I. Untitled introduction: parliamentary government
   A. Structure: far less separation of power than in a presidential system
      1. Legislative branch is dominant
         a. Members of the lower house of parliament are popularly elected. In some countries this is also true of members of the upper house.
         b. Bills passed by the parliament are the law.
         c. No one can overrule them in the U.K.; but some parliamentary systems (e.g., Austria, Canada, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, and Spain) do have an independent judiciary with the power of judicial review
      2. Executive branch operates only with the support of the parliament
         a. The chief executive (prime minister [U.K.], premier [Japan], chancellor [Germany]) is selected by the parliament from within its membership and still serves within the parliament.
         b. Members of the executive cabinet are also selected by the parliament and most or all cabinet ministers are typically members of the parliament who still serve in the parliament.
      3. A majority (or, in some countries, a super-majority of 2/3rds or 3/4ths) vote of “no confidence” by the parliament will dissolve the cabinet and force new cabinet ministers to be selected.
      4. Conversely, the chief executive usually has the right to dissolve parliament, forcing a new parliamentary election.
   B. Advantages (more efficient & responsive government that is also less confusing)
      1. Faster response to changing circumstances – fewer checks and balances means less delay or gridlock.
      2. Easier for the electorate to assign praise or blame; elections mean more; turnout higher.
      3. Government is more responsive to the will of the majority of the electorate; there are fewer opportunities for numerical minorities to force delay or compromise; fewer excuses for the majority party(s) not living up to campaign promises.
   C. Disadvantages (more dangerous government – fewer safeguards against abuse of power)
      1. Less bargaining & compromise can lead to fewer safeguards against hasty, passionate, or self-interested policies; especially vulnerable are numeric minorities.
      2. May lead to unstable government with a paralyzing succession of government breakups, especially in multi-party systems that often entail party coalitions that are marriages of convenience unable to maintain a long-term majority in parliament. Examples: Weimar Republic (1918-33), France until 1958, and Italy (1945-2001, when they switched from PR to winner-take-all elections)

II. Cabinet control of parliament in the U.K.
   A. Essential to a stable and productive parliamentary system
   B. Cabinet proposes legislation and parliament debates but rarely adds more than minor amendments
   C. Apparent paradox: the cabinet is chosen by but dominates parliament
   D. Explanation: the cabinet is composed of top party leaders
   E. Tools of party discipline: control of
      1. Debate time
      2. Committee assignments
      3. Cabinet positions
      4. Access to election nominations

III. What does a parliament do?
   A. Provides a forum for the opposition to debate the merits of bills and sometimes cause their amendment due to pressure from the public
   B. Opens complicated bills to detailed scrutiny by friends & foes which then allows (mostly cabinet-proposed) amendments to correct their shortcomings
   C. Performs an oversight or watchdog role in evaluating the cabinet ministries’ administration of the laws and policies
      1. Regular reports
      2. Question time: a regularly scheduled part of the parliament’s daily calendar when cabinet members can be called on to explain and defend their ministry’s actions
      3. Problem: compared to the national legislature in presidential systems, parliaments typically lack a well-developed committee system
   D. Provides a pool of trained individuals for service in the executive branch of government
      1. Parliaments are better at this training than legislatures in the separation-of-powers system in a presidential system
      2. At any given time, about one-third of the British Parliament are major-party members who are also serving in one of the cabinet ministries (and about one-third of the MP’s are opposition-party members who are waiting the turn to serve when their party gains control of Parliament)
3. In a **parliamentary system**, the legislature exercises its power through the executive; in a **presidential system**, the legislature more typically exercises its strength in opposing the executive (even one of its own party)

IV. **Types of legislative representation roles**
   A. **Delegate** model: speaks and votes for constituents’ opinions and interests
   B. **Trustee** model: speaks and votes based on their greater knowledge and wisdom of the national interest
   C. **Politico** model:
      1. Acts as a delegate on most day-to-day issues
      2. But acts as a trustee on rarer controversies involving fundamental values

V. **Parliamentary committees**
   A. Weaker and less independent (especially in the U.K.) than legislative committees in a (separation-of-powers) presidential system
      1. Less specialized expertise (because *ad hoc* committees review proposed bills)
      2. *Standing* committees provide limited oversight of ministries
      3. Both types of committees lack important tools:
         a. No permanent staff
         b. No authority to call committee hearings
         c. No *subpoena* power
   B. Real power resides in the majority-party leadership

VI. **Exceptions to parliamentary/cabinet supremacy**
   A. *Federalism* (e.g., Germany, Canada, India)
   B. *Independent judiciary* (e.g., Germany & Austria) with *the power of judicial review*
   C. Parliamentary government in **India**
      1. Modeled on both the British (strong cabinet) and U.S. (federalism & an independent Supreme Court)
      2. Much evolution through custom and practice
         a. From one dominant party to party competition (the constitutional crisis of 1977 resulted in a much weakened Congress Party)
         b. From a theoretically strong & independent president to subordination to the cabinet
         c. The power of judicial review was weakened by the power of parliament to amend the constitution
      3. Major social diversity – religion (Hindu, Sikh, & Moslem) and language (over 15 major)

VII. “**Consensus**” parliaments
   A. Found primarily in northern European countries: Scandinavian, Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, & Belgium
   B. Most have “neocorporatist” interest-group representation that mutes the distinction between the major-party and its opposition and puts greater emphasis on bargaining and compromise
   C. The *cabinet control* of the parliament is much weaker
      1. Many important policies are removed from parliament and given to independent commissions that must consult with all interested parties
      2. Committees of parliament are more independent of the cabinet because chairs are allocated proportionate to party strength in the parliament
      3. Minority cabinets sometimes form due to support from non-majority-coalition parties
   D. Main *advantages*:
      1. Less dramatic policy shifts with changes in the party makeup of cabinets
      2. More representation of minority interests
   E. Main *disadvantage*: less clear party responsibility for the success or failure of government policies
   F. Not all multi-party parliaments are “consensus” (e.g., Canada, India, Italy, Spain, Greece)
   G. Parliamentary government in **Germany** – much fragmentation of power with many “veto points” imposed by France & U.S. in the **1949 constitution**: many checks and balances on the German parliamentary system
      1. U.S. imposed a strong upper house of parliament, an independent judiciary with judicial review, & federalism
      2. France imposed a mixed electoral system – a combination of single-member elections with additional-member adjustments for proportional representation

VIII. **Parliaments in autocratic systems**
   A. Parliaments lack power over the autocratic chief executive or party (e.g., China)
   B. Serve primarily to
      1. Rubber-stamp (provide legitimacy to) government policies
      2. Provide limited debate to give the government feedback on public grievances (especially important without a free press or other civil liberties – e.g., assembly and petition for redress of grievances)