is available for course examinations. Grading in both introductory and intermediate courses in Comparative Government and Politics is based primarily on examinations, with papers second in weight. Class participation and presentations receive much less weight in grading. Since AP grades are based entirely on examinations, one can imagine that some students who perform well in class participation and/or presentations, or who perform well when preparing longer papers, might be able to perform bet-

ter in college courses than in AP Examinations. Nevertheless, the results of the data analyses show clearly that AP students with grades of 5 outperform non-AP students, and that there is little difference in sequent course performance between AP students who received grades of 3 or 4 and non-AP students.

### Gender Differences

Since male students consistently receive higher AP grades than female students in these three AP courses, it is logical to consider whether gender differences are observed in performance in college courses in these disciplines. Over 70 percent of college instructors of Comparative Government and Politics surveyed reported that they had observed no gender differences in performance in their courses. However, a small percentage (15–20%) reported that they had observed that female students performed better, and almost none reported observing that male students performed better. On specific examination question types, survey respondents reported that female students tended to perform better on essay and short-answer questions and papers written outside of class. Male students had a very slight advantage in class participation. Although the gender differences in AP grades and college course grades might appear to be related to the greater emphasis on multiple-choice questions in AP exams, survey respondents indicated that they had observed practically no gender differences in performance on the multiple-choice parts of course examinations.

### Preparation of AP Students

The secondary analyses of existing data from a previous study by Morgan and Ramist (1998) of from 14 to 18 colleges indicated that AP students who received grades at the highest level (5) performed better in higher-level college level courses in Microeconomics and Macroeconomics than students in these courses who received credit through the regular college introductory course. AP students who received grades at lower levels (4 and 3) performed at about the same level in the higher-level courses as did regular students. The analyses of the existing data for Comparative Government and Politics were inconclusive because of limitations in the data. According to the survey results, instructors of Comparative Government and Politics were mixed in their beliefs about the preparation of AP and non-AP students, however. Some instructors (about 5 percent) believed that AP students were better prepared, while other instructors (about 25 percent) believed that regular students were better prepared.

There are of course limitations in both the analyses of existing data and in the survey. The existing data on the performance of AP students in higher-level courses were collected between 1992 and 1994 for courses taken between 1991 and 1994 and based on students who entered 14 to 18 colleges in 1991. Thus, the data are relatively old, and the colleges are not necessarily representative of all colleges where AP credit is awarded.

The survey of faculty was conducted in 2000 and was limited to instructors of one course area, Comparative Government and Politics. Although it is more recent than the data analyses and although more institutions were involved, the response rate was low, and it is a survey of faculty perceptions only.

## Conclusions

The following conclusions seem to be appropriate from the results of this investigation, which was limited to the three examinations studied:

For AP Examinations in Microeconomics and Macroeconomics:

1. AP students who received grades of 5 performed better in intermediate college courses than non-AP students who received course credit through the regular college introductory course.
2. AP students who received grades of 4 or 3 performed about the same in intermediate college courses as non-AP college students.
3. From 1992–1998, gender differences in AP Examinations have favored male students, especially on the multiple-choice component of the examinations.

For the AP Examination in Comparative Government and Politics there was insufficient data available to compare the performance of AP and non-AP students, but gender differences in performance for 1992–1998 have favored male students on the multiple-choice component while, on the free-response component, gender differences are practically nonexistent.

From the results of the survey, the following conclusions can be drawn. For college courses in Comparative Government and Politics:

1. Introductory courses emphasize a broad coverage of subject matter, and intermediate courses emphasize selected topics.
2. Both introductory and intermediate course examinations emphasize primarily essay and short-answer questions.

3. Both introductory and intermediate course grades are based primarily on examinations and papers.
4. Most survey respondents have not observed gender differences in performance in either introductory or intermediate courses, although a small percentage have observed that female students perform better in both introductory and intermediate courses.

As noted earlier, there are of course a number of limitations to this study. While the statistical comparisons of AP and non-AP students were consistent for Microeconomics and Macroeconomics, the statistical power was low in the analyses for individual grades in Table 2, making it difficult to detect significant differences. For Comparative Government and Politics, the numbers of cases available for analysis of performance were so small they precluded meaningful analysis. A further limitation to the statistical comparisons of performance was that there was no control of examinee ability and the like. Consequently, it is not clear whether the superior performance in college course of students with AP grades of 5 is the result of superior instruction in AP courses, the result of superior academic ability of these students, or perhaps due to differences in motivation. Finally, the survey of instructors in Comparative Government and Politics was limited by a low response rate of only 35 percent. Future analyses of this type of data should concentrate on obtaining larger numbers of cases for analysis and higher response rates and controlling for student academic ability difference.

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## Appendix A: National Survey of College Faculty: Questionnaire for Instructors of Comparative Government and Politics, 2000

Reproduction of questionnaire follows.





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# **National Survey of College Faculty**

Questionnaire for Instructors of  
Comparative Government  
and Politics

2000

Educational Testing Service

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## INSTRUCTIONS

The questionnaire should be completed by a person at your institution who teaches an undergraduate course in comparative government and politics. If you do not teach a course of this type, or have not taught it recently, please pass the questionnaire on to an appropriate individual.

Most of the items in the questionnaire ask you to circle one or more of the letters or numbers preceding or following the response(s) most appropriate for your institution.

Sample item:

1. Is your institution public or private?

- A Public
- B Private

The remaining questions require you to enter a number if applicable or to enter check marks. Please be sure to answer all questions applicable to your institution or to the courses you have taught.

Your responses will be treated as confidential. Neither you nor your institution will be individually identified. No information about particular institutions will be released in reports of the survey findings. Only aggregate data will be reported.

Please return your completed questionnaire by **May 19, 2000** in the postage-paid return envelope provided.

---

### **Institutional Characteristics**

*Circle the letter preceding the response you select for each item. (Only select one item for each question.)*

2. Is your institution public or private?
  - A. Public
  - B. Private
  
2. Location
  - A. Very large city (500,000 +)
  - B. Large city (250,000-499,999)
  - C. Small city (50,000-249,999)
  - D. Large town (10,000-49,999)
  - E. Small town (2,500-9,999)
  - F. Rural community (<2,500)
  
3. Region
  - A. New England: CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT
  - B. Middle States: DE, DC, MD, NJ, NY, PA
  - C. South: AL, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, VA
  - D. Midwest: IL, IN, IA, KS, MI, MN, MO, NE, ND, OH, SD, WV, WI
  - E. Southwest: AR, NM, OK, TX
  - F. West: AK, AZ, CA, CO, HI, ID, MT, NV, OR, UT, WA, WY

### **Instructor Characteristics**

4. What is your gender?
  - A. Female
  - B. Male
  
5. How many years have you taught comparative government and politics? \_\_\_\_\_ years.
  
6. What level of courses in comparative government and politics have you taught? (circle all that apply)
  - A. Introductory courses.
  - B. Intermediate courses.
  - C. Both introductory and intermediate courses.
  - D. Advanced courses.

### **Course Characteristics**

7. How would you characterize the content of introductory and intermediate courses in comparative government and politics taught at your institution?

Introductory Courses (choose one of the following)

- A. The courses emphasize a broad coverage of the subject matter.
- B. The courses emphasize selected topics of the subject matter.

Intermediate Courses (choose one of the following)

- A. The courses emphasize a broad coverage of the subject matter.
- B. The courses emphasize selected topics of the subject matter.

8. Which of the following better characterizes your expectations of students who take comparative government courses at your institution?

Introductory Courses (choose one of the following)

- A. Students are expected to master a broad range of factual information.
- B. Students are expected to demonstrate an ability to work with course materials in a few limited topic areas, but are not expected to master a broad range of factual information.

Intermediate Courses

- A. Students are expected to master a broad range of factual information.
- B. Students are expected to demonstrate an ability to work with course materials in a few limited topic areas, but are not expected to master a broad range of factual information.

9. Please indicate the proportion of examination questions of the types indicated below that are used in typical comparative government and politics course examinations at your institution. Additionally, please indicate the weight of each question type in assigning examination scores.

Introductory Courses	Proportion	Weight
A. essay	_____ %	_____ %
B. short-answer	_____ %	_____ %
C. multiple-choice	_____ %	_____ %
D. true/false	_____ %	_____ %

Intermediate Courses

A. essay	_____ %	_____ %
B. short-answer	_____ %	_____ %
C. multiple-choice	_____ %	_____ %
D. true/false	_____ %	_____ %

10. In assigning course grades, what is the relative weight given to examinations, papers, class participation, and presentations in courses that you teach in comparative government and politics?

Introductory Courses	Weight
A. Examinations	_____ %
B. Papers	_____ %
C. Class participation	_____ %
D. Presentations	_____ %

Intermediate Courses

A. Examinations	_____ %
B. Papers	_____ %
C. Class participation	_____ %
D. Presentations	_____ %

11. Is the politics of gender included in courses in comparative government and politics at your institution?

Introductory Courses

- A. Yes
- B. No

Intermediate Courses

- A. Yes
- B. No

**Performance Differences**

12. Have you observed gender differences in performance in comparative government and politics courses at your institution?

Introductory Courses

- A. No
- B. Yes, female students perform better
- C. Yes, male students perform better

Intermediate Courses

- A. No
- B. Yes, female students perform better
- C. Yes, male students perform better

13. Concerning student performance in your classroom, what is the relative performance by gender for the various examination types and class assignments indicated below? (1 = Female and male students perform about the same, 2 = Female students perform better than male students, 3 = Male students perform better than female students). Please enter checkmarks in the appropriate columns.

Introductory Courses	1	2	3
A. Essay exam questions	—	—	—
B. Short-answer exam questions	—	—	—
C. Multiple-choice exam questions	—	—	—
D. Papers written outside of class	—	—	—
E. Class participation	—	—	—
F. Presentations	—	—	—
Intermediate Courses			
A. Essay exam questions	—	—	—
B. Short-answer exam questions	—	—	—
C. Multiple-choice exam questions	—	—	—
D. Papers written outside of class	—	—	—
E. Class participation	—	—	—
F. Presentations	—	—	—

14. In intermediate courses in comparative government and politics at your institution, participating students may have received credit for a pre-requisite course through Advanced Placement. Or, participating students may have completed a regular introductory course. In general, how do you believe these two kinds of students compare? (choose one of the following)

- A. They are equivalent in their preparation.
- B. Students with Advanced Placement credit are superior in their preparation.
- C. Students who completed regular introductory courses are superior in their preparation.
- D. Don't know.

- 
15. Have you observed any gender differences in performance in comparative government and politics courses? If so, to what would you attribute these gender differences?

Introductory Courses

Intermediate Courses

16. Have you observed any differences between students who received credit for a pre-requisite course through Advanced Placement and students who completed a regular introductory course in comparative government and politics? Please describe any differences you have observed. To what do you attribute these differences?

Thank you for your participation. Please use the envelope provided to return the survey.

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Appendix B:  
Open-Ended Comments  
Obtained in the Survey



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**15. [Introductory Courses] Have you observed any gender differences in performance in comparative government and politics courses? If so, to what would you attribute these gender differences?**

---

AP emphasis seems more on facts; regular intro courses stress concepts.

Female students come to office hours with a bit more frequency but the difference is slight.

Female students have better study habits

Female students on the whole seem a bit more serious about the subject.

Female students seem more adept at class presentations, but less likely to participate in class discussions. I would attribute the former to more background in speech classes and/or theater background among female students. As for the latter, I believe it is due to anxiety found not only in the classroom but in society. Male students feel more comfortable expressing their opinions, no matter how well informed. Whereas female students are more comfortable in a formal setting that provides the security of structure.

Female students take good notes and ask more questions to clarify concepts than male students

Female students are smarter, work harder, complete all assignments, are more responsible

Female students are more focused and conscientious by a small margin

Female students seem more dedicated, engaged, willing to ask questions, more thorough.

Female students tend to do better on written assignments while male students tend to do better on objective exams. I believe that female students tend to have better written skills due to the social aspects of language while male students do better with concrete materials.

I note a difference only in patterns of class participation, not overall performance in my courses. The male students tend to ask more questions. They also seem more inclined to keep abreast of current events.

In general I believe our female students are somewhat better in terms of writing skills and preparation for class. They are generally more conscientious.

In largest classes there may be a slight tendency for male students to bring up questions and issues but it is also the case that younger students in lower level courses do not participate freely, without coaxing, whatever the gender.

In the past few years, female students appear much more reluctant to participate in class discussions. I've had some drop rather than present before the class. Many see me because they believe they are not comprehending the material but their performance is often good. It seems to be a function of peer pressure and poor socialization issues.

Male students tend to emphasize and discuss conflict more while female students take more interest in cooperative models of politics.

Male students comment more and ask more questions.

Male students do not perform as well when asked to research, study, and/or analyze gender issues. Women seem to do fine with all their material.

Male students generally more willing to speak during class. Female students are more likely to seek individual help outside class.

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**15. [Introductory Courses] Have you observed any gender differences in performance in comparative government and politics courses? If so, to what would you attribute these gender differences?**

---

Men slightly more talkative in discussion section, but many exceptions. Women dominate in some sections.

More male students work than female, but male students participate more.

Most women students want to be told what to do and how to do it. They seek to please. No more, no less. So they memorize everything and get a lot of B+ grades. A large group of men simply don't care or decide to coast through and they get C's. At the A level, men and women are the same.

No

No

No differences

No gender differences

No gender differences

No gender differences

No gender differences

No gender differences

No gender differences

No gender differences

No gender differences

No gender differences

No gender differences

No gender differences

No gender differences

No gender differences

No gender differences

No gender differences

No.

No.

None observed.

On the whole, women in the classes seem to write more effectively when they enter college, though this diminishes with time. Men tend to participate more in class discussions, being more aggressive.

---

**15. [Introductory Courses] Have you observed any gender differences in performance in comparative government and politics courses? If so, to what would you attribute these gender differences? continued. . .**

---

The differences are not unique to comparative politics, but in general. Women in intro classes are less spontaneously willing to participate, but given time to prepare (do a presentation) do well. Women students don't challenge me as often as male students who seem more inclined to interrupt and/or question my judgments.

The differences that I've observed in answering question 13 cannot be said as obvious, nor is it systematic.

Very little difference.

Women far superior.

Women in the class show keen interest when gender representation in legislative bodies, GEM, G01, impact of electoral systems on women, etc. are discussed

Women participate less readily in class discussion and have to be encouraged

Women tend to be more motivated in both types of courses.

Yes. Nature of topics. Male/Female ratio favors women

Yes. Subject matter. Inclination to participate. Exposure to politics

---

**15. [Intermediate Courses] Have you observed any gender differences in performance in comparative government and politics courses? If so, to what would you attribute these gender differences?**

---

A greater level of maturity seems to favor female students at this stage.

AP students are often more motivated and more intelligent. They move ahead more quickly.

By the intermediate level, there are more male than female students and the performance is more equal

Female students have better study habits.

Female students seem less confident in their presentations than male students

I have not seen a major difference in performance. The male students in some classes are more vocal, but perhaps because I'm a female, I try to make sure female students get a say in class discussions too.

I have noticed no real overall difference, although occasionally I have noticed that women who are reticent about participation often perform better in written work than male students who are reticent to participate in class.

It is my overall experience that female students generally do better at the undergraduate level. My basic "take" is that female students are slightly more serious and responsible than male students and have fewer non-academic distractions.

Men tend to participate more in class discussions, so I try to make sure that women don't get isolated. I think men get socialized into listening less - when they talk, they interrupt more, and often express their own views without reference to the ongoing discussion itself.

No

No

No

No gender differences

No gender differences

No gender differences

No gender differences

No gender differences

No gender differences

No gender differences

No gender differences

No gender differences

No gender differences

---

**15. [Intermediate Courses] Have you observed any gender differences in performance in comparative government and politics courses? If so, to what would you attribute these gender differences?**

---

No gender differences

No gender differences

No gender differences

No.

None Observed.

Same

Same

Same as Intro.

Same as Introductory.

The general superiority of female writing skills translates often into better essays and papers, but not good presentations.

The same as for introductory. You may often see one or two more better male students. It may be because they tend to be more outspoken, independent, and/or tend to take a leadership role more often.

There seems to be slightly more male than female students in our upper level international politics classes. Anecdotally, it may be the case that male students participate a tad more than female students at this level, but in terms of performance, my very, very best students are more likely to be female.

Women far superior.

Women generally put in more effort and are more serious about learning. They also tend to concern themselves with the realities of politics in other countries, they have a humanistic orientation.

Women seem to be simply more conscientious about doing assigned readings on a consistent basis and completing written assignments, making use of the full compliment of course materials to respond to exam questions or paper topics.

Yes. Female students out-perform their male peers.

Yes. Subject Matter. Inclination to participate. Exposure to politics.

---

**16. Have you observed any differences between students who received credit for a pre-requisite course through Advanced Placement and students who completed a regular introductory course in comparative government and politics? Please describe any differences you have observed. To what do you attribute these differences?**

---

AP students are more familiar with concepts discussed.

AP students have a variety of backgrounds due to differences in high school teachers. While some are quite prepared, others cover mostly current events and hence are not well prepared for the theoretical dimension necessary in intermediate courses. On the whole, these students are not as well prepared as those students who have taken their courses here and consequently, are well versed in the basic theories of comparative politics. Also, since this is a small department with two faculty teaching comparative politics, we have a level of continuity not possible at the high school level. Comparative politics is, at best, a very broad and ill-defined subject matter. Teaching it at the high school level only complicates the issues.

AP students know fewer facts and are less comfortable discussing the theories of comparative politics. They have less developed writing and analytical skills than those students who take the introductory course at the university.

AP students possess only factual information. Students who have taken a regular introductory course are better acquainted with the methodology and conceptual foundations of the discipline.

AP students score better in their examinations than students who completed a regular introductory course.

AP students usually have a broader introduction to the field. Students who take courses on campus learn more of the particular interests of their instructor.

Broad political concepts within comparative politics largely missing with very little factual basis to work from.

Few, if any. Advanced Placement students go into internal or advanced classes in Political Science

Generally, advanced placement students have followed a course that is a country by country examination rather than a topical/theoretical approach. Although they have a few facts at their command, they generally know nothing about the field.

Generally, my high performing students have been in AP classes in high school. They do not receive college credit here for high school courses.

In our honor's program we have many students who came in with AP credits. These are top-notch students, many of whom have excellent high school preparation. The high school AP classes, however, may not cover as much material as is expected in the intro. university courses. The biggest differences in performance appear to me to be based on the range of skills students acquire in high school classes...writing skills (which tend to be better with AP students), analytical skills, presentation skills. The biggest problems we encounter are that 30-40% of students are not writing at a university level and are not prepared for the amount of reading that is expected of them. Few have experience with research papers or conducting any kind of empirical research.

No

No

No

---

No differences

No differences

No differences

No differences

No differences

No differences

No differences

No differences

No differences

No differences

No differences

No.

No.

None Observed.

Not as dramatic as question 14 may indicate. The ability to learn and the desire to take the class make a difference.

Students are better prepared with exposure to theory and analysis received in the introductory course(s). Advanced Placement does better to encourage conceptual chemistry which is a requisite for comparative politics.

Students who enter upper-division classes thinking (based on AP credit) they have mastered the basics usually have not. They lack conceptual depth and analytical abilities...even if they do not know a lot of basic information. This is true in the intro to American government courses as well.

Students who have completed a regular intro course are more conceptually sophisticated. I don't know if this reflects AP teaching emphasis or maturity of the students when they took the course.

Students with AP credit appear less intimidated by the level of sophistication of less instruction

Students with AP credit are ill prepared for CP courses at the intermediate level

The difference is not great, but there seems to be a greater amount of "ah-ha" responses among those who took pre-reqs. That is, when a system, concept, event is mentioned in an intermediate class, a student who took a pre-req is more likely to make conscious connections between the intro material and the new material.

They are more familiar with facts of some theoretical issues.

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Those who complete regular introductory courses tend to see issues as more complex and embrace this complexity. AP students often (not always) know the vocabulary and theories but don't seem to be accustomed to making independent and integrative connections between concrete cases (especially current events) and theoretic frameworks.

Students with the intro perform better because our department tailors the intro course to prepare students for our upper division classes.

Yes, the AP students generally are very ill prepared to think analytically and comparatively about politics. High school teachers are not specialists in comparative politics. They don't read the academic journals that are part of college faculty norms.

Yes. Our course has a section on research design, conceptualization theory. The average AP program does not cover these topics.

Yes. Students who have taken an AP course in high school tend to be more analytical in approach and more articulate on issues compared with non-AP students.



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# Appendix C: Descriptions of Advanced Placement Courses and Exams in Macroeconomics, Microeconomics, and Comparative Government and Politics

**Note:** The material in this appendix was obtained from College Board online publications ([www.collegeboard.org/ap](http://www.collegeboard.org/ap))

## *The Microeconomics Course*

The purpose of an AP course in microeconomics is to give students a thorough understanding of the principles of economics that apply to the functions of individual decision makers, both consumers and producers, within the larger economic system. It places primary emphasis on the nature and functions of product markets, and includes the study of factor markets and of the role of government in promoting greater efficiency and equity in the economy.

## *Microeconomics Summary Outline*

- I. Basic economic concepts (8–12%)
  - A. Scarcity: the nature of economic systems
  - B. Opportunity costs and production possibilities
  - C. Specialization and comparative advantage
  - D. The functions of any economic system (what, how, and for whom to produce)
- II. The nature and functions of product markets (60–70%)
  - A. Supply and demand (15–20%)
    1. Price and quantity determination
    2. Basic manipulation of supply and demand, including ceilings and floors
  - B. Models of consumer choice (5–10%)
    1. Consumer choice behind the demand curve
    2. Elasticity
  - C. Firm production, costs, revenues (10–15%)
    1. Marginal product and diminishing returns
    2. Average and marginal costs and revenues

3. Long-run costs and economies of scale
  - D. Product pricing and outputs, both in the individual firm and in the market (25–30%)
    1. Perfect competition
    2. Imperfect competition
      - a. Monopoly
      - b. Oligopoly
      - c. Monopolistic competition
  - E. Efficiency and government policy toward imperfect competition (5–10%)
- III. Factor markets (10–15%)
    - A. Derived factor demand
    - B. Determination of wages and other factor prices
  - IV. Efficiency, equity, and the role of government (8–12%)
    - A. Market failures
      1. Externalities
      2. Public goods
    - B. Distribution of income

## *The Microeconomics Exam*

The exam is approximately two hours long. It consists of two sections:

### **Section I:**

70 minutes of multiple-choice questions, which account for two-thirds of the student's total grade.

### **Section II:**

50 minutes of free-response questions that account for one-third of the student's total grade. Some questions in this section require graphical analysis.

## *The Macroeconomics Course*

The purpose of an AP course in macroeconomics is to give students a thorough understanding of the principles of economics that apply to an economic system as a whole. Such a course places particular emphasis on the study of national income and price determination, and also develops students' familiarity with economic performance measures, economic growth, and international economics. There is no single approach that an AP Macroeconomics course is expected to follow. Whatever the approach, however, AP teachers are advised to take into account certain topics generally covered in college courses.

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## *Macroeconomics Summary Outline*

- I. Basic economic concepts (5–10%)
  - A. Scarcity: the nature of economic systems
  - B. Opportunity costs and production possibilities
  - C. Specialization and comparative advantage
  - D. The functions of any economic system (what, how, and for whom to produce)
  - E. Demand, supply, price determination
- II. Measurement of economic performance (8–12%)
  - A. Gross national product, gross domestic product, and national income concepts
  - B. Inflation and price indices
  - C. Unemployment
- III. National income and price determination (70–75%)
  - A. Aggregate supply (8–12%)
    1. Classical analysis
    2. Keynesian analysis
    3. Rational expectations
  - B. Aggregate demand (25–35%)
    1. Circular flow
    2. Components of aggregate demand
    3. Multiplier
    4. Fiscal policy
    5. Monetary policy
  - C. Money and banking (10–15%)
    1. Definition of money and its creation
    2. Tools of central bank policy
  - D. Fiscal–monetary mix (10–15%)
    1. Interaction of fiscal and monetary policies
    2. Monetarist–Keynesian controversy
    3. Deficits
  - E. Trade-offs between inflation and unemployment (8–10%)
    1. Long run versus short run
    2. Supply shocks
    3. Role of expectations
- IV. International economics and growth (8–12%)
  - A. Balance of payments, international finance, exchange rates
  - B. Economic growth

## *The Macroeconomics Exam*

The exam is approximately two hours long. It consists of two sections:

### **Section I:**

70 minutes of multiple-choice questions that account for two-thirds of the student's total grade.

### **Section II:**

50 minutes of free-response questions that account for one-third of the student's total grade. Some questions in this section require graphical analysis.

## *The Comparative Course*

The AP Program offers two examinations in government and politics: United States Government and Politics, and Comparative Government and Politics. Students may take one or both examinations in a given year for a single fee. The material on each examination is intended to correspond to at least one semester of college-level instruction.

An effectively designed course in AP Comparative Government and Politics will give students a good basic understanding of the world's diverse political structures and practices. The course should encompass the study both of specific countries and of general concepts used to interpret the key political relationships found in virtually all national polities. Five countries form the core of the examination. Four of these nations are Great Britain, France, Russia/the Soviet Union, and China. These states are included because they are commonly covered in college comparative politics courses and provide paradigms of different types of political systems. The inclusion of a developing nation allows the student to examine the political implications of different levels of economic development. For the fifth nation, therefore, the examination will permit candidates to choose either India, Mexico, or Nigeria. With these five countries as examples, a teacher might choose to explore the following substantive topics and questions in comparative politics.

- I. The Sources of Public Authority and Political Power
- II. The Relationship Between State and Society
- III. The Relationships Between Citizens and States
- IV. Political and Institutional Frameworks
- V. Political Change
- VI. The Comparative Method

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## *Comparative Summary Outline*

### I. The sources of public authority and political power (5–15%)

- A. The nature and sources of governments' legitimacy (social compacts, constitutionalism, ideologies, and other claims to political legitimacy)
- B. Historical evolution of national political traditions
- C. Political culture and socialization: transmission of political values

### II. Society and politics (5–15%)

- A. Bases of social cleavages (class, ethnicity, language, religion, etc.)
- B. Depth and persistence of such cleavages and the permeability of social boundaries
- C. Political consequences of social cleavages
- D. Translation of social cleavage into political conflict
- E. Institutional expression of social cleavages (party systems and political elites)

### III. Citizen and state (5–15%)

- A. Beliefs that citizens hold about their government and its leaders
- B. Processes by which citizens learn about politics
- C. The ways in which citizens vote and otherwise participate in political life
- D. The variety of factors that influence citizens to differ from one another in terms of their political beliefs and behaviors

### IV. Political framework (35–45%)

- A. Types of regimes (communist, authoritarian, democratic, corporatist, etc.) and their constitutional frameworks
  - a. Political and economic integration
  - b. Relationship to domestic politics and laws
  - c. International organizations and their impact on economic development
- B. The scope of government activity (social and economic policy, planning, and control)
- C. The institutions of national government (legislatures, executives, bureaucracies, and courts)
  - a. The major formal and informal institutional arrangements and powers
  - b. Relations among these institutions
  - c. Relations to subnational political units

### D. Political parties and interest groups

- a. Their functions, organization, and development
- b. The range of interests that are or are not represented
- c. Links to institutions of government and effects on political process

### E. Relations between institutions of national government and supranational organizations

- a. Political and economic integration
- b. Relationship to domestic politics and laws
- c. International organizations and their impact on economic development
- d. Political leadership: recruitment and succession

### V. Political change (15–25%)

#### A. The internal and external sources of political change (e.g., industrialization, urbanization, economic crisis, international economy, foreign invasion, diffusion of new ideas and ideologies)

#### B. The nature of political change

- a. Regime continuity and change (revolutionary and evolutionary, violent and nonviolent change of regime)
- b. The changing basis of regime legitimacy
- c. The changing scope of governmental activity

#### C. Nationalism

- a. Nature of national identity and nationalism
- b. Impact on parties and domestic politics
- c. Relation to supranational movements

#### D. The consequences of political change (e.g., redistribution of land, change in ownership of means of production, circulation of elites, changing nature of citizen participation, changing party systems, the acquisition and/or loss of citizen rights)

### VI. Introduction to comparative politics (5–10%)

- A. Purpose and methods of comparison
- B. Classifying governments and politics
- C. Problems in cross-cultural analysis

## *The Comparative Exam*

The Comparative Government and Politics exam is approximately 2½ hours long and consists of two sections, each accounting for 50 percent of the student's total exam score:

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**Section I (multiple-choice):**

45 minutes; 60 questions.

**Section II (free-response):**

100 minutes; 4 mandatory questions (suggested time per question is 25 minutes); each question is equally weighted and accounts for 25 percent of the total score on this section.

**Coverage:**

Great Britain, France, Russia/the Soviet Union, and China receive equal coverage in the multiple-choice section of the examination. Occasionally, multiple-choice questions may assume an elementary familiarity with U.S. government and politics. Students must demonstrate knowledge of India, Mexico, or Nigeria in the free-response section of the examination. Essays will require that a student discuss one of these countries and one or more of the four core countries (Great Britain, France, Russia/the Soviet Union, and China).



