

(Class) Activities

The document contains instructions and materials for three Global Politics Class Activities.

1. Country-Case Studies

When I ask students to become country experts of a specific country ([see country expert assignment](#)), I often do activities that highlight differences between countries and get students moving, for example:

1. Line up according to the number of judges on the supreme court in your country from highest to lowest. Modification can be number of MPs in parliament, percentage of women in cabinet etc. When I do this activity, if students have the same number, they stand up behind each other, essentially creating a living bar chart.
2. If your country has a woman president or prime minister, stand up. Modification can include federalism, monarch as the head of state, election this year etc. Essentially anything where the answer is yes or no.
3. If your country is a parliamentary democracy, go to the right side of the room. If you are a presidential system, go to the left side of the room. Who is left? Modifications include type of electoral system (proportional vs. majoritarian), formal vs. informal constitution, strong vs. weak bicameralism etc.

2. Icebreaker activities

To get students excited about class and set the tone that my classes are interactive in style, I use a variation of the ice breaker below. At the same time, the ice breaker is designed to get students to think about non-US perspectives.

I give students the following prompt:

1. Go around the room and introduce yourself to a classmate. State your name and major.
2. Share what's the most unusual food that you have ever eaten.

I give students 2 minutes to talk and then I make them switch to a new student about 5 times (depending on class size and time). Afterwards, ask students to introduce another student and share the most unusual food that the student have eaten.

Next, I ask the student to list the top 3 most unusual foods they shared. Then I ask them what makes these foods unusual. In the US context, it is usual non-Western food (often Asian) that is considered "exotic". This leads to a discussion about what it means to be exotic, intercultural differences, racism and food, and how these answers would change if were in a different part of the world.

Modifications:

1. Share an intercultural difference you observed on your travels.
2. What is the most exotic place you ever visited (same discussion on exotic as with food)?
3. In my European Union class, I ask students to complete and share with each other the sentence “When I think of Europe ...” which leads to a discussion what Europe means to them.

3. Bring a Friend to Class

In my European Union class, I invite faculty and staff to class when we discuss a common European identity. If you do not know faculty or staff, the provost office is usually a great place to ask for colleagues.

During class, I ask my colleagues to reflect on this prompt: “When I think of Europe, ...” – this has the added bonus that if you did the same icebreaker with the students, you can see the difference in how Europeans complete the sentence compared to American students.

Modification: ask students to bring a European friend to class for the same exercise.

This activity can easily be modified to fit the needs for region or country specific classes.