

## **PSC 2116 – Modern Constitutions and Governments**

### **Introduction**

There are varieties of constitutional models in the world that have evolved in different historical and political contexts. Some of these have even shaped Sri Lanka's own constitutional framework. Learning the aspects of other systems of constitutions and government enables us to understand better the way our in which politics works in our country within a certain constitutional, political and procedural paradigms and principles.

This course enables students to acquire an introductory knowledge of the nature of constitutional foundations and the systems of government in a number of major countries in the world. The country studies will represent different constitutional models in Asia, Europe, America and Africa. This course will also provide a basis for comparative understanding of different systems of governance.

### **Course Objectives**

This course seeks to:

- i. Introduce students to the nature, structures and functions of modern constitutions and governments in a number of selected countries.
- ii. Enable students to know that a comparative understanding of different constitutional models will enhance their capacity to understand the constitutional and the political system in Sri Lanka better.

### **Expected Outcomes**

At the end of this course, students will have gained the ability to:

- i. understand how different systems of government are organized in relations to different constitutional traditions and models,
- ii. gain competence to identify and compare the general and specific features and functions of selected constitutions and governments,
- iii. assess the issues and problems in the constitutional; governance in Sri Lanka in the light of the experiences in other models of constitutions and governance.

## Course Content

1. The nature and significance of constitutions
  - i. What is a constitution?
  - ii. Contents of a constitution
  - iii. Why are constitutions important?
  - iv. Constitutionalism and classification of modern constitutions
2. Government and Constitution of the United States of America
  - i. The nature of the American constitution
  - ii. The Presidential system
  - iii. Checks and Balances
  - iv. Bill of Rights
3. Indian Government and Constitution
  - i. The nature of the Indian constitution
  - ii. Special features of the Indian Federal System
  - iii. Parliamentary system in India
  - iv. Local Government and the Panchayathi Raj system in India
4. Government and Constitution of France
  - i. The nature of the French Constitution
  - ii. The nature and power of the President
  - iii. The relationship between President and Parliament (in comparison with the Presidential System of Sri Lanka )
5. Government and Constitution of Japan
  - v. The nature and special features of the Japanese Constitution
  - vi. Parliamentary System in Japan
  - vii. Political Party System in Japan
6. Government and Constitution of Germany
  - i. The nature of the German Constitution
  - ii. Federal System and its special features
  - iii. German Electoral System
7. Government and Constitution of South Africa
  - i. The nature of the South African Constitution
  - ii. Federal System
  - iii. Lessons of the South African constitutional change

	<b>Assessment</b>	
	<b>Method</b>	<b>Weightage</b>
	Take-home Assignment	15%
	Mid-Semester Written Paper	15%
	End-of-Semester Examination	60%
	Attendance	10%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Recommended Reading

Ball, Alan R.. 1994, *Modern Politics and Government* .London: Routledge.

Bhagwan, Vishna and Vidya Bhushan, 1986, *World Constitutions*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers.

Gabriel, A, Almod, G. Bingham Powell, Jr. Kaare Strom & Russell J. Dalton (eds.).2005, *Comparative Politics Today: A World-View*. India: Pearson Education.

Groven, Verinder and Ranjana Arora, 1994, *Federation of India and States Re-organization*, New Delhi: SAGE.

Newton, Kenneth, Newton Ken & Deth Jan W. Van, 2005, *Foundation of Comparative Politics, Democracy of the Modern World*, Cambridge University Press.

Reynolds, Andrew. 2002, *The Architecture of Democracy: Constitutional Design, Conflict Management*. Oxford University Press.

Spitzer, Robert J., 1993, *President and Congress*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Vora, Rajendra and Palohikar, Suhas (Eds.) 2004, *Indian Democracy*. New Delhi: Sage Publication Ltd.