

POLS1101 AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

EXAM 3 STUDY GUIDE

Multiple Choice

The practice quizzes posted on the course web site are the best way to study for the multiple choice section of the exam. The multiple choice questions are drawn at random from a test bank provided by the publisher of the Essentials of American Government textbook. The questions that appear on the exam are from the same source as the practice quizzes.

Students are strongly encouraged to use the practice quizzes to study for the multiple choice section of the exam.

The multiple choice section has 30 questions in it. Each question is worth 1 point (out of 100 total).

Short Answer Questions

I don't intend exams to be mysterious. I'm not out to trick anyone. I want to know how well you understand the information being presented in the course. Read what follows carefully and hopefully it will help. I have attempted to include some humor, but I am very bad at it so I'm sorry if what follows is dull.

General Information

An exam is not a text message, nor is it a discussion over a beer at the pub. I expect your answers to be in formal, grammatically correct English. No slang or trendy abbreviations as I am old and won't understand them and that will be bad for your grade. Professional abbreviations or technical acronyms such as NATO, WTO, NAFTA, and USAID are fine.

Your answers must be legible!!! When in doubt I will assume anything I can't read is the name of character from South Park. That may be nice comic relief for me, but it will be very bad for your grade.

I subject all answers to a "person on the street test". Namely, if I were to stop a person at random on the street and ask them the same question that I asked you, what would they say? This means that I expect you to use the vocabulary of the course in your answers. One of the best ways to demonstrate that you understand the material is a mastery of the technical vocabulary we use in political science. Using the terms incorrectly is also one of the best ways to demonstrate that you don't know the material.

Please be accurate in your examples, dates, historical references, etc. Nothing jumps out at a grader more than a basic factual error. These are red flags that the writer doesn't know the material.

I value parsimony. Remember, I have to grade these exams so don't think that you'll just include everything but the kitchen sink and that will do. In the context of the exam, you won't have time for this anyway. A well-reasoned argument with a selection of supporting facts that demonstrates you know what you're talking about will get a better score than a catalog of everything you've ever learned or found on the internet about something.

Short Answer Questions

Answers should be 2-3 paragraphs and should demonstrate the following:

- A clear knowledge of the basic information relevant to the answer (all of which comes straight from the book and from notes)
- A clear knowledge of how the subject matter in the question is relevant to the wider themes of the course

The short answer sections should be concise, clear, and simple. There is no need for complicated arguments, just provide enough to demonstrate that you know the basic information and that you can apply it to the course.

In general, the short answer questions have right and wrong answers. These are open only to limited interpretation.

You will be asked to answer four short answer questions from a list of between six. Each answer will be graded on a ten point scale as follows:

A (9/10) – perfect, you have everything I was looking for, great minds think alike

B (8) – excellent, you have most of what I was looking for and clearly understood the relevant material

C (7) – average, you can read the textbook and the outlines of the notes and summarize them

D (6) – poor, you apparently did not read the textbook or did not understand it

F (5 or less) – Failure! Your answer is basically wrong. Generally at least some points will be given if the answer seems to be a genuine effort at answering the question. Zero points may be given even when something is written.

Six of the following questions will appear on the exam. You will be required to answer four (4) of them. The questions will be worth ten (10) points each.

- Compare and contrast the distribution of income in the US and the distribution of the tax burden.
- What is the budgetary impact of the economic stimulus bill that recently became law? Assuming the entire amount is spent this year, how much of the budget will be spent on the program and what will this do to the deficit for 2009?
- What is baseline budgeting? Why is this a necessary part of the budget process?
- What are the major taxes that serve as sources of US government revenue?
- Briefly explain the difference between a “progressive tax” and a “regressive tax”.
- What is the “\$45 trillion problem” discussed by Littlefield in the *Choices* book? How does this relate to our discussion of budgets and taxes?
- Compare and contrast the main areas of government spending for the state of Georgia and the Federal Government of the US.
- Briefly explain why the electoral system in the US leads to the dominance of two major political parties.