Summer Project: AP Comparative Govt.

Instructor: Bryan Olsen
bolsen@stanwood.wednet.edu

You have signed up for a really cool class and I couldn't be more pleased. This class has been called Civics/CWP on steroids and I kind of like that description. In order for us to hit the ground running in September, I am going to ask you to prepare in the following ways.

1.) Please subscribe (If your family doesn't already) to the print version of the Seattle Times. It will come with an on-line subscription but I want you to get in the habit of reading the physical, print-on-paper newspaper. Reading a physical paper forces you to read and interact with the news in a more intensive way than one does with an on-line version. The Seattle Times is our best local paper. It features many pieces generated by the Times staff itself and, additionally, many pieces that originate at the NY Times, AP and other international news services. The cost is not great although if it is prohibitive, an on-line subscription is a good second-best alternative.

2.) Once you've got the paper, start reading the thing, every day, front-to-back! The Seattle Times has three sections in its daily edition. International/National, State/Local, and Sports. Of these sections, it is the International/National section that will be of utmost importance to our class but important information will sometimes also be found in the State/Local section as well. I always finish up with Sports, the cherry on top! Your choice.

3.) Please acquire 7 manila folders. Label them for each of the 7 countries/supra-national organizations that we will be focusing on next year. These 7 entities are… China, Russia, Great Britain, Mexico, Nigeria, Iran and the European Union.

4.) When you are reading the newspaper every day, I want you to pay extra close attention to any stories dealing with our 7 countries. Please physically cut out these relevant stories and store them in the appropriate manila folders. You will begin compiling a dossier on each of our focus countries and, through doing so, begin to gain a greater understanding of these 7 very different nations.

5.) I have also included a list of what I call our "Killer" vocabulary. This is a specialized political science vocabulary that we must know in order to get everything possible from this class. We will start the year getting to know these terms with a vocab test two weeks into the year. I ask you to make up a set of flash cards with the term on the front and the definition on the back. To help, I have included a set of definitions. It is up to you to match them up correctly!

Well, that's it my young Padawan Leaners! It is my hope that you will develop the life-long habit of starting every day with a perusal of the newspaper. It is a delightful and civilized way to start your day. The Seattle Times also carries many other features, especially the Sunday edition. The crossword is pretty easy on Monday and Tuesday but gets progressively harder as the week goes on, culminating with the Sunday edition, an absolute monster! Bonus Olsen points to anyone who completes the Sunday edition w/out outside assistance.

Best regards,

Bryan Olsen
Stanwood High School