

Block 1: Constitutional theory

Constitution (Formal)	A central written document containing the basic rules that govern the state.
Constitution (Substantive)	The entire body of fundamental rules governing a political entity, regardless of whether they are codified in a single document.
Popular sovereignty	"We the people of the United States (...)"
National sovereignty	"The Spanish Nation, in the exercise of its sovereignty, (...)"
Content: maps of power	Define institutions and their relationships
Content: bill of rights	Guarantee fundamental rights.
Constitutional supremacy	The principle that the Constitution is the superior, paramount law, meaning any legislative act repugnant to it is void.
Parliamentary/Legislative Sovereignty	The doctrine prevalent in systems like the UK, where Parliament has the right to make or unmake any law whatever, and no person or body can override its legislation.

Block 3: Fundamental Rights and Sources of Law

Block 2: Institutions and Structure

Separation of Powers	Public power is divided into three functions (legislating, implementing, interpreting/enforcing laws) and that these tasks should be allocated to different institutions and staffed by different people (Functional, Institutional, and Personal dimensions).
SoP: negative rationale	To avoid tyranny or the concentration of power (Montesquieu).
SoP: positive rationale	To enable mutual checks and balances (Madison via Marbury v. Madison).

Block 2: Institutions and Structure (cont)

Parliamentary systems	The executive (Prime Minister/Chancellor) is selected by the legislature and remains in office only if they maintain parliamentary confidence (subject to the vote of no confidence or motion of censure). Example: Germany, Spain.
Presidential systems	The President is directly elected, has an independent mandate, and is not subject to the rule of confidence (cannot be ousted by Parliament except via impeachment for grave offenses). Example: US.
Semi-presidential systems	Features a dual executive with a directly elected President and a Prime Minister accountable to Parliament (rule of confidence applies to the PM). Example: France.
The Executive branch	The Government, led by the Head of the Executive (President or Prime Minister/Chancellor). Implement and enforce laws
The Legislative branch	Parliament, Congress, or Legislature. Make laws, budget, and supervise the government.
The Judicial branch	The Courts (the Judiciary). Interpret and enforce laws, must be impartial and independent from government interference, which is deemed essential to protecting the Rule of Law.
Unitary vs. Federal States	Whether power is split between the central government and regional subunits (federal) or concentrated exclusively in the central government (unitary).
Rationale for Federalism	Federalism used as a check on limited government (distributive-based) or as a way to accommodate ethnic/social diversity (identity-based).