

COMPARATIVE POLITICAL SYSTEMS



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TRAINING CENTER



Introduction

Comparative Political Systems examines how different states organize power, make laws, and hold leaders accountable. Participants study presidential, parliamentary, and semi-presidential models, along with federal and unitary structures, electoral designs, and party systems. This Comparative Political Systems Training Course builds the analytical tools needed to compare institutions across countries and explain why similar rules produce different outcomes. Furthermore, the course covers constitutional design, judicial independence, bureaucratic capacity, and measures of governance quality. Participants also review authoritarian and hybrid regimes, democratization paths, and the role of civil society and media. As a result, participants leave able to read political institutions accurately and assess their effects on policy and stability.

Comparative Political Systems Course Objectives

- Compare presidential, parliamentary, and semi-presidential systems and their consequences.
- Analyze federal, unitary, and devolved structures of territorial power.
- Evaluate electoral systems such as first-past-the-post, proportional representation, and mixed-member designs.
- Apply Duverger's law and Sartori's party system typology to real cases.
- Assess constitutional design, checks and balances, and judicial review mechanisms.
- Classify regimes using frameworks such as Polity5, V-Dem indices, and Freedom House ratings.
- Examine authoritarian, hybrid, and competitive authoritarian regime dynamics.
- Analyze democratization and backsliding using Linz and Stepan's transition framework.
- Measure state capacity and governance quality with the World Bank Worldwide Governance Indicators.

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- Build structured country comparisons using the most-similar and most-different systems designs.

Course Methodology

The course applies interactive, evidence-based methods:

- Facilitated lectures with guided institutional analysis.
- Comparative case studies of selected countries and regions.
- Work with published datasets such as V-Dem and Polity5.
- Structured debates on constitutional and electoral design choices.
- Group exercises building country comparison matrices.
- Short analytical briefs with peer review and feedback.

Who Should Take This Course

- Government officials and public policy analysts.
- Diplomats and foreign ministry staff.
- Parliamentary and legislative support staff.
- Researchers, academics, and graduate students in political science.
- Journalists and political risk analysts.
- NGO, international organization, and think tank professionals.

Comparative Political Systems Course Outlines

Day 1: Foundations of Comparative Analysis

- Defining the state, regime, and government.
- Understanding the aims and limits of comparative method.



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- Applying most-similar and most-different systems designs.
- Distinguishing institutions, rules, and informal practices.
- Reviewing core concepts of sovereignty and legitimacy.
- Using case selection and variable control in comparison.
- Building a working country comparison framework.

Day 2: ExecutiveLegislative Systems

- Comparing presidential, parliamentary, and semi-presidential models.
- Examining government formation, coalitions, and confidence votes.
- Analyzing veto powers, decree authority, and gridlock risks.
- Reviewing Linz's critique of presidentialism.
- Studying cohabitation and dual executives in France and beyond.
- Assessing legislative committee systems and oversight tools.
- Comparing cases such as the United States, United Kingdom, and Germany.

Day 3: Elections, Parties, and Representation

- Comparing majoritarian, proportional, and mixed electoral systems.
- Applying Duverger's law to party formation.
- Using Sartori's typology of party systems.
- Analyzing district magnitude, thresholds, and seat allocation formulas.
- Examining gerrymandering, malapportionment, and reform debates.
- Reviewing referendums and direct democracy tools.
- Studying representation of minorities, women, and regions.

Day 4: Constitutions, Courts, and Territorial Power



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- Comparing codified and uncoded constitutions.
- Analyzing amendment rules and constitutional rigidity.
- Examining judicial review models: American, Kelsenian, and hybrid.
- Assessing judicial independence and appointment mechanisms.
- Comparing federal, unitary, and devolved arrangements.
- Studying fiscal federalism and intergovernmental relations.
- Reviewing cases such as Germany, India, and Spain.

Day 5: Regime Types, Governance Quality, and Change

- Classifying democracies, autocracies, and hybrid regimes.
- Using V-Dem, Polity5, and Freedom House measures.
- Examining competitive authoritarianism and electoral manipulation.
- Analyzing democratization waves and democratic backsliding.
- Measuring state capacity with Worldwide Governance Indicators.
- Assessing civil society, media freedom, and rule of law.
- Presenting final comparative country analyses.

Conclusion

By successfully completing Comparative Political Systems, participants will have acquired a working command of institutional analysis across countries, covering executive-legislative relations, electoral and party systems, constitutional and judicial design, territorial power, and regime classification. They will have gained skills in comparative method, governance data interpretation, and structured country assessment. Gentex Training Center designed this program to build rigorous, evidence-based political analysis.





FAQs

Q1 What is the "Comparative Political Systems" course about?

It studies how states organize power and compares their institutions. Participants examine presidential and parliamentary systems, electoral and party structures, constitutions, courts, federal arrangements, and regime types across countries.

Q2 What are the key benefits of the "Comparative Political Systems" course?

Participants gain sharper institutional analysis, stronger political risk judgement, and clearer understanding of why similar rules produce different results. They also learn to use governance datasets credibly and to write structured, evidence-based country comparisons.

Q3 What skills will I gain from the "Comparative Political Systems" course?

You will develop four core skills: comparative institutional analysis, electoral and party system evaluation, constitutional and judicial design assessment, and regime classification using governance indicators.



Q4 What tools, methods, or standards are covered in the "Comparative Political Systems" course?

The course covers the most-similar and most-different systems designs, Duverger's law, Sartori's party typology, Linz and Stepan's transition framework, judicial review models, V-Dem indices, Polity5, Freedom House ratings, and the World Bank Worldwide Governance Indicators.

Q5 How is the "Comparative Political Systems" course applied in real-world practice?

Participants apply the methods to live analytical tasks, such as assessing electoral reform proposals, forecasting coalition outcomes, briefing on political risk, and benchmarking governance quality. Each module ends with a short comparative brief, so learning transfers directly into professional analysis.