

## TECEP® Test Description for POS-282-TE

### INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS

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This exam assesses students' understanding and knowledge of concepts in comparative politics. It focuses on the public sphere of politics and power relations and the comparison of types of government and political systems. Topics include: basic concepts in social science, comparative political theory, and methodology; the nature of the state and comparisons of authoritarian, totalitarian, and democratic state forms; the concept of democracy and democratization; the institutional features of government and governance; how variables shape outcomes in politics; ideology, and government policy processes; and a comparison of government structure across regions. This exam also assesses how these concepts apply to representative countries around the world. (3 credits)

- **Test format:**
    - 80 multiple choice questions (1 point each)
    - 2 essays (10 points each)
  - **Passing score:** 70% (70 out of 100 points). Your grade will be reported as CR (credit) or NC (no credit).
  - **Time limit:** 2 hours
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### OUTCOMES ASSESSED ON THE TEST

- Analyze disparate governments using social science methods.
  - Characterize the development of the modern nation-state system and the global diversity of its forms.
  - Define democracy and the causes of democratization.
  - Examine the development of government structures and institutions.
  - Describe the components of political behavior.
  - Compare the diverse political ideologies, systems, and nation-states practiced around the world.
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## TOPICS ON THE TEST AND THEIR APPROXIMATE DISTRIBUTION

The table below indicates the main topics covered by this exam and the approximate percentage of the exam devoted to each main topic. Under the main topic heading is a list of related—but more specific—topics. It is important to review these topics to determine how much prior knowledge you have and/or how much additional study is necessary.

Topic	Percentage
<p><b>Social Science and Comparative Politics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Social science basics:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ the scientific method</li> <li>○ the history of scientific inquiry</li> <li>○ social science theory and reasoning</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Comparative methodology:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ the comparative method</li> <li>○ John Stuart Mill’s Two Methods of Comparison</li> <li>○ varieties of methods in comparative politics</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>15%</b></p>
<p><b>The Nation-State</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The State:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ defining “the State”</li> <li>○ the Treaty of Westphalia</li> <li>○ origins of the modern state in Europe</li> </ul> </li> <li>● The modern state system:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Hobbes and sovereignty</li> <li>○ Weber and the modern state</li> <li>○ the growth of the state system in Latin America</li> <li>○ the Middle East and Africa in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Congo, Argentina, Panama, Mexico)</li> <li>○ supranational organizations</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Non-democratic state forms:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ totalitarian states</li> <li>○ authoritarian states</li> <li>○ theocratic states</li> <li>○ sources and trends of authoritarianism</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>20%</b></p>
<p><b>Democratic States and Democratization</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Defining democracy:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ what democracy is</li> <li>○ criteria of democracy</li> <li>○ characteristics of democracy (political rights, elections, and accountability)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>20%</b></p>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ citizens' rights and human rights</li> <li>○ representative and participatory democracies</li> <li>● Democratization: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ causes of democratization</li> <li>○ economic development and democracy</li> <li>○ the rise of the democratic state</li> <li>○ democracies (Brazil)</li> <li>○ emerging democracies (Nigeria, Guinea-Bissau)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<p><b>Comparing Political Structures and Institutions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Comparing constitutions and government systems: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ the importance of constitutions</li> <li>○ checks and balances between branches of government</li> <li>○ roles of the executive, judicial, and legislative branches</li> <li>○ presidential and parliamentary systems</li> <li>○ unicameral (Israel) vs. bicameral (United Kingdom) legislatures</li> <li>○ the limits of written constitutions (Vietnam)</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Designing multi-level government: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ understanding diverse populations and public opinion</li> <li>○ confederations vs. federations</li> <li>○ consensus vs. majoritarianism</li> <li>○ direct democracy options</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Bureaucracy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ defining bureaucracy</li> <li>○ bureaucrats vs. political appointees</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Trends in governance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ the public sector</li> <li>○ privatization of government</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>20%</b></p>
<p><b>Political Behavior</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Political behavior and political culture: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ the formation of political attitudes</li> <li>○ the influence of culture on political institutions</li> <li>○ measuring political participation</li> <li>○ political mobilization (China) and alienation</li> <li>○ political alliances and cleavages</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Civil society: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ social movements and activism</li> <li>○ lobbying/government relations</li> <li>○ quasi non-governmental organizations</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>10%</b></p>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The media: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ media ownership and multimedia conglomeration</li> <li>○ the free press and the information market</li> <li>○ regulating the media</li> <li>○ electronic politics (e-politics)</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Voting system factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ voting and the human development index (HDI)</li> <li>○ controlling the vote turnout</li> <li>○ suffrage</li> <li>○ gerrymandering</li> <li>○ proportionality and election thresholds in parliamentary systems</li> <li>○ protest voters and non-voters</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<p><b>Comparing Ideology, Policy, and Decision Making</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Contemporary mainstream political ideologies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ conservatism</li> <li>○ liberalism</li> <li>○ communism/socialism</li> <li>○ religio-political ideologies</li> <li>○ democratic socialism</li> <li>○ environmentalism</li> </ul> </li> <li>● The public policy cycle: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ agenda setting</li> <li>○ debate and compromise</li> <li>○ implementation and choice of means</li> <li>○ evaluation and feedback</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Politics beyond the policy process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ informal economies (Vietnam) and black markets</li> <li>○ corruption and cronyism</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>15%</b>

## STUDY MATERIALS

Below is a list of recommended study materials to help prepare you for your exam. Most textbooks in this subject include the topics listed above and will prepare you for the test. If you choose another text, be sure to compare its table of contents against the topic list to make sure all topics are covered.

Title
Kesselman, M., Krieger, J., & Joseph, W. [editors]. <i>Introduction to Comparative Politics</i> . Boston, MA: Cengage.



Lim, T. C. *Doing Comparative Politics: An Introduction to Approaches and Issues*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Kopstein, J., & Lichman, M. [editors]. *Comparative Politics: Interests, Identities, and Institutions in a Changing Global Order*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Boix, C., & Stokes, S. [editors]. *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

In addition to the materials above, you may wish to review the resource below. We encourage you to explore this resource to make sure that you are familiar with multiple perspectives on the topics above. This resource is openly licensed, which means that it is free to be [revised, remixed, reused, redistributed, and retained](#), so long as its unique terms are followed. You can learn more about open licensing [here](#).

Resource Licensing Guide	
Title	License
<a href="#">POLSC221: Introduction to Comparative Politics</a> [Saylor course]. Washington, D.C.: Saylor Academy.	<a href="#">See terms</a>

## SAMPLE QUESTIONS

The questions below are designed to help you study for your TECEP. Answering these questions does not guarantee a passing score on your exam.

Please note that the questions below **will not** appear on your exam.

### Multiple-Choice Questions

1. Which of the following statements about theory in the social sciences is true?
  - a. Theories are not based on facts and are meant to encourage the imagination.
  - b. Natural science theories are capable of being tested, but social science theories are not.
  - c. Theories are systematic explanations of phenomena.
  - d. Positivist theories are inductive and interpretivist theories are deductive.



2. Which of the following modern states could best be described as a “weak” state?
  - a. Vietnam
  - b. Peru
  - c. Turkey
  - d. Nigeria
  
3. Which of the following best describes exploratory research?
  - a. It aims to revise existing exploratory and descriptive research.
  - b. It attempts to identify causal factors and outcomes of phenomena.
  - c. It examines the what, where, and when of phenomena.
  - d. It requires making observations and documenting phenomena
  
4. Which of the following established the concept of sovereignty in international law and is considered the birth of the modern nation-state system?
  - a. The Magna Carta
  - b. The Treaty of Westphalia
  - c. The Treaty of Paris
  - d. The Treaty of Ghent
  
5. Which theorist believed that society arises because of necessity, natural inclination, and habit?
  - a. Thomas Hobbes
  - b. David Hume
  - c. Karl Marx
  - d. Max Weber
  
6. One difference between authoritarian regimes and totalitarian regimes is that totalitarian regimes
  - a. focus on economic rather than ideological issues
  - b. practice radical socialist political agendas
  - c. create charismatic leaders and unthinking followers
  - d. seek to control the state, the economy, and civil society
  
7. Which of the following describes representative democracy?
  - a. It is not a common form of democracy in the modern age.
  - b. It is only found in rich and industrialized states.
  - c. It involves indirect participation through elected representatives.
  - d. It was the most prevalent form of democracy in the Colonial era.



8. The transition from military rule to democracy in Brazil beginning in 1985 was characterized by which of the following?
- The new government's commitment to addressing inequality
  - The maintenance of power by the political elite
  - The transfer of substantial authority to rural areas
  - The end of the federal system in Brazil
9. Which of the following pieces of evidence undermines modernization theory?
- Education, mass communication, and urbanization can lead people to mobilize, but not always in a democratic fashion.
  - Richer countries tend to be, on average, more democratic than poorer states.
  - Greater citizen participation in decision-making processes occurs more often in richer countries than in poorer ones.
  - Citizens of richer countries have, on average, a higher degree of education.
10. Which of the following countries has a parliamentary system of government headed by a prime minister?
- Israel
  - Brazil
  - Kenya
  - Nigeria
11. Critics of Vietnam's 2013 amended constitution argue that it
- hampers the authority of the government to operate efficiently and in the best interest of its citizens
  - fosters oppression by providing a veneer of legitimacy to vested interest groups and privileged sectors of society
  - is based in an atheist worldview and violates the fundamental right to freedom of religious practice
  - restricts the education and progress of humanity at large by protecting freedom of religion
12. Which of the following is NOT true with regard to bicameral legislatures?
- Bicameral legislatures grew out of the need in European countries to represent the aristocracy as well as the rest of the population.
  - Bicameral legislatures grew out of the need to provide adequate representation to individual states within the federal system of the United States.
  - Bicameral legislatures typically are more efficient than unicameral legislatures in their ability to divide up legislation.
  - Bicameral legislatures are generally better able than unicameral legislatures to represent a variety of interest groups and views.



13. What term describes a set of attitudes and practices that shapes people's political behavior?
- a. Governing party
  - b. Political party
  - c. Social culture
  - d. Political culture
14. Manipulating district boundaries to create a stronger partisan vote in an attempt to gain political advantage is called
- a. incumbent advantage
  - b. gerrymandering
  - c. representative voting
  - d. electioneering
15. In terms of economic development, Vietnam is \_\_\_\_\_ China.
- a. behind
  - b. even with
  - c. ahead of
  - d. not comparable with
16. In which of the following two countries has religion had an important impact on politics over the last fifty years?
- a. China and the United Kingdom
  - b. Brazil and Vietnam
  - c. Kenya and Peru
  - d. Spain and Turkey
17. "The more well-to-do a nation, the greater the chances that it will sustain democracy." Seymour Lipset, Political Man  
Which of the following countries could be cited in support of this proposition?
- a. China
  - b. Nigeria
  - c. United Kingdom
  - d. Vietnam

### Essay Question

18. Select two countries that you have studied (one in Europe and one outside of Europe) and explain why each of these countries is a nation-state. In your answer, be sure to define the term "nation-state."





## ANSWERS TO SAMPLE QUESTIONS

- |        |         |         |
|--------|---------|---------|
| 1. (c) | 7. (c)  | 13. (d) |
| 2. (d) | 8. (b)  | 14. (b) |
| 3. (b) | 9. (a)  | 15. (a) |
| 4. (b) | 10. (a) | 16. (d) |
| 5. (b) | 11. (b) | 17. (c) |
| 6. (d) | 12. (c) |         |

18. Essays will be graded according to the following scoring guide:

Criteria	Points
Response is complete and relevant.	<b>3 points</b>
Supporting examples display subject matter knowledge.	<b>3 points</b>
Response is analytical rather than merely descriptive.	<b>2 points</b>
Response is logically organized.	<b>2 points</b>

