BPSM-163 COMPARATIVE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS
(TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENTS)

Assignment Code: BPSM-163/ASST/TMA/2026-2027
Marks: 100

Answer all questions in the three Assignments and submit them together.

Assignment - I

Answer the following in about 500 words each. Each question carries 20 marks.

1. Critically examine the principal methods used in comparative political analysis. Discuss the relative strengths and limitations of the experimental, case-study, statistical, focused-comparison and historical methods.

2. Analyse the relationship between electoral systems and party systems. How do majoritarian and proportional representation systems influence political representation and government formation?

Assignment - II

Answer the following questions in about 250 words each. Each question carries 10 marks.

3. Explain why federal systems are often adopted to accommodate diversity. Compare federal and unitary systems with reference to the distribution of powers and the conditions necessary for a successful federation.

4. What factors explain military intervention in politics? Discuss the major features and consequences of military regimes.

5. Compare the role and character of the state in developed and developing countries.

Assignment - III

Answer the following questions in about 100 words each. Each question carries 6 marks.

6. Distinguish between comparative politics and comparative government.

7. What is meant by an authoritarian regime? Mention its principal features.

8. How do pressure groups differ from political parties?

9. Explain the idea of civil society as a public sphere.

10. Mention any two ways in which globalisation affects state sovereignty.

1. Critically examine the principal methods used in comparative political analysis. Discuss the relative strengths and limitations of the experimental, case-study, statistical, focused-comparison and historical methods.

Answer

Comparative political analysis studies similarities and differences among political systems to explain why their institutions, behaviour and outcomes vary. It does not merely describe constitutions. It asks questions such as why democracy survives in some societies, why military coups occur in others, and how elections shape party competition. To answer these questions, researchers select methods according to the type of evidence, the number of cases and the causal claim they wish to test. No single method is suitable for every problem.

The **experimental method** attempts to identify causal effects by changing one condition while holding other influences constant, ideally through random assignment. For example, a field experiment might randomly provide political information to some voters and compare their participation with a control group. Its main strength is strong internal validity: if randomisation works, differences in outcomes can plausibly be attributed to the treatment. Laboratory experiments also let researchers observe decision-making under controlled conditions. However, whole constitutions, revolutions and forms of government cannot be randomly allocated to countries. Ethical restrictions arise when an intervention might disadvantage citizens, and behaviour in an artificial setting may differ from ordinary politics. Natural experiments, such as an administrative reform introduced in some regions but not others for reasons unrelated to local trends, can sometimes offer a useful alternative. Yet their assumptions must be carefully tested.

The **case-study method** examines one country, institution, event or political process in considerable detail. A study of the democratic transition in South Africa, for instance, can trace how negotiations, political leadership, economic pressures and public mobilisation interacted. Case studies use interviews, documents, speeches, official records and process tracing. Their major advantage is depth: they uncover mechanisms, timing, actors' motivations and local meanings that large datasets may overlook. They are especially useful for identifying new explanations or studying unusual outcomes. The limitation is that one case cannot automatically represent every society. Selection of a striking or convenient example may lead to bias. A careful researcher therefore justifies case selection, considers rival explanations and states how far the findings can reasonably travel.