1. The goals of political actors, and the ways in which their actions and behaviors in pursuit of those goals shape the operation of American government, are recurring themes of the literature on American politics. Describe and discuss/critique the goals scholars have imputed to different political actors (e.g., members of Congress, presidents, Supreme Court justices), how those actors’ strategies and tactics are shaped by their goals, the ways in which American political institutions shape and constrain these actors’ goals (and their pursuit of them), and the implications of this work for our understanding of the functioning of American government, especially vis-à-vis democratic principles.

2. Party identification is one of the central concepts in the literature on American political behavior. There are multiple theories about what party identification is, how it develops, and its role in the process of attitude formation and electoral choice. Discuss and critically evaluate these competing theories. Does the empirical evidence support one theoretical perspective more than the others?

3. Describe how and why individuals’ demographic characteristics, such as their race, ethnicity, gender, class and religious identification, shape the political behavior among citizens. Do the various demographic characteristics function in similar ways (e.g., does race matter in the same way that gender matters?) or do they matter in different ways and for different reasons? How do these characteristics interact? What does the evidence tell us about the influence of demographic characteristics on the behavior of political elites? Should we expect to find the same effects of demographic characteristics among elite actors as we do among the masses?

4. The religion and politics literature clearly establishes that religion affects voting behavior, but it typically does not situate its discussion of religion’s impact on the vote within the major theoretical traditions in voting behavior research. The three main theoretical perspectives on voting are the sociological (or Columbia) model, the social-psychological (or Michigan) model, and the economic (rational choice, Downsian, Rochester) model. Write an essay in which you discuss the electoral impact of religion from the perspective of each of these theoretical traditions. How does voter religion “fit” into each of the three models? Finally, is religion’s impact on voting behavior best explained by a particular theoretical approach, or can the electoral impact of religion be explained just as well by any of the three perspectives?
Participation: Choose One

1. Political participation in the United States appears to many as a paradox. On the one hand, American voter turnout ranks near the bottom among the world’s democracies. But on the other hand, by international standards Americans engage in other forms of participation, like contacting elected officials, at very high rates.

First, what explains this apparent paradox? Why are Americans (a) less likely to vote but (b) more likely to engage in other forms of political activity than citizens of other democratic nations? Contrast the differing perspectives on this issue within the political science literature, and argue for the explanation(s) you find most convincing.

Second, what are the implications of this paradox for representative democracy in the United States? How does operating in an environment with low turnout but high rates of non-electoral participation affect the actions of elected officials in the United States? How does it affect the substance of public policy? How might the policy landscape be different if the U.S. had *high* voter turnout but *low* rates of other forms of political participation?

2. Most of the seminal studies of voter participation begin with the premise that voters participate less than they did in the past. Recent elections, however, reveal a strong reversal in these trends. Describe and assess the major theories of voter participation. Are they able to explain the recent resurgence in voter turnout? If not, how might one explain recent participation increases in national level elections?
General American Politics
Choose two to answer from the following four questions:

1. V.O. Key famously observed that "unless mass views have some place in the shaping of policy, all the talk about democracy is nonsense." Drawing from the literature on both mass behavior and institutions in American politics, assess the current quality of American democracy by this standard of mass opinion shaping public policy.

2. Among the general public, the U.S. House of Representatives is often criticized for being unresponsive to public opinion. Yet it was designed by the Framers to be the most responsive institution. Based on the literature within political science, is the House of Representatives highly responsive to the public opinion, as was intended? Or is it unresponsive, as most Americans think? (In your essay, be sure to define "responsive to public opinion"). In your essay, be sure to refer to more than the Congress literature as it is conventionally defined. How can the literatures in public opinion, political participation, or campaigns and elections speak to this question?

3. In recent years, scholars and popular commentators have debated whether ‘race matters.’ The first decade of the Twenty-First century began with the highly controversial Bush v. Gore 2000 Presidential election, was followed by the 2008 election of Barack Obama over John McCain, and ended with the rise of the Tea Party in 2010. While the ‘race matters’ idea has been an important focus in the Race and Ethnicity subfield of American Politics for some time, write an essay that assesses its importance for the American field more broadly. Explore the significance of the question of whether ‘race matters’ for the American Politics field, including national institutions, public opinion, and partisan politics.

4. In the framers’ understanding, Congress held the substantive powers of government. The presidency was designed as “an effectual check” upon the legislature. Yet, the 20th century saw a shift of that institutional balance with increasing presidential power and prominence in American politics and governance. What are the causes of this apparent institutional reversal? Along with presidency research, consider how the literatures on political parties, elections, and Congress can inform your essay.

Immigration
Choose one of the following two questions.

1. The newest wave of immigration in the United States, comprised by immigrants from Latin America and Asia, has rapidly transformed the American demography. Despite significant bloc voting for Obama in 2012, many pundits and scholars assert that Latinos and Asians seem to have a less coherent political identity because immigrants were not socialized into notions of pan-ethnic solidarity. Do you agree with this assessment, or is this an overly simplistic account of group behavior? Drawing on the relevant literature discuss how the continued growth of the Latinos and Asians, from both immigration and native births, will affect the political integration of these groups in the decades to come.

2. Both George W. Bush and Barack Obama have called on Congress to pass comprehensive immigration reform, with limited consequences in the legislative process. A key consideration with respect to immigration policy is its relationship with public opinion. Softening public opposition to unauthorized immigration would suggest a democratic mandate to pass immigration policy to address the presence of undocumented immigrants. Yet, the federal level has failed to pass such legislation, while some states have pursued restrictionist policies designed to encourage self-deportation. Discuss the diverging paths of policy-making and public opinion about immigration, particularly at the state-level. Why do some states enact tough restrictions on immigrant rights while others provide social welfare and cultural recognition? What role does public opinion have on this relationship, and is this unique to immigration policy?
American Politics Comprehensive Exam
January 18, 2014

General American Politics
Choose two to answer from the following four questions:

1. V.O. Key famously observed that "unless mass views have some place in the shaping of policy, all the talk about democracy is nonsense." Drawing from the literature on both mass behavior and institutions in American politics, assess the current quality of American democracy by this standard of mass opinion shaping public policy.

2. Among the general public, the U.S. House of Representatives is often criticized for being unresponsive to public opinion. Yet it was designed by the Framers to be the most responsive institution. Based on the literature within political science, is the House of Representatives highly responsive to the public opinion, as was intended? Or is it unresponsive, as most Americans think? (In your essay, be sure to define “responsive to public opinion”). In your essay, be sure to refer to more than the Congress literature as it is conventionally defined. How can the literatures in public opinion, political participation, or campaigns and elections speak to this question?

3. In recent years, scholars and popular commentators have debated whether ‘race matters.’ The first decade of the Twenty-First century began with the highly controversial Bush v. Gore 2000 Presidential election, was followed by the 2008 election of Barack Obama over John McCain, and ended with the rise of the Tea Party in 2010. While the ‘race matters’ idea has been an important focus in the Race and Ethnicity subfield of American Politics for some time, write an essay that assesses its importance for the American field more broadly. Explore the significance of the question of whether ‘race matters’ for the American Politics field, including national institutions, public opinion, and partisan politics.

4. In the framers’ understanding, Congress held the substantive powers of government. The presidency was designed as “an effectual check” upon the legislature. Yet, the 20th century saw a shift of that institutional balance with increasing presidential power and prominence in American politics and governance. What are the causes of this apparent institutional reversal? Along with presidency research, consider how the literatures on political parties, elections, and Congress can inform your essay.
**Judicial Politics**

Choose one of the following two questions.

1. Alexander Bickel argued that judicial review suffers from a counter-majoritarian difficulty because, “when the Supreme Court declares unconstitutional a legislative act or the action of an elected executive...it exercises control, not in behalf of the prevailing majority, but against it. Robert Dahl disagreed; he claimed that, “[e]xcept for short-lived transitional periods...the Supreme Court is inevitably a part of the dominant national alliance... [and] of course supports the major policies of the alliance.” Based on modern empirical scholarship, which of these views is more accurate? In forming your response: (1) consider alternative definitions of the “majority” and (2) consider the theoretical reasons why the Court might support or undermine the majority and the empirical evidence to support those theories.

2. For decades, the judicial politics literature has been preoccupied with a debate between the “attitudinal” and “legal” models of judicial decision making; yet, as early as 1994, prominent judicial politics scholars declared the legal model to be a “straw man” argument that no judge or scholar actually believes. What is the status of the “legal model” today? That is, what is the current state of empirical evidence regarding the role of “law” in American judicial decision-making? In forming your response: (1) consider alternative perspectives on what it means for judges to follow the “law” and (2) consider strengths and weaknesses of the “legal model” and its modern incarnations.
American Politics Comprehensive Exam  
January 18, 2014

General American Politics  
Choose two to answer from the following four questions:

1. V.O. Key famously observed that "unless mass views have some place in the shaping of policy, all the talk about democracy is nonsense." Drawing from the literature on both mass behavior and institutions in American politics, assess the current quality of American democracy by this standard of mass opinion shaping public policy.

2. Among the general public, the U.S. House of Representatives is often criticized for being unresponsive to public opinion. Yet it was designed by the Framers to be the most responsive institution. Based on the literature within political science, is the House of Representatives highly responsive to the public opinion, as was intended? Or is it unresponsive, as most Americans think? (In your essay, be sure to define "responsive to public opinion"). In your essay, be sure to refer to more than the Congress literature as it is conventionally defined. How can the literatures in public opinion, political participation, or campaigns and elections speak to this question?

3. In recent years, scholars and popular commentators have debated whether 'race matters.' The first decade of the Twenty-First century began with the highly controversial Bush v. Gore 2000 Presidential election, was followed by the 2008 election of Barack Obama over John McCain, and ended with the rise of the Tea Party in 2010. While the 'race matters' idea has been an important focus in the Race and Ethnicity subfield of American Politics for some time, write an essay that assesses its importance for the American field more broadly. Explore the significance of the question of whether 'race matters' for the American Politics field, including national institutions, public opinion, and partisan politics.

4. In the framers' understanding, Congress held the substantive powers of government. The presidency was designed as "an effectual check" upon the legislature. Yet, the 20th century saw a shift of that institutional balance with increasing presidential power and prominence in American politics and governance. What are the causes of this apparent institutional reversal? Along with presidency research, consider how the literatures on political parties, elections, and Congress can inform your essay.

Political Participation
Choose one of the following two questions:

1. Perhaps the most frequent recommendation within the civic engagement literature is for enhanced civic education, most commonly through formal schooling. What do we know about the effect of education on civic engagement—whether defined by attitudes or behavior?

First, adjudicate among the competing arguments regarding the effect—or absence thereof—of a causal link between educational attainment and civic engagement. Be sure to describe, analyze, and evaluate the different types of evidence that have been brought to bear on this question.

Second, discuss what is known about the efficacy of civic education—whether curricular or extra-curricular. Drawing on one or more theories within the civic engagement literature, explain why you would, or would not, expect civic education programs for youth to have an effect on their life-long civic engagement.

2. Contemporary voters are able to register and vote in more ways than any point in history (e.g., vote by mail, early voting, election day registration, online registration). Proponents of these laws intended these alternatives to showing up at a given polling place on Election Day to increase voter turnout. The academic literature suggests the passage of new laws has met with mixed success at best. This question consists of three parts. Thinking theoretically, what sub-populations should benefit from convenience voting reforms (or should it benefit all groups equally or no group at all)? Next, critically evaluate the extent to which the existing literature supports or refutes your theoretical expectations. Finally, propose a research design to collect better data to test your theory.
Part I. General Questions
Choose two (2) of the following four (4) questions to answer. Be clear about which questions you are answering.

1. Recent years have seen a turn toward experimental research in American politics, both in the field and the lab. Not everyone agrees that this trend is a positive one. What have been the positive and negative consequences of the growing trend toward experimental research? How has it affected the sorts of questions political scientists ask? How has it affected the answers they reach? If forced to make (an admittedly overly simplified) summary judgment, would you argue that experimental research is merely a methodological fad that (like prior fads) should recede into the background, or does it represent a true methodological advance that promises a brighter future for the field?

2. V.O. Key famously observed that “unless mass views have some place in the shaping of policy, all the talk about democracy is nonsense.” Using this criterion of mass opinion shaping policy, assess how democratic contemporary American politics is.

3. Why did Republicans do well in the midterm elections of 2010 but then lose the 2012 presidential election? Party identification is the strongest predictor of the vote and is highly stable, and yet these two elections produced very different outcomes. In answering this question, do not focus only on the specific contexts and candidates of 2010 and 2012, but rather on general factors, including but not necessarily limited to the nature of midterm vs. presidential elections, presidential incumbents vs. challengers, and the constraints imposed by the nomination process.

4. The literature on parties has long been dominated by the idea of electoral (re)alignments. Provide a brief critical overview of this literature, focusing on the main foci of theoretical and empirical contention. In the end, what is your judgment of the utility of this entire approach, offering in particular an assessment of the charge by David Mayhew in his "Critique of an American Genre" that the realignment perspective is no longer especially useful or relevant.

Part II. Subfield Questions
Choose one (1) of the two (2) questions from the subfield relevant to you. Be clear about which question you are answering.
Religion and Politics

1. Religious affiliation in the United States is very fluid, as many Americans switch religions over the course of their lives and, increasingly, drop having a religious affiliation altogether. What are the political consequences of religious switching? What might be the political causes of it?

2. An ongoing debate among scholars of religion and politics is whether there should even be a subfield dedicated to religion. Unlike sociology, where religion is often studied for its own sake, in political science we study religion and something else: parties, public opinion, the presidency, the courts, and so on. Therefore, the argument goes, there is no original theoretical contribution to be made by focusing on religion per se. Overall, is the study of American politics better off because there is a religion and politics subfield? Or would the study of religion (paradoxically) be better off if there was no subfield dedicated to the topic? In particular, has the subfield led to theoretical and/or empirical advancements in the study of American politics that would not have been made otherwise?

Race and Ethnicity

1. Latinos surpassed African Americans as the second largest racial minority in America in 2000 and Asian Americans are the fastest growing ethnic group in the population. Despite significant bloc voting for Obama in 2012, many pundits and scholars assert that Latinos and Asians seem to have a less coherent political identity as minority groups, compared to African Americans. What factors might account for the differences? Does this affect the possibility of coalitions among and across these groups? Drawing on the literature as appropriate, discuss how the continued growth of the Latinos and Asians, both from immigration and native births, will affect the dynamics of racial politics in the decades to come.

2. Some empirical theories of race/ethnicity in American politics include pluralism, individual assimilation, class stratification, and racial hierarchy. Based on your interpretation of the research reported in the race and ethnicity literature, critically consider which of the theories you would argue is most supported by the empirical evidence. Carefully explain why you favor the theory you do, and the shortcomings of the theories you do not favor, with appropriate citation to and discussion of the relevant literature. Your survey of that literature should consider a variety of substantive topics (e.g., historical development, attitudes, political participation, institutions, policies, etc.) and more than one specific racial/ethnic group (e.g., African-Americans, Latinos, Asians).
American Field Comprehensive Exam
May 2013

Each essay (i.e., the response to each question) should be a maximum of 4,800 words. You have 48 hours to complete your exam; an additional 10 hours are allowed for non-native English speakers.

Part I. General Questions
Choose two (2) of the following four (4) questions to answer. Be clear about which questions you are answering.

1. The Constitution outlined a government with majoritarian tendencies (e.g., popular elections; apportionment in the House being decided by population) and anti-majoritarian tendencies (e.g., the Supreme Court; the electoral college; the Senate). The past 4 years have witnessed historically high levels of the use of the filibuster in the Senate and historically low numbers of significant laws being passed. Critics point to these two facts as evidence that the system is broken and reform (either the Constitution or Senate rules) is needed. What electoral and/or institutional dynamics have created this gridlock? Does this legislative inactivity mean that people are better or worse represented than they were 10 years ago when laws passed Congress relatively frequently? Which people are better represented and which people are represented worse?

2. In his official address as president of the APSA in 1996, Arend Lijphart argued for the drastic step of introducing mandatory voting to the United States as the best method for solving the “serious democratic problem” of chronically low levels and biased nature of electoral participation in the United States. The particulars of his analysis aside, comment on the causes and consequences of low and biased turnout in the United States. (Your discussion of bias may include attention to such factors as class, race, ethnicity, and so on). Would you agree that, empirically and normatively, the U.S. faces a “serious democratic problem” due to low and biased turnout?

3. V.O. Key famously observed that “unless mass views have some place in the shaping of policy, all the talk about democracy is nonsense.” Using this criteria of mass opinion shaping policy, assess how democratic contemporary American politics is. At minimum, be sure to consider: What does the literature in American politics say about the process by which citizens formulate policy opinions and choose representatives? In what ways and to what extent has mass opinion and behavior been shown to affect the behavior of candidates and incumbents across the three branches of government, and the policy outputs of political institutions? What, if any, conclusions about the state of democracy can be drawn from our current understanding of these phenomenon?

4. Scholars disagree about the answers to the following questions: What is a party? What is partisanship? How, if at all, does party influence the behavior of
legislators and legislatures? Detail each of these debates and explain which answer to each question you find most compelling and why.

**Part II. Subfield Questions: Religion and Politics**

Choose one (1) of the following two (2) questions to answer. Be clear about which question you are answering.

1. Two of the central theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of religion and contemporary political behavior in the U.S are the social-psychological perspective exemplified by the work of Green, Guth, Kellstedt, and Smidt, and the sociological approach represented by the work of Djupe and Gilbert. Write an essay in which you gauge the strengths and weaknesses of these two perspectives on religion and American political behavior. What assumptions about the nature of religion and of political behavior are made by the two perspectives, and which set of assumptions rests on firmer ground? Which approach does a better job of identifying and explaining the causal mechanisms that link religious orientations to political attitudes and behavior? Which does a better job of identifying and explaining general patterns across a wide range of religious and political contexts? Is there a way in which the two approaches might be combined to create a more satisfying methodological and theoretical account of religion and political behavior?

2. Scholars such as Kenneth Wald have argued that the theory of “culture wars” has dominated the study of religion and politics in the U.S. to too great an extent. Do you agree or disagree with this critique of the religion and politics literature? What political developments have been effectively explained by culture wars theory? What political developments have been missed or not understood well enough by the focus on the culture wars? What types of theoretical approaches (e.g. social movement theory, cultural theory, rational choice theory, secularization theory) might better explain these phenomena? How might culture wars theory be integrated into a broader and more satisfying theory of religion and politics?
American Field Comprehensive Examination
January 22, 2011

General Questions (PICK TWO)

1) What are the advantages and disadvantages of America’s two-party system? Write an essay in which you either defend or critique the current party system—or a combination of both. Feel free to think broadly as you consider advantages and disadvantages, and thus draw on multiple literatures.

2) Facebook has been widely praised as an engine political parties and campaigns can use to mobilize and organize supporters. Please address the following:
   a) Propose a research design by which the effect of social networking sites like Facebook can be measured and compared to other campaign tactics.
   b) Do you think Facebook is more or less effective than traditional modes of organization. In what sense?
   c) If you think Facebook is effective, what is the primary mechanism by which it operates?
   d) How does your research design allow for a test of this proposed mechanism?

3) In the popular press, "leadership" is often discussed and dissected when explaining politics, but leadership is rarely a focus of political science. The major exception to this rule is the study of Presidential politics (e.g., Neustadt, Skowronek). Explain why the discussion of leadership is usually confined to Presidential politics. In answering this question, you might consider:
   a) How political science differs from horse-race punditry;
   b) How the Presidency differs from other parts of government or politics;
   c) The degree to which other subfields like political psychology (e.g., likes/dislikes) or spatial modeling (e.g., the assumption of political entrepreneurs) incorporate leadership;

4) The plural-elite model of democracy (associated, in part, with Schumpeter and the early work of Dahl and Lindblom) is frequently regarded as the working model of American democracy. Articulate the core theoretical structure of this approach to democracy, noting in passing how it was argued to be preferable to the "classical theory of democracy." Appraise the theoretical integrity and empirical utility of the plural-elite model against the arguments typically arrayed against it by its various critics.

Area of Focus: Campaigns and Elections (PICK ONE):

1) Was the Republican party helped or hurt by the Tea Party Movement during the 2010 General Election? That is, in the absence of the Tea Party as an organization, would the Republican party have won more or fewer seats?

2) Does campaign advertising make a difference? When, how, and under what circumstances? In writing your answer, critically evaluate the strategies used by authors advancing empirical claims.
American Comprehensive Exam Questions Spring 2010

General Questions (Given to all four students) (Students Answer 2 out of 4 questions)

1. Identify what you deem to be the most important issue(s) which are understudied or not studied very well – theoretically and/or substantively and/or empirically and/or normatively -- in the analysis of American Politics. After briefly explaining the limitations of that research, lay out a reasonably specific research agenda to address the shortcomings. Carefully explain the theoretical grounding for your agenda as well as the necessary evidence to pursue these and specify how you would go about applying your theory and evidence to advance the research in this area. Cite all relevant literature.

2. One of the central questions in research on American political behavior has been the extent to which citizens are “politically sophisticated.” What are the central findings of this literature? Are these research findings dependent on the various ways in which scholars define and measure political sophistication? To what extent have Americans become more or less sophisticated over time? Does it really matter? Explain.

3. If you could implement three policy reforms to increase voter turnout, what would they be and why? Write an essay in which you explain what effect you would expect each reform to have, and why.

4. Does democracy depend upon a politically-attentive and active citizenry? Or, can democracy function well with a public that is largely disengaged from the political process? Does your answer depend on your theoretical perspective and your definition of democracy? Based on what we know about the political attentiveness, knowledge, and participation of American citizens, can the United States sustain a well-functioning democracy? What responses do different theoretical perspectives provide to this last question?

Subfield Questions (Students Answer 1 out of 2 questions): The Presidency

1. Some scholars of the presidency argue the modern presidency threatens American representative democracy. What is it about presidential politics and presidential leadership that might be seen as threatening to representative democracy? Do the claims of these scholars have merit? Your essay should examine the relevant work of at least three of the following: James Ceaser, Samuel Kernell, Theodore Lowi, Sidney Milkis, Jeffrey Tulis, and Stephen Skowronek.

2. How has the selection process for presidents changed from the election of George Washington to today? What are the causes of these changes, and are those changes related to changes in the presidency’s role over the course of American political development? Be attentive to identifying the scholarship that is most relevant to this question.
General Questions (Given to all four students) (Students Answer 2 out of 4 questions)

1. Identify what you deem to be the most important issue(s) which are understudied or not studied very well – theoretically and/or substantively and/or empirically and/or normatively -- in the analysis of American Politics. After briefly explaining the limitations of that research, lay out a reasonably specific research agenda to address the shortcomings. Carefully explain the theoretical grounding for your agenda as well as the necessary evidence to pursue these and specify how you would go about applying your theory and evidence to advance the research in this area. Cite all relevant literature.

2. One of the central questions in research on American political behavior has been the extent to which citizens are “politically sophisticated.” What are the central findings of this literature? Are these research findings dependent on the various ways in which scholars define and measure political sophistication? To what extent have Americans become more or less sophisticated over time? Does it really matter? Explain.

3. If you could implement three policy reforms to increase voter turnout, what would they be and why? Write an essay in which you explain what effect you would expect each reform to have, and why.

4. Does democracy depend upon a politically-attentive and active citizenry? Or, can democracy function well with a public that is largely disengaged from the political process? Does your answer depend on your theoretical perspective and your definition of democracy? Based on what we know about the political attentiveness, knowledge, and participation of American citizens, can the United States sustain a well-functioning democracy? What responses do different theoretical perspectives provide to this last question?

Subfield questions (Students Answer 1 out of 2 questions): Religious Liberty and First Amendment Jurisprudence

1. What place does and should the study of constitutional law, constitutions, and constitutionalism have in the study of American politics?

2. A long standing jurisprudential debate exists between “originalism” and “living constitutionalism.” Explain the parameters of this dispute, citing the relevant literature. Also, explain how this dispute has manifested itself in First Amendment religious liberty jurisprudence.
American Comprehensive Exam Questions Spring 2010

General Questions (Given to all four students) (Students Answer 2 out of 4 questions)

1. Identify what you deem to be the most important issue(s) which are understudied or not studied very well -- theoretically and/or substantively and/or empirically and/or normatively -- in the analysis of American Politics. After briefly explaining the limitations of that research, lay out a reasonably specific research agenda to address the shortcomings. Carefully explain the theoretical grounding for your agenda as well as the necessary evidence to pursue these and specify how you would go about applying your theory and evidence to advance the research in this area. Cite all relevant literature.

2. One of the central questions in research on American political behavior has been the extent to which citizens are “politically sophisticated.” What are the central findings of this literature? Are these research findings dependent on the various ways in which scholars define and measure political sophistication? To what extent have Americans become more or less sophisticated over time? Does it really matter? Explain.

3. If you could implement three policy reforms to increase voter turnout, what would they be and why? Write an essay in which you explain what effect you would expect each reform to have, and why.

4. Does democracy depend upon a politically-attentive and active citizenry? Or, can democracy function well with a public that is largely disengaged from the political process? Does your answer depend on your theoretical perspective and your definition of democracy? Based on what we know about the political attentiveness, knowledge, and participation of American citizens, can the United States sustain a well-functioning democracy? What responses do different theoretical perspectives provide to this last question?

Subfield questions (Students Answer 1 out of 2 questions): Religious Liberty and First Amendment Jurisprudence

1. What place does and should the study of constitutional law, constitutions, and constitutionalism have in the study of American politics?

2. A long standing jurisprudential debate exists between “originalism” and “living constitutionalism.” Explain the parameters of this dispute, citing the relevant literature. Also, explain how this dispute has manifested itself in First Amendment religious liberty jurisprudence.
American Comprehensive Exam Questions Spring 2010

General Questions (Given to all four students) (Students Answer 2 out of 4 questions)

1. Identify what you deem to be the most important issue(s) which are understudied or not studied very well -- theoretically and/or substantively and/or empirically and/or normatively -- in the analysis of American Politics. After briefly explaining the limitations of that research, lay out a reasonably specific research agenda to address the shortcomings. Carefully explain the theoretical grounding for your agenda as well as the necessary evidence to pursue these and specify how you would go about applying your theory and evidence to advance the research in this area. Cite all relevant literature.

2. One of the central questions in research on American political behavior has been the extent to which citizens are “politically sophisticated.” What are the central findings of this literature? Are these research findings dependent on the various ways in which scholars define and measure political sophistication? To what extent have Americans become more or less sophisticated over time? Does it really matter? Explain.

3. If you could implement three policy reforms to increase voter turnout, what would they be and why? Write an essay in which you explain what effect you would expect each reform to have, and why.

4. Does democracy depend upon a politically-attentive and active citizenry? Or, can democracy function well with a public that is largely disengaged from the political process? Does your answer depend on your theoretical perspective and your definition of democracy? Based on what we know about the political attentiveness, knowledge, and participation of American citizens, can the United States sustain a well-functioning democracy? What responses do different theoretical perspectives provide to this last question?

Subfield Questions (Students Answer 1 out of 2 questions): Religion and Politics

1. Political scientists have found a positive relationship between religiosity (particularly traditional religiosity) and conservative attitudes on policy issues. Write an essay in which you discuss various explanations for that relationship. Is the relationship causal? If not, then why not? If so, then what is the most likely direction of causality? Finally, propose a research design to test your explanation.

2. The study of religion in American politics has gained increasing attention in recent years. Write an essay in which you identify at least two contributions that the study of religion can make, or has already made, to our general understanding of American politics. Finally, identify one key direction for future research that would enable the subfield of religion and politics to contribute more broadly to our general understanding of American politics.
American
Final Comp Questions
May 2009

1. Drawing on the literature on economic performance and Presidential vote share, incumbency effects, the Electoral College and demographic trends in the United States, is there anything John McCain could have done to win the Presidency?

2. In the 1990s, a lot of political science research in American politics described and explained declining rates of civic and political engagement. In the 2000s, a dominant theme in American politics has been commentary and debate over whether there has been a rise in partisan polarization—whether in Congress or (more controversially) among voters.

Assume that (a) there has indeed been a decline in many forms of civic engagement; and (b) there has been an increase in polarization.

Write an essay in which you discuss whether (a) could be a cause of (b), and then propose a research design to test whether there is a connection between them.

In doing so, you will need to define your key terms: civic and political engagement, and polarization, including whether you are describing the elite or mass level, or both (you choose).

3. Does the American political system, as it actually functions, fulfill the standards of republican democracy, particularly with regard to political equality and representation? Drawing from the empirical literature in American politics, your answer should address the ways in which American political institutions, organizations, and mass behavior do and do not function in ways consistent with generally-accepted norms of democracy. Note that we are not interested in a theoretical defense of certain democratic norms or theories over others (choose a few general standards and move on) but rather on what political science has suggested about how the system actually functions and whether those findings are consistent with general expectations for an ideal democracy. Finally, your essay should identify new directions in which future research might go to better our understanding of the equality of political representation.

4. John Hart Ely argues that the key to a proper understanding of the constitution and of constitutional history is the idea of “democracy enhancement” as captured in shorthand in the Carolene Products footnote. Prepare an essay in which you test his theory against (a) the original Madisonian theory of the constitution and (b) the history of Supreme Court’s interpretation of the Constitution.
**Subfield (Presidency)**

1. At the beginning of the American republic the presidency was designed to be a counter-majoritarian institution. Explain what it was about the office’s design that indicates it was aimed to restrain democracy. Does the presidency remain counter-majoritarian today? Identify at least three contributions to research on the presidency that contribute to answering this question. Your essay should be clear on what constitutes democratic politics and how it applies to the presidency.

2. Stephen Skowronek’s typology characterizes Lincoln and Roosevelt as "reconstructive" presidents. Yet these presidents are temporally far apart in American history, and they addressed quite different challenges. What is the analytic utility of classifying Lincoln and Roosevelt as occupying the same kind of political role? Finally, explain how the “emergent pattern” in American politics imposes very different contexts on these two cases of reconstructive leadership.
Choose **one** question from each of the following three sections.

**Part One: American Democracy**

1. To what extent does the contemporary American political system meet the standards of democracy in regard to political equality and representation? Drawing from the empirical literature in American politics, your answer should address the ways in which American political institutions, political organizations, and mass behavior do and do not succeed in meeting democratic norms. Note that we are not interested in a theoretical defense of certain democratic norms over others (the question enumerates the two we would like you to focus on) but on what political science has to say about how the system actually functions and whether those conclusions are consistent with our expectations for an ideal democracy.

2. Recent work in political science emphasizes the degree to which political actors must be strategic in the pursuit of their goals. The essential interdependency of politics (outcomes are a function of collective, rather than individual, action) means that actors must take into account the goals and actions of other actors when trying to achieve their aims. At the same time, political actors exist within specific institutional settings that both constrain their behavior and offer opportunities for action. Drawing from the empirical literature on American politics, how do institutions and interdependency shape the behavior of members of Congress, Supreme Court justices, and presidents? How are institutional constraints/opportunities and interdependency similar across the three branches and how are they different? What are the consequences of these institutions and interdependencies for the functioning of American democracy?

**Part Two: Institutions**

1. At the beginning of the American republic the presidency was apparently designed to constrain democratic impulses. Does it remain counter-majoritarian? Identify at least three contributions to research on the presidency that help answer this question. Address this question in light of 19th and 20th century developments in American politics. Your essay should be clear on what constitutes democratic politics, and it should consider how these criteria apply to the presidency.

2. Richard Neustadt’s *Presidential Power* and Stephen Skowronek’s *The Politics Presidents Make* are frequently described as seminal works in presidency studies that frame fundamentally different approaches to the office and its politics. Compare and contrast these two works, explaining how they differ and exploring areas where their views may converge. Your essay should use at least one president to illustrate these two books’ differences and similarities of interpretation.

**Part Three: Public Law**

1. Over the years, the Supreme Court has decided several cases implicating the principle of separation of powers. Youngstown Sheet & Tube v. Sawyer (1952), Immigration and Naturalization Service v. Chadha (1985), and Morrison v. Olsen (1988) are among the most important of these cases. What theory (or theories) of separation of powers informs these cases? Commentators have distinguished between formalist and functional approaches to the judicial review of separation of powers conflicts. Define these approaches. Which are reflected in these cases? What are the strongest arguments in favor of formalism? Of functionalism? Which do you prefer as a political scientist? Why?

2. Judicial review in America has been described as a counter-majoritarian institution. There is a great deal of argument in the literature -- from Robert Dahl to Mark Tushnet -- over the validity of this proposition. Discuss and critically evaluate the various theories relating to the proposition.
General Questions
Choose two of the following four general questions to answer. Be clear about which questions you are answering.

1. At the beginning of the American republic, the U.S. Supreme Court and the presidency were counter-majoritarian institutions designed to constrain democratic impulses. Do these institutions remain counter-majoritarian today? How and why? Address this question in light of 20th century developments in American politics. Your essay should clearly identify criteria for determining what constitutes democratic politics, and it should consider how these criteria apply to the functions of the Supreme Court and presidency.

2. V.O. Key famously observed that “unless mass views have some place in the shaping of policy, all the talk about democracy is nonsense.” Using this criteria of mass opinion shaping policy, assess how democratic contemporary American politics is. At minimum, be sure to consider: What does the literature in American politics say about the process by which citizens formulate policy opinions and choose representatives? To what extent can mass opinion and behavior be used to explain the behavior of candidates and incumbents, and the policy outputs of democratic institutions? What, if any, conclusions about the state of democracy can be drawn from our current understanding of these phenomenon?

3. The essential interdependency of politics (outcomes are a function of collective, rather than individual, action) means that actors must take into account the goals and actions of other actors when trying to achieve their aims. Political actors also exist within specific institutional settings that both constrain their behavior and offer opportunities for action. Drawing from the empirical literature on American politics, your essay should consider how institutions and interdependency shape the behavior of members of Congress, Supreme Court justices, and presidents. How are institutional constraints/opportunities and interdependency similar across the three branches and how are they different? What are the consequences of these institutions and interdependencies for the functioning of American democracy?

4. Despite a minor upswing in 2004, voter turnout in the United States is consistently among the lowest of all industrial democracies, and also shows the greatest class bias (that is, the poor are greatly under-represented among citizens who turnout to vote). Discuss the causes and consequences of comparatively low and class-skewed turnout. What are the implications for American democracy?
Choose one of the following two subfield questions to answer. Be clear about which question you are answering.

1. From the perspective of degrees of responsiveness to popular (democratic) politics, compare and contrast the modern presidency to the presidency conceived by the Framers and the presidency of post-Civil War America. Your essay should be explicit in identifying and using at least three scholars whose writings apply to this question.

2. Fred Greenstein observes that the change in the presidency during the 20th century is sufficiently dramatic to necessitate “a modifier such as ‘modern’ [to] characterize the post-1932 manifestations . . . that had evolved from the . . . circumscribed traditional presidency.”

What are those “manifestations” that distinguish the “modern” presidency from the institution's “traditional” form? What explanation can you offer for the institutional changes characterized as “modern”? Finally, compare and contrast Theodore Lowi's and Stephen Skowronek's conceptions of change in the presidency with Fred Greenstein's.
General Questions
Choose two of the following four general questions to answer. Be clear about which questions you are answering.

1. At the beginning of the American republic, the U.S. Supreme Court and the presidency were counter-majoritarian institutions designed to constrain democratic impulses. Do these institutions remain counter-majoritarian today? How and why? Address this question in light of 20th century developments in American politics. Your essay should clearly identify criteria for determining what constitutes democratic politics, and it should consider how these criteria apply to the functions of the Supreme Court and presidency.

2. V.O. Key famously observed that “unless mass views have some place in the shaping of policy, all the talk about democracy is nonsense.” Using this criteria of mass opinion shaping policy, assess how democratic contemporary American politics is. At minimum, be sure to consider: What does the literature in American politics say about the process by which citizens formulate policy opinions and choose representatives? To what extent can mass opinion and behavior be used to explain the behavior of candidates and incumbents, and the policy outputs of democratic institutions? What, if any, conclusions about the state of democracy can be drawn from our current understanding of these phenomenon?

3. The essential interdependency of politics (outcomes are a function of collective, rather than individual, action) means that actors must take into account the goals and actions of other actors when trying to achieve their aims. Political actors also exist within specific institutional settings that both constrain their behavior and offer opportunities for action. Drawing from the empirical literature on American politics, your essay should consider how institutions and interdependency shape the behavior of members of Congress, Supreme Court justices, and presidents. How are institutional constraints/opportunities and interdependency similar across the three branches and how are they different? What are the consequences of these institutions and interdependencies for the functioning of American democracy?

4. Despite a minor upswing in 2004, voter turnout in the United States is consistently among the lowest of all industrial democracies, and also shows the greatest class bias (that is, the poor are greatly under-represented among citizens who turnout to vote). Discuss the causes and consequences of comparatively low and class-skewed turnout. What are the implications for American democracy?
Choose one of the following two subfield questions to answer. Be clear about which question you are answering.

1. From the perspective of responsiveness to popular (democratic) politics, compare and contrast the modern presidency to the presidency conceived by the Framers and the presidency of post-Civil War America. Your essay should be explicit in identifying and using at least three scholars whose writings apply to this question.

2. Fred Greenstein observes that the change in the presidency during the 20th century is sufficiently dramatic to necessitate “a modifier such as ‘modern’ [to] characterize the post-1932 manifestations . . . that had evolved from the . . . circumscribed traditional presidency.”

What are those “manifestations” that distinguish the “modern” presidency from the institution’s “traditional” form? What explanation can you offer for the institutional changes characterized as “modern”? Finally, compare and contrast Theodore Lowi’s and Stephen Skowronek’s conceptions of change in the presidency with Fred Greenstein’s.
General Questions

Choose two of the following four general questions to answer. Be clear about which questions you are answering.

1. At the beginning of the American republic, the U.S. Supreme Court and the presidency were counter-majoritarian institutions designed to constrain democratic impulses. Do these institutions remain counter-majoritarian today? How and why? Address this question in light of 20th century developments in American politics. Your essay should clearly identify criteria for determining what constitutes democratic politics, and it should consider how these criteria apply to the functions of the Supreme Court and presidency.

2. V.O. Key famously observed that “unless mass views have some place in the shaping of policy, all the talk about democracy is nonsense.” Using this criteria of mass opinion shaping policy, assess how democratic contemporary American politics is. At minimum, be sure to consider: What does the literature in American politics about the process by which citizens formulate policy opinions and choose representatives contribute to this debate? To what extent can mass opinion and behavior be used to explain the behavior of candidates and incumbents, and the policy outputs of democratic institutions? What, if any, conclusions about the state of democracy can be drawn from our current understanding of these phenomenon?

3. The essential interdependency of politics (outcomes are a function of collective, rather than individual, action) means that actors must take into account the goals and actions of other actors when trying to achieve their aims. Political actors also exist within specific institutional settings that both constrain their behavior and offer opportunities for action. Drawing from the empirical literature on American politics, your essay should consider how institutions and interdependency shape the behavior of members of Congress, Supreme Court justices, and presidents. How are institutional constraints/opportunities and interdependency similar across the three branches and how are they different? What are the consequences of these institutions and interdependencies for the functioning of American democracy?

4. Despite a minor upswing in 2004, voter turnout in the United States is consistently among the lowest of all industrial democracies, and also shows the greatest class bias (that is, the poor are greatly under-represented among citizens who turnout to vote). Discuss the causes and consequences of comparatively low and class-skewed turnout. What are the implications for American democracy?
Subfield
Choose one of the following two subfield questions to answer. Be clear about which question you are answering.

1. Journalists, citizens, and many scholars have long been concerned that the role of organized interests in the United States is biased and undemocratic, both in terms of the shape and content of the interest group universe and its membership, and in terms of the relationship between organized interests and political decision makers. Yet others have lauded the benefits of group membership and activity for the functioning of democratic politics. Discuss the major theoretical arguments and empirical evidence for and against these two perspectives. Your answer should consider the multiple ways in which bias may, or may not, characterize the interest group universe and group—government interaction.

2. Do parties matter? If so, how and why? Specifically, your essay should consider whether and how parties matter for: electoral choice and voter mobilization; candidate selection and behavior; the choices and actions of members of Congress, Supreme Court justices, and presidents; and policy outcomes and political decision making. For all of these areas, your essay should address both whether and how parties matter in the present context and how their role has shifted over time.
General Questions
Choose two of the following four general questions to answer. Be clear about which questions you are answering.

1. At the beginning of the American republic, the U.S. Supreme Court and the presidency were counter-majoritarian institutions designed to constrain democratic impulses. Do these institutions remain counter-majoritarian today? How and why? Address this question in light of 20th century developments in American politics. Your essay should clearly identify criteria for determining what constitutes democratic politics, and it should consider how these criteria apply to the functions of the Supreme Court and presidency.

2. V.O. Key famously observed that “unless mass views have some place in the shaping of policy, all the talk about democracy is nonsense.” Using this criteria of mass opinion shaping policy, assess how democratic contemporary American politics is. At minimum, be sure to consider: What does the literature in American politics say about the process by which citizens formulate policy opinions and choose representatives? To what extent can mass opinion and behavior be used to explain the behavior of candidates and incumbents, and the policy outputs of democratic institutions? What, if any, conclusions about the state of democracy can be drawn from our current understanding of these phenomenon?

3. The essential interdependency of politics (outcomes are a function of collective, rather than individual, action) means that actors must take into account the goals and actions of other actors when trying to achieve their aims. Political actors also exist within specific institutional settings that both constrain their behavior and offer opportunities for action. Drawing from the empirical literature on American politics, your essay should consider how institutions and interdependency shape the behavior of members of Congress, Supreme Court justices, and presidents. How are institutional constraints/opportunities and interdependency similar across the three branches and how are they different? What are the consequences of these institutions and interdependencies for the functioning of American democracy?

4. Despite a minor upswing in 2004, voter turnout in the United States is consistently among the lowest of all industrial democracies, and also shows the greatest class bias (that is, the poor are greatly under-represented among citizens who turnout to vote). Discuss the causes and consequences of comparatively low and class-skewed turnout. What are the implications for American democracy?
Choose one of the following two subfield questions to answer. Be clear about which question you are answering.

1. How does the literature on the political behavior of various racial/ethnic groups alter or influence our theoretical understanding of the larger body of political behavior research, and more broadly, how does the literature on that literature alter our understanding of American democracy? Can generalizations really be made, or must we think of different groups (blacks, Latinos, Asians, others) separately? Explain. If we need to think about different groups, what specific theoretical and/or empirical issues are most relevant?

2. Some empirical theories of race/ethnicity in American politics include pluralism, individual assimilation, class stratification, and racial hierarchy. Based on your interpretation of the research reported in the race and ethnicity literature, critically consider which of the theories you would argue is most supported by the empirical evidence. Carefully explain why you favor the theory you do, and the shortcomings of the theories you do not favor, with appropriate citation to and discussion of the relevant literature. Your survey of that literature should consider a variety of substantive topics (e.g., historical development, attitudes, political participation, institutions, policies, etc.) and more than one specific racial/ethnic groups (e.g., Blacks, Latinos, Asians).
General Questions

1.

Which party will win the 2008 presidential election? Write an essay in which you discuss what the American politics literature can (and perhaps, can not) tell us about the prospects for the upcoming election.

2.

How would James Madison explain the development of the current American political system as it has developed? How would Madison assess the current American political system?

3.

Historically oriented political scientists often segment the American political experience into four periods, each entailing a different structure of political relations. These are the patrician period, the party period, the pluralist period, and the plebiscitary period.

To be meaningful for our understanding of American political development, there must be characteristics distinctive to each that affect the distribution of power in that period. Consider the institutional features of each period, the structures of the political system such as parties, interest groups and communications media as well as governmental institutions. What does political science research teach about the dominant institutional relations of each period? What light can political science shed on the political dynamics that cause the transitions from one period to the next?

4.

Political participation in the United States appears to many as a paradox. On the one hand, American voter turnout ranks near the bottom among the world’s democracies. But on the other hand, by international standards Americans engage in other forms of participation, like contacting elected officials, at very high rates.

First, what explains this apparent paradox? Why are Americans (a) less likely to vote but (b) more likely to engage in other forms of political activity than citizens of other democratic nations? Contrast the differing perspectives on this issue within the political science literature, and argue for the explanation(s) you find most convincing.

Second, what are the implications of this paradox for representative democracy in the United States? How does operating in an environment with low turnout but high rates of non-electoral participation affect the actions of elected officials in the United States? How does it affect the substance of public policy? How might the policy landscape be
different if the U.S. had high voter turnout but low rates of other forms of political participation?

**Democratic Theory**

1.

Several of the authors considered to be important democratic theorists are, strange to say, economists (e.g., Schumpeter, Lindbloom, Downs). Do the economists share a common approach to and conclusions about democracy? Why are economists such a large presence in this field?

2.

One of the major divides among democratic theorists is that between "populist" and "elitist" democrats. What is this debate really about? Who (if anybody) wins?
American Democracy

(1) At its most basic level, most of the empirical work on American politics is concerned with the question of whether the American political system actually functions according to democratic ideals. In particular, *representation* is a central concern. According to the empirical literature on American politics, does the American political system represent the interests of the American people? How and why? How and why not? Your answer should consider the potential for, evidence of, and mechanisms for representation. What does theory and empirical evidence suggest about the quality of representative democracy in the United States?

(2) The goals of political actors, and the ways in which the actions undertaken in pursuit of those goals shape the operation of American government, are recurring themes of the literature on American politics. Describe and discuss/critique the goals scholars have imputed to three different political actors, the ways in which American political institutions affect, and are affected by, these actors’ goals, and the implications of this work for our understanding of the functioning of American government, especially vis-à-vis democratic principles.

Institutions

(1) The dominant perspectives in the literature on parties and interest groups (e.g., Downs, Olsen, Salisbury, Aldrich, Cox & McCubbins) emphasize that both are created and maintained by strategic individuals pursuing specific goals. According to this perspective, for what purpose(s) are parties and interest groups formed and maintained? How? What are the major challenges to these accounts? If these accounts are correct, what do these motivations suggest for the contribution of these institutions to the functioning of the American political system? That is, what are the consequences and implications for the role of parties and groups in American democracy?

(2) Writers on Congress have used different theoretical frameworks to address themes of common goals of the institution and its members. Sometimes this is called the common good, or the public good, or responsibility, or the collective good. Draw upon at least two of the following authors, and for each indicate how they approach the problem of the common or collective good, what theoretical framework they use, and the strengths and weaknesses of their approach. Mayhew, Cox and McCubbins, Jacobsen, Arnold, Poole and Rosenthal. (After doing two from this list, you may include comments about other approaches.)
Constitutional Law

1. How do two of the following writers describe the basic relationship between religion and the constitution? Chuck Colson, Robert George, Stephen Carter, Walter Berns. Comment briefly on the writers you select.

2. The classic opening statement in the modern (Post-New Deal) debate about judicial review was Alexander Bickel's *The Least Dangerous Branch*.

   (a) How much weight does Bickel’s discussion have in the debate about judicial review as it has moved on into the late 20th and early 21st century?

   (b) How much weight should it have?

Bickel sets up the discussion in terms of the "counter-majoritarian problem." Are these the terms in which the initial debate over judicial review at the time of the founding was conducted? Explain
American Democracy

1. At its most basic level, most of the empirical work on American politics is concerned with the question of whether the American political system actually functions according to democratic ideals. In particular, representation is a central concern. According to the empirical literature on American politics, does the American political system represent the interests of the American people? How and why? How and why not? Your answer should consider the potential for, evidence of, and mechanisms for representation. What does theory and empirical evidence suggest about the quality of representative democracy in the United States?

2. The goals of political actors, and the ways in which the actions undertaken in pursuit of those goals shape the operation of American government, are recurring themes of the literature on American politics. Describe and discuss/critique the goals scholars have imputed to three different political actors, the ways in which American political institutions affect, and are affected by, these actors’ goals, and the implications of this work for our understanding of the functioning of American government, especially vis-à-vis democratic principles.

Institutions

1. Research on the presidency tends to give primary weight in explaining the performance of presidents to one of two perspectives: variables pertaining to institutions and their context or to variables pertaining to the characteristics of individual presidents. Identify and describe one leading example of research within each perspective. Then, choose three presidents after 1933 and examine how institutional/contextual variables and personal variables apply to explaining their performance in office.
2. Writers on Congress have used different theoretical frameworks to address themes of common goals of the institution and its members. Sometimes this is called the common good, or the public good, or responsibility, or the collective good. Draw upon at least two of the following authors, and for each indicate how they approach the problem of the common or collective good, what theoretical framework they use, and the strengths and weaknesses of their approach. Mayhew, Cox and McCubbins, Jacobsen, Arnold, Poole and Rosenthal. (After doing two from this list, you may include comments about other approaches of your choice.)

Constitutional Law

1. How do two of the following writers describe the basic relationship between religion and the constitution? Chuck Colson, Robert George, Stephen Carter, Walter Berns. Comment briefly on the writers you select.

2. The classic opening statement in the modern (Post-New Deal) debate about judicial review was Alexander Bickel’s The Least Dangerous Branch.

   (a) How much weight does Bickel’s discussion have in the debate about judicial review as it has moved on into the late 20th and early 21st century?

   (2) How much weight should it have?

Bickel sets up the discussion in terms of the "counter-majoritarian problem." Are these the terms in which the initial debate over judicial review at the time of the founding was conducted? Explain.

3. Comparative constitutional case law has become increasingly important in the interpretation of domestic constitutions. What accounts for this development? How do constitutional scholars and judges use comparative jurisprudence (i.e., what are its goals, values, and methodologies)? Does the scholarly enterprise differ from the process of actual adjudication? What are the limits of comparative constitutional interpretation?
American Democracy

(1) At its most basic level, most of the empirical work on American politics is concerned with the question of whether the American political system actually functions according to democratic ideals. In particular, representation is a central concern. According to the empirical literature on American politics, does the American political system represent the interests of the American people? How and why? How and why not? Your answer should consider the potential for, evidence of, and mechanisms for representation. What does theory and empirical evidence suggest about the quality of representative democracy in the United States?

(2) The goals of political actors, and the ways in which the actions undertaken in pursuit of those goals shape the operation of American government, are recurring themes of the literature on American politics. Describe and discuss/critique the goals scholars have imputed to three different political actors, the ways in which American political institutions affect, and are affected by, these actors’ goals, and the implications of this work for our understanding of the functioning of American government, especially vis-à-vis democratic principles.

Political Behavior

1. Imagine a three-way discussion between three analysts concerning public opinion as it affects public policy in the states. The three analysts each have different perspectives; their orientations emphasize (a) political culture (e.g., Elazar), (b) ideology (e.g. Erikson, Wright and McIver), and (c) social diversity. What would be (i) themajor question(s)they are likely to dispute;
(ii) what are the most important areas of disagreement, and agreement they are likely to have regarding those questions, and (iii) why? Explain and justify your arguments.

2. Much of the literature on political participation, in general, and election turnout, more specifically, has derived from assumptions that economic factors predominate in motivating people to participate in politics. Some literature focuses on electoral structures and some examines the psychological correlates of SES. Although the Lipset-Rokkan framework dominated studies of comparative political participation for decades, only in the last few years have scholars in American political behavior built an understanding of cultural and religious factors into their models. Perhaps the most important precipitator of this turn in understanding was Verba and Nie's realization that enhanced black participation may have come from "consciousness of kind." However, in the Verba, Schlozman, and Brady study, many religious variables are built into their "resource theory" of political participation.

A. Review the literatures on political participation, making sure to discuss at least four of the following: Campbell, et al.; Burnham; Verba and Nie; Conway; Rosenstone and Hansen; Powell; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady.

B. How does the emerging cultural/religious literature on political participation help us to understand the changing size and composition of the American electorate in presidential and congressional elections since 1960?

Institutions

1. Research on the presidency tends to give primary weight in explaining the performance of presidents to one of two perspectives: variables pertaining to institutions and their context or to variables pertaining to the characteristics of individual presidents. Identify and describe one leading example
of research within each perspective. Then, choose three presidents after 1933 and examine how institutional/contextual variables and personal variables apply to explaining their performance in office.

2. Much literature over the last three decades has focused on the degree to which Presidents influence congressional decision-making. Drawing upon the literature, outline the main approaches to this question. Which approach do you think is most fruitful for assessing Presidential power in Congress, and why?
American Democracy

1. At its most basic level, most of the empirical work on American politics is concerned with the question of whether the American political system actually functions according to democratic ideals. In particular, representation is a central concern. According to the empirical literature on American politics, does the American political system represent the interests of the American people? How and why? How and why not? Your answer should consider the potential for, evidence of, and mechanisms for representation. What does theory and empirical evidence suggest about the quality of representative democracy in the United States?

2. The goals of political actors, and the ways in which the actions undertaken in pursuit of those goals shape the operation of American government, are recurring themes of the literature on American politics. Describe and discuss/critique the goals scholars have imputed to three different political actors, the ways in which American political institutions affect, and are affected by, these actors’ goals, and the implications of this work for our understanding of the functioning of American government, especially vis-à-vis democratic principles. Finally, what does a focus on goal-oriented behavior contribute to our understanding of American politics?

Institutions

1. Critically compare and contrast at least thee of the following authors in their analysis of Congress; Mayhew, Fenno, Jacobsen, Cox and McCubbins, Kreibel. Each of them in some way puts forth a theory which attempts to look at the interaction between motivations of individual and the provision (or failure to provide) certain collective institutional goods. For each them address the following issues:
   A) Assumption about individual motivation
   B) Their conception of what the public or collective good is
   C) How their theory accounts for the provision of the public good.
   D) Which theory you feel is strongest

2. Drawing upon relevant literatures, critically analyze approaches to the study of presidential-congressional relations in the American system. What are some of the main approaches? What are some of the strengths and weaknesses of the main approaches? Which approach do you think is the most fruitful?
Mass Behavior

1. The political behavior, including or especially the voting behavior, literature in the U.S. most often emphasizes individual level variables, with relatively little attention to contextual and/or different institutional factors. On the other hand, the U.S. is a federal system in which the national government has major powers and, at the same time, the states have significant political and policy authority. There are thus potentially a host of federalist and/or within-state factors that shape behavior. Discuss and explain major factors or influences on behavior that emanate from the federal structure and/or within-state characteristics as those have been addressed in research on these questions. What are the explanations or theories that have been put forth, and what does evidence indicate about the accuracy of the theories? How, and how much, does this literature add to our understanding of political behavior? How and how much does, and should, this research lead scholars to assess (or reassess) the level and quality of American democracy? Explain and support your arguments carefully, incorporating (and challenging as appropriate) the relevant research.

2. What factors shape American public opinion? What are the mechanisms by which this opinion is translated into electoral results, and what are the individual-level and institutional factors that affect this process? What does your answer say about the quality of democracy in the United States?
American Democracy

1. At its most basic level, most of the empirical work on American politics is concerned with the question of whether the American political system actually functions according to democratic ideals. In particular, representation is a central concern. According to the empirical literature on American politics, does the American political system represent the interests of the American people? How and why? How and why not? Your answer should consider the potential for, evidence of, and mechanisms for representation. What does theory and empirical evidence suggest about the quality of representative democracy in the United States?

2. The goals of political actors, and the ways in which the actions undertaken in pursuit of those goals shape the operation of American government, are recurring themes of the literature on American politics. Describe and discuss/critique the goals scholars have imputed to three different political actors, the ways in which American political institutions affect, and are affected by, these actors’ goals, and the implications of this work for our understanding of the functioning of American government, especially vis-à-vis democratic principles. Finally, what does a focus on goal-oriented behavior contribute to our understanding of American politics?

Institutions

1. Fred Greenstein observes “that a modifier such as ‘modern’ is needed characterize the post-1932 manifestations . . . that had evolved from the . . . circumscribed traditional presidency.” What are those “manifestations” that distinguish the “modern” presidency from an earlier, “traditional” form of the institution? How can we account for the development of those characteristics within the presidency? Compare and contrast the explanations for that development that you find in the works of Theodore Lowi, Sidney Milkis, and Stephen Skowronek.

2. Drawing upon relevant literatures where possible, critically analyze approaches to the study of presidential-congressional relations in the American system. What are some of the main approaches? What are some of the strengths and weaknesses of the main approaches? Which approach do you think is the most fruitful?
Constitutional Law

1. James B. Thayer, Alexander Bickel, John Hart Ely, Ronald Dworkin, and Robert Bork have all sought to justify and limit the power of judicial review in America. Select four of these authors and compare their theories of judicial review. To what extent are any of these theories reflected in American constitutional case law? Do you find any one of them convincing? Finally, why should the Supreme Court’s view of constitutional morality prevail over Congress’s view of what the Constitution requires or does not require?

2. The Supreme Court in Lopez and its progeny claims to be returning to the original understanding of federalism. Is it doing so?
For Emma Cohen de Lara

**American Democracy**

1. At its most basic level, most of the empirical work on American politics is concerned with the question of whether the American political system actually functions according to democratic ideals. In particular, *representation* is a central concern. According to the empirical literature on American politics, does the American political system represent the interests of the American people? How and why? How and why not? Your answer should consider the *potential* for, *evidence* of, and *mechanisms* for representation. What does theory and empirical evidence suggest about the quality of representative democracy in the United States?

2. The goals of political actors, and the ways in which the actions undertaken in pursuit of those goals shape the operation of American government, are recurring themes of the literature on American politics. Describe and discuss/critique the goals scholars have imputed to *three* different political actors, the ways in which American political institutions affect, and are affected by, these actors’ goals, and the implications of this work for our understanding of the functioning of American government, especially vis-à-vis democratic principles. Finally, what does a focus on goal-oriented behavior contribute to our understanding of American politics?

**Institutions**

1. Critically compare and contrast at least *three* of the following authors in their analysis of Congress; Mayhew, Fenno, Jacobsen, Cox and McCubbins, Kreibel. Each of them in some way puts forth a theory which attempts to look at the interaction between motivations of individual and the provision (or failure to provide) certain collective institutional goods. For each of them address the following issues:
   A) Assumption about individual motivation
   B) Their conception of what the public or collective good is
   C) How their theory accounts for the provision of the public good.
   D) Which theory you feel is strongest

2. Drawing upon relevant literatures, critically analyze approaches to the study of presidential-congressional relations in the American system. What are some of the main approaches? What are some of the strengths and weaknesses of the main approaches? Which approach do you think is the most fruitful?
Constitutional Law

1. In a recent death penalty case (*Atkins v. Virginia*), in which the Supreme Court invalidated the execution of a mentally retarded person as a violation of the cruel and unusual punishments provision of the Eighth Amendment, Justice Stevens, writing for the Court, cited the views of the “world community” as well as selected opinion polls and *amici* briefs filed by the European Union and the United States Catholic Conference. In dissent, Chief Justice Rehnquist wrote: “I write separately...to call attention to the defects in the Court’s decision to place weight on foreign laws, the views of religious organizations, and opinion polls in reaching its conclusion.” Justice Scalia agreed, claiming that “the views of professional and religious organizations and the results of opinion polls are irrelevant. Equally irrelevant,” he wrote, “are the practices of the ‘world community,’ whose notions of justice are (thankfully) not always those of our people.” He concluded by saying, “We must never forget that it is a Constitution for the United States of America that we are expounding.” Assess the validity or propriety of these dissenting views. What about foreign constitutional case law? Are there any circumstances under which the decisions of foreign constitutional courts might serve as a guide to the interpretation of the U.S. Constitution? Discuss the arguments for and against.

2. Sanford Levinson, D.P. Kommers, and others have remarked that Germany’s Basic Law has replaced the United States Constitution as the leading model of constitutional design and governance around the world. Do you agree or disagree? Are there any grounds in political theory for ranking the constitutions of advanced democracies in terms of their moral quality or superiority?
Choose one question from each of the following three sections.

**Part One: American Democracy**

(1) Representation is a central component of most conceptions of democracy. Thus, any attempt to evaluate the quality of American democracy should consider the quality of representation. According to the empirical literature on American politics, does the American political system provide representation of the interests of the American people? How and why and to what extent? Your answer should evaluate the mechanisms for and evidence of representation in terms of what we know about: mass behavior, mediating institutions, and governing institutions.

(2) Recent work in political science emphasizes the degree to which political actors must be strategic in the pursuit of their goals. The essential interdependency of politics (outcomes are a function of collective, rather than individual, action) means that actors must take into account the goals and actions of other actors when trying to achieve their aims. At the same time, political actors exist within specific institutional settings that both constrain their behavior and offer opportunities for action. Drawing from the empirical literature on American politics, how do institutions and interdependency shape the behavior of members of Congress, Supreme Court justices, and presidents? How are institutional constraints/opportunities and interdependency similar across the three branches and how are they different? What are the consequences for the functioning of American democracy?

**Part Two: Institutions**

(1) Stephen Skowronek conceptualizes "the politics presidents' make" across American political history as a predictable unfolding of roles within recurring regimes. Thus, presidents at different times may have more in common with each other (i.e., Polk, T. Roosevelt, and L. Johnson) than they have with their immediate predecessors or successors. In apparent conflict with Skowronek's "story," influential research on the 20th century presidency argues that the "modern" office is a transformed institution, fundamentally unlike the "traditional" presidency. Richard Neustadt, Sidney Milkis, Theodore Lowi, Terry Moe, and Samuel Kernell are among the leading contributors to that literature. Are these two approaches to understanding the presidency diametrically
opposed? Or, can they be reconciled in a way that makes "modern" presidency research consistent with Skowronek’s longer perspective on institutional change in the presidency? Along with treating Skowronek, your essay should treat at least three of the "modern" authors cited above.

(2) Rational choice has a track record in explaining many things about the institution of Congress. Recently it has been used to illuminate the relationships between the institutions of Congress and the Presidency. Critically analyze the rational choice approach to Congress and the Presidency. What are its strengths? What are its weaknesses?

III. Part Three: Constitutional Law

1. Describe the strengths and weaknesses of the following approaches to constitutional interpretation: textualism; originalism; structuralism; precedent or doctrine; philosophy or moral reasoning. Can these approaches be listed in any order of priority – that is, in terms of their neutrality or objectivity? How effective are these methods in keeping an interpreter’s personal views out of the process of constitutional decision-making?

2. In a number of constitutional cases – most recently the homosexual sodomy case (Lawrence v. Texas) – Justice Scalia has deplored the Supreme Court’s reference to foreign constitutional case law. He has dismissed foreign case law as “irrelevant,” saying that “comparative analysis is inappropriate to the task of interpreting a constitution.” Please comment, underscoring what you think are the legitimate or illegitimate uses (abuses?) of comparative analysis in the interpretation of a domestic constitution.
Choose one question from each of the following three sections.

Part One: American Democracy

(1) Representation is a central component of most conceptions of democracy. Thus, any attempt to evaluate the quality of American democracy should consider the quality of representation. According to the empirical literature on American politics, does the American political system provide representation of the interests of the American people? How and why and to what extent? Your answer should evaluate the mechanisms for and evidence of representation in terms of what we know about: mass behavior, mediating institutions, and governing institutions.

(2) Recent work in political science emphasizes the degree to which political actors must be strategic in the pursuit of their goals. The essential interdependency of politics (outcomes are a function of collective, rather than individual, action) means that actors must take into account the goals and actions of other actors when trying to achieve their aims. At the same time, political actors exist within specific institutional settings that both constrain their behavior and offer opportunities for action. Drawing from the empirical literature on American politics, how do institutions and interdependency shape the behavior of members of Congress, Supreme Court justices, and presidents? How are institutional constraints/opportunities and interdependency similar across the three branches and how are they different? What are the consequences for the functioning of American democracy?

Part Two: Institutions

(1) Numerous recent authors on Congress have identified a given problem with Congress (such as responsibility, institutional maintenance, etc.) and then attempted to show how and why Congress solves or attempts to solve this problem. Compare and contrast at least two of the following: Mayhew, Cox and McCubbins, Khreibel, Jacobsen. Discuss the adequacy of their explanation of the solution for the specific problem they address, drawing on other literature as appropriate. Comment on the implications for our understanding of the Congress and/or American politics in general.
(2) States vary considerably in their institutional characteristics. But we seem to know rather little about the sources and consequences of those institutional characteristics. Discuss the current state of knowledge on the sources and consequences of state institutions, citing literature as appropriate. Indicate what further research is needed, and why.

**Part Three: Behavior**

(1) Consider major political processes or institutions in the states, such as political parties, interest groups, voting/elections, referenda/initiatives, etc. What does examining these tell us about the nature and the extent of democracy in the American states?

(2) What can rational choice theory tell us about political participation? Discuss the merits and demerits of rational choice-grounded explanations for:

   (a) the individual-level decision to vote and otherwise get involved in politics
   (b) the institutional-level factors that facilitate political involvement

In the course of your answer, be sure to contrast rational choice theory with other lenses through which political participation can be viewed, and thus understood.
Choose one question from each of the following three sections.

**Part One: American Democracy**

(1) Representation is a central component of most conceptions of democracy. Thus, any attempt to evaluate the quality of American democracy should consider the quality of representation. According to the empirical literature on American politics, does the American political system provide representation of the interests of the American people? How and why and to what extent? Your answer should evaluate the mechanisms for and evidence of representation in terms of what we know about: mass behavior, mediating institutions, and governing institutions.

(2) Recent work in political science emphasizes the degree to which political actors must be strategic in the pursuit of their goals. The essential interdependency of politics (outcomes are a function of collective, rather than individual, action) means that actors must take into account the goals and actions of other actors when trying to achieve their aims. At the same time, political actors exist within specific institutional settings that both constrain their behavior and offer opportunities for action. Drawing from the empirical literature on American politics, how do institutions and interdependency shape the behavior of members of Congress, Supreme Court justices, and presidents? How are institutional constraints/opportunities and interdependency similar across the three branches and how are they different? What are the consequences for the functioning of American democracy?

**Part Two: Institutions**

(1) How (if at all) can scholarship on legislatures in other countries improve our understanding of the U.S. Congress?

(2) States vary considerably in their institutional characteristics. But we seem to know rather little about the sources and consequences of those institutional characteristics. Discuss the current state of knowledge on the sources and consequences of state institutions, citing literature as appropriate. Indicate what further research is needed, and why.
Part Three: Behavior

(1) Consider major political processes or institutions in the states, such as political parties, interest groups, voting/elections, referenda/initiatives, etc. What does examining these tell us about the nature and the extent of democracy in the American states?

(2) What can rational choice theory tell us about political participation? Discuss the merits and demerits of rational choice-grounded explanations for:

   (a) the individual-level decision to vote and otherwise get involved in politics
   (b) the institutional-level factors that facilitate political involvement

In the course of your answer, be sure to contrast rational choice theory with other lenses through which political participation can be viewed, and thus understood.
American Democracy

(1) At its most basic level, most of the empirical work on American politics is concerned with the question of whether the American political system actually functions according to democratic ideals. In particular, representation is a central concern. According to the empirical literature on American politics, does the American political system represent the interests of the American people? How and why? How and why not? Your answer should consider the potential for, evidence of, and mechanisms for representation. What does theory and empirical evidence suggest about the quality of representative democracy in the United States?

(2) The goals of political actors, and the ways in which the actions undertaken in pursuit of those goals shape the operation of American government, are recurring themes of the literature on American politics. Describe and discuss/critique the goals scholars have imputed to three different political actors, the ways in which American political institutions affect, and are affected by, these actors’ goals, and the implications of this work for our understanding of the functioning of American government, especially vis-à-vis democratic principles.

Institutions

(1) The dominant perspectives in the literature on parties and interest groups (e.g., Downs, Olsen, Salisbury, Aldrich, Cox & McCubbins) emphasize that both are created and maintained by strategic individuals pursuing specific goals. According to this perspective, for what purpose(s) are parties and interest groups formed and maintained? How? What are the major challenges to these accounts? If these accounts are correct, what do these motivations suggest for the contribution of these institutions to the functioning of the American political system? That is, what are the consequences and implications for the role of parties and groups in American democracy?

(2) Writers on Congress have used different theoretical frameworks to address themes of common goals of the institution and its members. Sometimes this is called the common good, or the public good, or responsibility, or the collective good. Draw upon at least two of the following authors, and for each indicate how they approach the problem of the common or collective good, what theoretical framework they use, and the strengths and weaknesses of their approach. Mayhew, Cox and McCubbins, Jacobsen, Arnold, Poole and Rosenthal. (After doing two from this list, you may include comments about other approaches.)
Constitutional Law

1. How do two of the following writers describe the basic relationship between religion and the constitution?
Chuck Colson, Robert George, Stephen Carter, Walter Berns.
Comment briefly on the writers you select.

2. The classic opening statement in the modern (Post-New Deal) debate about judicial review was Alexander Bickel’s The Least Dangerous Branch.

   (a) How much weight does Bickel’s discussion have in the debate about judicial review as it has moved on into the late 20th and early 21st century?

   (b) How much weight should it have?

Bickel sets up the discussion in terms of the "counter-majoritarian problem." Are these the terms in which the initial debate over judicial review at the time of the founding was conducted? Explain
American Democracy

1. At its most basic level, most of the empirical work on American politics is concerned with the question of whether the American political system actually functions according to democratic ideals. In particular, representation is a central concern. According to the empirical literature on American politics, does the American political system represent the interests of the American people? How and why? How and why not? Your answer should consider the potential for, evidence of, and mechanisms for representation. What does theory and empirical evidence suggest about the quality of representative democracy in the United States?

2. The goals of political actors, and the ways in which the actions undertaken in pursuit of those goals shape the operation of American government, are recurring themes of the literature on American politics. Describe and discuss/critique the goals scholars have imputed to three different political actors, the ways in which American political institutions affect, and are affected by, these actors’ goals, and the implications of this work for our understanding of the functioning of American government, especially vis-à-vis democratic principles.

Institutions

1. Research on the presidency tends to give primary weight in explaining the performance of presidents to one of two perspectives: variables pertaining to institutions and their context or to variables pertaining to the characteristics of individual presidents. Identify and describe one leading example of research within each perspective. Then, choose three presidents after 1933 and examine how institutional/contextual variables and personal variables apply to explaining their performance in office.
2. Writers on Congress have used different theoretical frameworks to address themes of common goals of the institution and its members. Sometimes this is called the common good, or the public good, or responsibility, or the collective good. Draw upon at least two of the following authors, and for each indicate how they approach the problem of the common or collective good, what theoretical framework they use, and the strengths and weaknesses of their approach. Mayhew, Cox and McCubbins, Jacobsen, Arnold, Poole and Rosenthal. (After doing two from this list, you may include comments about other approaches of your choice.)

Constitutional Law

1. How do two of the following writers describe the basic relationship between religion and the constitution? Chuck Colson, Robert George, Stephen Carter, Walter Berns. Comment briefly on the writers you select.

2. The classic opening statement in the modern (Post-New Deal) debate about judicial review was Alexander Bickel's The Least Dangerous Branch.

   (a) How much weight does Bickel’s discussion have in the debate about judicial review as it has moved on into the late 20th and early 21st century?

   (2) How much weight should it have?

Bickel sets up the discussion in terms of the "counter-majoritarian problem." Are these the terms in which the initial debate over judicial review at the time of the founding was conducted? Explain

3. Comparative constitutional case law has become increasingly important in the interpretation of domestic constitutions. What accounts for this development? How do constitutional scholars and judges use comparative jurisprudence (i.e., what are its goals, values, and methodologies)? Does the scholarly enterprise differ from the process of actual adjudication? What are the limits of comparative constitutional interpretation?
American Democracy

(1) At its most basic level, most of the empirical work on American politics is concerned with the question of whether the American political system actually functions according to democratic ideals. In particular, representation is a central concern. According to the empirical literature on American politics, does the American political system represent the interests of the American people? How and why? How and why not? Your answer should consider the potential for, evidence of, and mechanisms for representation. What does theory and empirical evidence suggest about the quality of representative democracy in the United States?

(2) The goals of political actors, and the ways in which the actions undertaken in pursuit of those goals shape the operation of American government, are recurring themes of the literature on American politics. Describe and discuss/critique the goals scholars have imputed to three different political actors, the ways in which American political institutions affect, and are affected by, these actors’ goals, and the implications of this work for our understanding of the functioning of American government, especially vis-à-vis democratic principles.

Political Behavior

1. Imagine a three-way discussion between three analysts concerning public opinion as it affects public policy in the states. The three analysts each have different perspectives; their orientations emphasize (a) political culture (e.g., Elazar), (b) ideology (e.g. Erikson, Wright and McIver), and (c) social diversity. What would be (i) the major question(s) they are likely to dispute;
(ii) what are the most important areas of disagreement, and agreement they are likely to have regarding those questions, and (iii) why? Explain and justify your arguments.

2. Much of the literature on political participation, in general, and election turnout, more specifically, has derived from assumptions that economic factors predominate in motivating people to participate in politics. Some literature focuses on electoral structures and some examines the psychological correlates of SES. Although the Lipset-Rokkan framework dominated studies of comparative political participation for decades, only in the last few years have scholars in American political behavior built an understanding of cultural and religious factors into their models. Perhaps the most important precipitator of this turn in understanding was Verba and Nie's realization that enhanced black participation may have come from "consciousness of kind." However, in the Verba, Schlozman, and Brady study, many religious variables are built into their "resource theory" of political participation.

A. Review the literatures on political participation, making sure to discuss at least four of the following: Campbell, et al.; Burnham; Verba and Nie; Conway; Rosenstone and Hansen; Powell; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady.

B. How does the emerging cultural/religious literature on political participation help us to understand the changing size and composition of the American electorate in presidential and congressional elections since 1960?

Institutions

1. Research on the presidency tends to give primary weight in explaining the performance of presidents to one of two perspectives: variables pertaining to institutions and their context or to variables pertaining to the characteristics of individual presidents. Identify and describe one leading example
of research within each perspective. Then, choose three presidents after 1933 and examine how institutional/contextual variables and personal variables apply to explaining their performance in office.

2. Much literature over the last three decades has focused on the degree to which Presidents influence congressional decision-making. Drawing upon the literature, outline the main approaches to this question. Which approach do you think is most fruitful for assessing Presidential power in Congress, and why?
For Alejandra Armesto

American Democracy

1. At its most basic level, most of the empirical work on American politics is concerned with the question of whether the American political system actually functions according to democratic ideals. In particular, *representation* is a central concern. According to the empirical literature on American politics, does the American political system represent the interests of the American people? How and why? How and why not? Your answer should consider the *potential* for, *evidence* of, and *mechanisms* for representation. What does theory and empirical evidence suggest about the quality of representative democracy in the United States?

2. The goals of political actors, and the ways in which the actions undertaken in pursuit of those goals shape the operation of American government, are recurring themes of the literature on American politics. Describe and discuss/critique the goals scholars have imputed to *three* different political actors, the ways in which American political institutions affect, and are affected by, these actors’ goals, and the implications of this work for our understanding of the functioning of American government, especially vis-à-vis democratic principles. Finally, what does a focus on goal-oriented behavior contribute to our understanding of American politics?

Institutions

1. Critically compare and contrast at least *three* of the following authors in their analysis of Congress; Mayhew, Fenno, Jacobsen, Cox and McCubbins, Kreibel. Each of them in some way puts forth a theory which attempts to look at the interaction between motivations of individual and the provision (or failure to provide) certain collective institutional goods. For each them address the following issues:
   A) Assumption about individual motivation
   B) Their conception of what the public or collective good is
   C) How their theory accounts for the provision of the public good.
   D) Which theory you feel is strongest

2. Drawing upon relevant literatures, critically analyze approaches to the study of presidential-congressional relations in the American system. What are some of the main approaches? What are some of the strengths and weaknesses of the main approaches? Which approach do you think is the most fruitful?
Mass Behavior

1. The political behavior, including or especially the voting behavior, literature in the U.S. most often emphasizes individual level variables, with relatively little attention to contextual and/or different institutional factors. On the other hand, the U.S. is a federal system in which the national government has major powers and, at the same time, the states have significant political and policy authority. There are thus potentially a host of federalist and/or within-state factors that shape behavior. Discuss and explain major factors or influences on behavior that emanate from the federal structure and/or within-state characteristics as those have been addressed in research on these questions. What are the explanations or theories that have been put forth, and what does evidence indicate about the accuracy of the theories? How, and how much, does this literature add to our understanding of political behavior? How and how much does, and should, this research lead scholars to assess (or reassess) the level and quality of American democracy? Explain and support your arguments carefully, incorporating (and challenging as appropriate) the relevant research.

2. What factors shape American public opinion? What are the mechanisms by which this opinion is translated into electoral results, and what are the individual-level and institutional factors that affect this process? What does your answer say about the quality of democracy in the United States?
1. At its most basic level, most of the empirical work on American politics is concerned with the question of whether the American political system actually functions according to democratic ideals. In particular, *representation* is a central concern. According to the empirical literature on American politics, does the American political system represent the interests of the American people? How and why? How and why not? Your answer should consider the *potential* for, *evidence* of, and *mechanisms* for representation. What does theory and empirical evidence suggest about the quality of representative democracy in the United States?

2. The goals of political actors, and the ways in which the actions undertaken in pursuit of those goals shape the operation of American government, are recurring themes of the literature on American politics. Describe and discuss/critique the goals scholars have imputed to *three* different political actors, the ways in which American political institutions affect, and are affected by, these actors’ goals, and the implications of this work for our understanding of the functioning of American government, especially vis-à-vis democratic principles. Finally, what does a focus on goal-oriented behavior contribute to our understanding of American politics?

**Institutions**

1. Fred Greenstein observes “that a modifier such as ‘modern’ is needed characterize the post-1932 manifestations . . . that had evolved from the . . . circumscribed traditional presidency.” What are those “manifestations” that distinguish the “modern” presidency from an earlier, “traditional” form of the institution? How can we account for the development of those characteristics within the presidency? Compare and contrast the explanations for that development that you find in the works of Theodore Lowi, Sidney Milkis, and Stephen Skowronek.

2. Drawing upon relevant literatures where possible, critically analyze approaches to the study of presidential-congressional relations in the American system. What are some of the main approaches? What are some of the strengths and weaknesses of the main approaches? Which approach do you think is the most fruitful?
Constitutional Law

1. James B. Thayer, Alexander Bickel, John Hart Ely, Ronald Dworkin, and Robert Bork have all sought to justify and limit the power of judicial review in America. Select four of these authors and compare their theories of judicial review. To what extent are any of these theories reflected in American constitutional case law? Do you find any one of them convincing? Finally, why should the Supreme Court’s view of constitutional morality prevail over Congress’s view of what the Constitution requires or does not require?

2. The Supreme Court in Lopez and its progeny claims to be returning to the original understanding of federalism. Is it doing so?
For Emma Cohen de Lara

American Democracy

1. At its most basic level, most of the empirical work on American politics is concerned with the question of whether the American political system actually functions according to democratic ideals. In particular, representation is a central concern. According to the empirical literature on American politics, does the American political system represent the interests of the American people? How and why? How and why not? Your answer should consider the potential for, evidence of, and mechanisms for representation. What does theory and empirical evidence suggest about the quality of representative democracy in the United States?

2. The goals of political actors, and the ways in which the actions undertaken in pursuit of those goals shape the operation of American government, are recurring themes of the literature on American politics. Describe and discuss/critique the goals scholars have imputed to three different political actors, the ways in which American political institutions affect, and are affected by, these actors’ goals, and the implications of this work for our understanding of the functioning of American government, especially vis-à-vis democratic principles. Finally, what does a focus on goal-oriented behavior contribute to our understanding of American politics?

Institutions

1. Critically compare and contrast at least thee of the following authors in their analysis of Congress; Mayhew, Fenno, Jacobsen, Cox and McCubbins, Kreibel. Each of them in some way puts forth a theory which attempts to look at the interaction between motivations of individual and the provision (or failure to provide) certain collective institutional goods. For each them address the following issues:
A) Assumption about individual motivation
B) Their conception of what the public or collective good is
C) How their theory accounts for the provision of the public good.
D) Which theory you feel is strongest

2. Drawing upon relevant literatures, critically analyze approaches to the study of presidential-congressional relations in the American system. What are some of the main approaches? What are some of the strengths and weaknesses of the main approaches? Which approach do you think is the most fruitful?
Constitutional Law

1. In a recent death penalty case (*Atkins v. Virginia*), in which the Supreme Court invalidated the execution of a mentally retarded person as a violation of the cruel and unusual punishments provision of the Eighth Amendment, Justice Stevens, writing for the Court, cited the views of the “world community” as well as selected opinion polls and *amici* briefs filed by the European Union and the United States Catholic Conference. In dissent, Chief Justice Rehnquist wrote: “I write separately...to call attention to the defects in the Court’s decision to place weight on foreign laws, the views of religious organizations, and opinion polls in reaching its conclusion.” Justice Scalia agreed, claiming that “the views of professional and religious organizations and the results of opinion polls are irrelevant. Equally irrelevant,” he wrote, “are the practices of the ‘world community,’ whose notions of justice are (thankfully) not always those of our people.” He concluded by saying, “We must never forget that it is a Constitution for the United States of America that we are expounding.” Assess the validity or propriety of these dissenting views. What about foreign constitutional case law? Are there any circumstances under which the decisions of foreign constitutional courts might serve as a guide to the interpretation of the U.S. Constitution? Discuss the arguments for and against.

2. Sanford Levinson, D.P. Kommers, and others have remarked that Germany’s Basic Law has replaced the United States Constitution as the leading model of constitutional design and governance around the world. Do you agree or disagree? Are there any grounds in political theory for ranking the constitutions of advanced democracies in terms of their moral quality or superiority?
Choose one question from each of the following three sections.

**Part One: American Democracy**

(1) Representation is a central component of most conceptions of democracy. Thus, any attempt to evaluate the quality of American democracy should consider the quality of representation. According to the empirical literature on American politics, does the American political system provide representation of the interests of the American people? How and why and to what extent? Your answer should evaluate the mechanisms for and evidence of representation in terms of what we know about: mass behavior, mediating institutions, and governing institutions.

(2) Recent work in political science emphasizes the degree to which political actors must be strategic in the pursuit of their goals. The essential interdependency of politics (outcomes are a function of collective, rather than individual, action) means that actors must take into account the goals and actions of other actors when trying to achieve their aims. At the same time, political actors exist within specific institutional settings that both constrain their behavior and offer opportunities for action. Drawing from the empirical literature on American politics, how do institutions and interdependency shape the behavior of members of Congress, Supreme Court justices, and presidents? How are institutional constraints/opportunities and interdependency similar across the three branches and how are they different? What are the consequences for the functioning of American democracy?

**Part Two: Institutions**

(1) Stephen Skowronek conceptualizes "the politics presidents' make" across American political history as a predictable unfolding of roles within recurring regimes. Thus, presidents at different times may have more in common with each other (i.e., Polk, T. Roosevelt, and L. Johnson) than they have with their immediate predecessors or successors. In apparent conflict with Skowronek's "story," influential research on the 20th century presidency argues that the "modern" office is a transformed institution, fundamentally unlike the "traditional" presidency. Richard Neustadt, Sidney Milkis, Theodore Lowi, Terry Moe, and Samuel Kernell are among the leading contributors to that literature. Are these two approaches to understanding the presidency diametrically
opposed? Or, can they be reconciled in a way that makes "modern" presidency research consistent with Skowronek’s longer perspective on institutional change in the presidency? Along with treating Skowronek, your essay should treat at least three of the "modern" authors cited above.

(2) Rational choice has a track record in explaining many things about the institution of Congress. Recently it has been used to illuminate the relationships between the institutions of Congress and the Presidency. Critically analyze the rational choice approach to Congress and the Presidency. What are its strengths? What are its weaknesses?

III. Part Three: Constitutional Law

1. Describe the strengths and weaknesses of the following approaches to constitutional interpretation: textualism; originalism; structuralism; precedent or doctrine; philosophy or moral reasoning. Can these approaches be listed in any order of priority – that is, in terms of their neutrality or objectivity? How effective are these methods in keeping an interpreter’s personal views out of the process of constitutional decision-making?

2. In a number of constitutional cases – most recently the homosexual sodomy case (Lawrence v. Texas) – Justice Scalia has deplored the Supreme Court’s reference to foreign constitutional case law. He has dismissed foreign case law as “irrelevant,” saying that “comparative analysis is inappropriate to the task of interpreting a constitution.” Please comment, underscoring what you think are the legitimate or illegitimate uses (abuses?) of comparative analysis in the interpretation of a domestic constitution.
Choose one question from each of the following three sections.

**Part One: American Democracy**

(1) Representation is a central component of most conceptions of democracy. Thus, any attempt to evaluate the quality of American democracy should consider the quality of representation. According to the empirical literature on American politics, does the American political system provide representation of the interests of the American people? How and why and to what extent? Your answer should evaluate the mechanisms for and evidence of representation in terms of what we know about: mass behavior, mediating institutions, and governing institutions.

(2) Recent work in political science emphasizes the degree to which political actors must be strategic in the pursuit of their goals. The essential interdependency of politics (outcomes are a function of collective, rather than individual, action) means that actors must take into account the goals and actions of other actors when trying to achieve their aims. At the same time, political actors exist within specific institutional settings that both constrain their behavior and offer opportunities for action. Drawing from the empirical literature on American politics, how do institutions and interdependency shape the behavior of members of Congress, Supreme Court justices, and presidents? How are institutional constraints/opportunities and interdependency similar across the three branches and how are they different? What are the consequences for the functioning of American democracy?

**Part Two: Institutions**

(1) Numerous recent authors on Congress have identified a given problem with Congress (such as responsibility, institutional maintenance, etc.) and then attempted to show how and why Congress solves or attempts to solve this problem. Compare and contrast at least two of the following: Mayhew, Cox and McCubbins, Khreibel, Jacobsen. Discuss the adequacy of their explanation of the solution for the specific problem they address, drawing on other literature as appropriate. Comment on the implications for our understanding of the Congress and/or American politics in general.
(2) States vary considerably in their institutional characteristics. But we seem to know rather little about the sources and consequences of those institutional characteristics. Discuss the current state of knowledge on the sources and consequences of state institutions, citing literature as appropriate. Indicate what further research is needed, and why.

**Part Three: Behavior**

(1) Consider major political processes or institutions in the states, such as political parties, interest groups, voting/elections, referenda/initiatives, etc. What does examining these tell us about the nature and the extent of democracy in the American states?

(2) What can rational choice theory tell us about political participation? Discuss the merits and demerits of rational choice-grounded explanations for:

   (a) the individual-level decision to vote and otherwise get involved in politics
   (b) the institutional-level factors that facilitate political involvement

In the course of your answer, be sure to contrast rational choice theory with other lenses through which political participation can be viewed, and thus understood.
Choose one question from each of the following three sections.

**Part One: American Democracy**

(1) Representation is a central component of most conceptions of democracy. Thus, any attempt to evaluate the quality of American democracy should consider the quality of representation. According to the empirical literature on American politics, does the American political system provide *representation* of the interests of the American people? How and why and to what extent? Your answer should evaluate the mechanisms for and evidence of representation in terms of what we know about: mass behavior, mediating institutions, and governing institutions.

(2) Recent work in political science emphasizes the degree to which political actors must be strategic in the pursuit of their goals. The essential interdependency of politics (outcomes are a function of collective, rather than individual, action) means that actors must take into account the goals and actions of other actors when trying to achieve their aims. At the same time, political actors exist within specific institutional settings that both constrain their behavior and offer opportunities for action. Drawing from the empirical literature on American politics, how do institutions and interdependency shape the behavior of members of Congress, Supreme Court justices, and presidents? How are institutional constraints/opportunities and interdependency similar across the three branches and how are they different? What are the consequences for the functioning of American democracy?

**Part Two: Institutions**

(1) How (if at all) can scholarship on legislatures in other countries improve our understanding of the U.S. Congress?

(2) States vary considerably in their institutional characteristics. But we seem to know rather little about the sources and consequences of those institutional characteristics. Discuss the current state of knowledge on the sources and consequences of state institutions, citing literature as appropriate. Indicate what further research is needed, and why.
Part Three: Behavior

(1) Consider major political processes or institutions in the states, such as political parties, interest groups, voting/elections, referenda/initiatives, etc. What does examining these tell us about the nature and the extent of democracy in the American states?

(2) What can rational choice theory tell us about political participation? Discuss the merits and demerits of rational choice-grounded explanations for:

   (a) the individual-level decision to vote and otherwise get involved in politics
   (b) the institutional-level factors that facilitate political involvement

In the course of your answer, be sure to contrast rational choice theory with other lenses through which political participation can be viewed, and thus understood.
American Democracy

(1) At its most basic level, most of the empirical work on American politics is concerned with the question of whether the American political system actually functions according to democratic ideals. In particular, representation is a central concern. According to the empirical literature on American politics, does the American political system represent the interests of the American people? How and why? How and why not? Your answer should consider the potential for, evidence of, and mechanisms for representation. What does theory and empirical evidence suggest about the quality of representative democracy in the United States?

(2) The goals of political actors, and the ways in which the actions undertaken in pursuit of those goals shape the operation of American government, are recurring themes of the literature on American politics. Describe and discuss/critique the goals scholars have imputed to three different political actors, the ways in which American political institutions affect, and are affected by, these actors’ goals, and the implications of this work for our understanding of the functioning of American government, especially vis-à-vis democratic principles.

Institutions

(1) The dominant perspectives in the literature on parties and interest groups (e.g., Downs, Olsen, Salisbury, Aldrich, Cox & McCubbins) emphasize that both are created and maintained by strategic individuals pursuing specific goals. According to this perspective, for what purpose(s) are parties and interest groups formed and maintained? How? What are the major challenges to these accounts? If these accounts are correct, what do these motivations suggest for the contribution of these institutions to the functioning of the American political system? That is, what are the consequences and implications for the role of parties and groups in American democracy?

(2) Writers on Congress have used different theoretical frameworks to address themes of common goals of the institution and its members. Sometimes this is called the common good, or the public good, or responsibility, or the collective good. Draw upon at least two of the following authors, and for each indicate how they approach the problem of the common or collective good, what theoretical framework they use, and the strengths and weaknesses of their approach. Mayhew, Cox and McCubbins, Jacobsen, Arnold, Poole and Rosenthal. (After doing two from this list, you may include comments about other approaches.)
Constitutional Law

1. How do two of the following writers describe the basic relationship between religion and the constitution?
Chuck Colson, Robert George, Stephen Carter, Walter Berns.
Comment briefly on the writers you select.

2. The classic opening statement in the modern (Post-New Deal) debate about judicial review was Alexander Bickel’s The Least Dangerous Branch.

   (a) How much weight does Bickel’s discussion have in the debate about judicial review as it has moved on into the late 20th and early 21st century?

   (b) How much weight should it have?

Bickel sets up the discussion in terms of the "counter-majoritarian problem." Are these the terms in which the initial debate over judicial review at the time of the founding was conducted? Explain
American Democracy

1. At its most basic level, most of the empirical work on American politics is concerned with the question of whether the American political system actually functions according to democratic ideals. In particular, representation is a central concern. According to the empirical literature on American politics, does the American political system represent the interests of the American people? How and why? How and why not? Your answer should consider the potential for, evidence of, and mechanisms for representation. What does theory and empirical evidence suggest about the quality of representative democracy in the United States?

2. The goals of political actors, and the ways in which the actions undertaken in pursuit of those goals shape the operation of American government, are recurring themes of the literature on American politics. Describe and discuss/critique the goals scholars have imputed to three different political actors, the ways in which American political institutions affect, and are affected by, these actors’ goals, and the implications of this work for our understanding of the functioning of American government, especially vis-à-vis democratic principles.

Institutions

1. Research on the presidency tends to give primary weight in explaining the performance of presidents to one of two perspectives: variables pertaining to institutions and their context or to variables pertaining to the characteristics of individual presidents. Identify and describe one leading example of research within each perspective. Then, choose three presidents after 1933 and examine how institutional/contextual variables and personal variables apply to explaining their performance in office.
2. Writers on Congress have used different theoretical frameworks to address themes of common goals of the institution and its members. Sometimes this is called the common good, or the public good, or responsibility, or the collective good. Draw upon at least two of the following authors, and for each indicate how they approach the problem of the common or collective good, what theoretical framework they use, and the strengths and weaknesses of their approach. Mayhew, Cox and McCubbins, Jacobsen, Arnold, Poole and Rosenthal. (After doing two from this list, you may include comments about other approaches of your choice.)

Constitutional Law

1. How do two of the following writers describe the basic relationship between religion and the constitution? Chuck Colson, Robert George, Stephen Carter, Walter Berns. Comment briefly on the writers you select.

2. The classic opening statement in the modern (Post-New Deal) debate about judicial review was Alexander Bickel’s *The Least Dangerous Branch*.

   (a) How much weight does Bickel’s discussion have in the debate about judicial review as it has moved on into the late 20th and early 21st century?

   (2) How much weight should it have?

Bickel sets up the discussion in terms of the "counter-majoritarian problem." Are these the terms in which the initial debate over judicial review at the time of the founding was conducted? Explain

3. Comparative constitutional case law has become increasingly important in the interpretation of domestic constitutions. What accounts for this development? How do constitutional scholars and judges use comparative jurisprudence (i.e., what are its goals, values, and methodologies)? Does the scholarly enterprise differ from the process of actual adjudication? What are the limits of comparative constitutional interpretation?
American Democracy

(1) At its most basic level, most of the empirical work on American politics is concerned with the question of whether the American political system actually functions according to democratic ideals. In particular, representation is a central concern. According to the empirical literature on American politics, does the American political system represent the interests of the American people? How and why? How and why not? Your answer should consider the potential for, evidence of, and mechanisms for representation. What does theory and empirical evidence suggest about the quality of representative democracy in the United States?

(2) The goals of political actors, and the ways in which the actions undertaken in pursuit of those goals shape the operation of American government, are recurring themes of the literature on American politics. Describe and discuss/critique the goals scholars have imputed to three different political actors, the ways in which American political institutions affect, and are affected by, these actors’ goals, and the implications of this work for our understanding of the functioning of American government, especially vis-à-vis democratic principles.

Political Behavior

1. Imagine a three-way discussion between three analysts concerning public opinion as it affects public policy in the states. The three analysts each have different perspectives; their orientations emphasize (a) political culture (e.g., Elazar), (b) ideology (e.g. Erikson, Wright and McIver), and (c) social diversity. What would be (i) the major question(s) they are likely to dispute;
(ii) what are the most important areas of disagreement, and agreement they are likely to have regarding those questions, and (iii) why? Explain and justify your arguments.

2. Much of the literature on political participation, in general, and election turnout, more specifically, has derived from assumptions that economic factors predominate in motivating people to participate in politics. Some literature focuses on electoral structures and some examines the psychological correlates of SES. Although the Lipset-Rokkan framework dominated studies of comparative political participation for decades, only in the last few years have scholars in American political behavior built an understanding of cultural and religious factors into their models. Perhaps the most important precipitator of this turn in understanding was Verba and Nie's realization that enhanced black participation may have come from "consciousness of kind." However, in the Verba, Schlozman, and Brady study, many religious variables are built into their "resource theory" of political participation.

A. Review the literatures on political participation, making sure to discuss at least four of the following: Campbell, et al.; Burnham; Verba and Nie; Conway; Rosenstone and Hansen; Powell; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady.

B. How does the emerging cultural/religious literature on political participation help us to understand the changing size and composition of the American electorate in presidential and congressional elections since 1960?

Institutions

1. Research on the presidency tends to give primary weight in explaining the performance of presidents to one of two perspectives: variables pertaining to institutions and their context or to variables pertaining to the characteristics of individual presidents. Identify and describe one leading example
of research within each perspective. Then, choose three presidents after 1933 and examine how institutional/contextual variables and personal variables apply to explaining their performance in office.

2. Much literature over the last three decades has focused on the degree to which Presidents influence congressional decision-making. Drawing upon the literature, outline the main approaches to this question. Which approach do you think is most fruitful for assessing Presidential power in Congress, and why?
American Democracy

1. At its most basic level, most of the empirical work on American politics is concerned with the question of whether the American political system actually functions according to democratic ideals. In particular, representation is a central concern. According to the empirical literature on American politics, does the American political system represent the interests of the American people? How and why? How and why not? Your answer should consider the potential for, evidence of, and mechanisms for representation. What does theory and empirical evidence suggest about the quality of representative democracy in the United States?

2. The goals of political actors, and the ways in which the actions undertaken in pursuit of those goals shape the operation of American government, are recurring themes of the literature on American politics. Describe and discuss/critique the goals scholars have imputed to three different political actors, the ways in which American political institutions affect, and are affected by, these actors’ goals, and the implications of this work for our understanding of the functioning of American government, especially vis-à-vis democratic principles. Finally, what does a focus on goal-oriented behavior contribute to our understanding of American politics?

Institutions

1. Critically compare and contrast at least three of the following authors in their analysis of Congress; Mayhew, Fenno, Jacobsen, Cox and McCubbins, Kreibel. Each of them in some way puts forth a theory which attempts to look at the interaction between motivations of individual and the provision (or failure to provide) certain collective institutional goods. For each them address the following issues:
   A) Assumption about individual motivation
   B) Their conception of what the public or collective good is
   C) How their theory accounts for the provision of the public good.
   D) Which theory you feel is strongest

2. Drawing upon relevant literatures, critically analyze approaches to the study of presidential-congressional relations in the American system. What are some of the main approaches? What are some of the strengths and weaknesses of the main approaches? Which approach do you think is the most fruitful?
Mass Behavior

1. The political behavior, including or especially the voting behavior, literature in the U.S. most often emphasizes *individual level* variables, with relatively little attention to contextual and/or different institutional factors. On the other hand, the U.S. is a federal system in which the national government has major powers and, at the same time, the states have significant political and policy authority. There are thus potentially a host of federalist and/or within-state factors that shape behavior. Discuss and explain major factors or influences on behavior that emanate from the federal structure and/or within-state characteristics as those have been addressed in research on these questions. What are the explanations or theories that have been put forth, and what does evidence indicate about the accuracy of the theories? How, and how much, does this literature add to our understanding of political behavior? How and how much does, and should, this research lead scholars to assess (or reassess) the level and quality of American democracy? Explain and support your arguments carefully, incorporating (and challenging as appropriate) the relevant research.

2. What factors shape American public opinion? What are the mechanisms by which this opinion is translated into electoral results, and what are the individual-level and institutional factors that affect this process? What does your answer say about the quality of democracy in the United States?
1. At its most basic level, most of the empirical work on American politics is concerned with the question of whether the American political system actually functions according to democratic ideals. In particular, representation is a central concern. According to the empirical literature on American politics, does the American political system represent the interests of the American people? How and why? How and why not? Your answer should consider the potential for, evidence of, and mechanisms for representation. What does theory and empirical evidence suggest about the quality of representative democracy in the United States?

2. The goals of political actors, and the ways in which the actions undertaken in pursuit of those goals shape the operation of American government, are recurring themes of the literature on American politics. Describe and discuss/critique the goals scholars have imputed to three different political actors, the ways in which American political institutions affect, and are affected by, these actors’ goals, and the implications of this work for our understanding of the functioning of American government, especially vis-à-vis democratic principles. Finally, what does a focus on goal-oriented behavior contribute to our understanding of American politics?

Institutions

1. Fred Greenstein observes “that a modifier such as ‘modern’ is needed characterize the post-1932 manifestations . . . that had evolved from the . . . circumscribed traditional presidency.” What are those “manifestations” that distinguish the “modern” presidency from an earlier, “traditional” form of the institution? How can we account for the development of those characteristics within the presidency? Compare and contrast the explanations for that development that you find in the works of Theodore Lowi, Sidney Milkis, and Stephen Skowronek.

2. Drawing upon relevant literatures where possible, critically analyze approaches to the study of presidential-congressional relations in the American system. What are some of the main approaches? What are some of the strengths and weaknesses of the main approaches? Which approach do you think is the most fruitful?
Constitutional Law

1. James B. Thayer, Alexander Bickel, John Hart Ely, Ronald Dworkin, and Robert Bork have all sought to justify and limit the power of judicial review in America. Select four of these authors and compare their theories of judicial review. To what extent are any of these theories reflected in American constitutional case law? Do you find any one of them convincing? Finally, why should the Supreme Court’s view of constitutional morality prevail over Congress’s view of what the Constitution requires or does not require?

2. The Supreme Court in Lopez and its progeny claims to be returning to the original understanding of federalism. Is it doing so?
American Democracy

1. At its most basic level, most of the empirical work on American politics is concerned with the question of whether the American political system actually functions according to democratic ideals. In particular, representation is a central concern. According to the empirical literature on American politics, does the American political system represent the interests of the American people? How and why? How and why not? Your answer should consider the potential for, evidence of, and mechanisms for representation. What does theory and empirical evidence suggest about the quality of representative democracy in the United States?

2. The goals of political actors, and the ways in which the actions undertaken in pursuit of those goals shape the operation of American government, are recurring themes of the literature on American politics. Describe and discuss/critique the goals scholars have imputed to three different political actors, the ways in which American political institutions affect, and are affected by, these actors’ goals, and the implications of this work for our understanding of the functioning of American government, especially vis-à-vis democratic principles. Finally, what does a focus on goal-oriented behavior contribute to our understanding of American politics?

Institutions

1. Critically compare and contrast at least three of the following authors in their analysis of Congress; Mayhew, Fenno, Jacobsen, Cox and McCubbins, Kreibel. Each of them in some way puts forth a theory which attempts to look at the interaction between motivations of individual and the provision (or failure to provide) certain collective institutional goods. For each them address the following issues:
   A) Assumption about individual motivation
   B) Their conception of what the public or collective good is
   C) How their theory accounts for the provision of the public good.
   D) Which theory you feel is strongest

2. Drawing upon relevant literatures, critically analyze approaches to the study of presidential-congressional relations in the American system. What are some of the main approaches? What are some of the strengths and weaknesses of the main approaches? Which approach do you think is the most fruitful?
Constitutional Law

1. In a recent death penalty case (*Atkins v. Virginia*), in which the Supreme Court invalidated the execution of a mentally retarded person as a violation of the cruel and unusual punishments provision of the Eighth Amendment, Justice Stevens, writing for the Court, cited the views of the “world community” as well as selected opinion polls and *amici* briefs filed by the European Union and the United States Catholic Conference. In dissent, Chief Justice Rehnquist wrote: “I write separately...to call attention to the defects in the Court’s decision to place weight on foreign laws, the views of religious organizations, and opinion polls in reaching its conclusion.” Justice Scalia agreed, claiming that “the views of professional and religious organizations and the results of opinion polls are irrelevant. Equally irrelevant,’” he wrote, “are the practices of the ‘world community,’ whose notions of justice are (thankfully) not always those of our people.” He concluded by saying, “We must never forget that it is a Constitution for the United States of America that we are expounding.” Assess the validity or propriety of these dissenting views. What about foreign constitutional case law? Are there any circumstances under which the decisions of foreign constitutional courts might serve as a guide to the interpretation of the U.S. Constitution? Discuss the arguments for and against.

2. Sanford Levinson, D.P. Kommers, and others have remarked that Germany’s Basic Law has replaced the United States Constitution as the leading model of constitutional design and governance around the world. Do you agree or disagree? Are there any grounds in political theory for ranking the constitutions of advanced democracies in terms of their moral quality or superiority?
University of Notre Dame  
Department of Political Science  
Comprehensive Examination in American Politics  
September 2003  
(Floyd)

Choose one question from each of the following three sections.

**Part One: American Democracy**

(1) Representation is a central component of most conceptions of democracy. Thus, any attempt to evaluate the quality of American democracy should consider the quality of representation. According to the empirical literature on American politics, does the American political system provide *representation* of the interests of the American people? How and why and to what extent? Your answer should evaluate the mechanisms for and evidence of representation in terms of what we know about: mass behavior, mediating institutions, and governing institutions.

(2) Recent work in political science emphasizes the degree to which political actors must be strategic in the pursuit of their goals. The essential interdependency of politics (outcomes are a function of collective, rather than individual, action) means that actors must take into account the goals and actions of other actors when trying to achieve their aims. At the same time, political actors exist within specific institutional settings that both constrain their behavior and offer opportunities for action. Drawing from the empirical literature on American politics, how do institutions and interdependency shape the behavior of members of Congress, Supreme Court justices, and presidents? How are institutional constraints/opportunities and interdependency similar across the three branches and how are they different? What are the consequences for the functioning of American democracy?

**Part Two: Institutions**

(1) Stephen Skowronek conceptualizes "the politics presidents' make" across American political history as a predictable unfolding of roles within recurring regimes. Thus, presidents at different times may have more in common with each other (i.e., Polk, T. Roosevelt, and L. Johnson) than they have with their immediate predecessors or successors. In apparent conflict with Skowronek's "story," influential research on the 20th century presidency argues that the "modern" office is a transformed institution, fundamentally unlike the "traditional" presidency. Richard Neustadt, Sidney Milkis, Theodore Lowi, Terry Moe, and Samuel Kernell are among the leading contributors to that literature. Are these two approaches to understanding the presidency diametrically
opposed? Or, can they be reconciled in a way that makes "modern" presidency research consistent with Skowronek's longer perspective on institutional change in the presidency? Along with treating Skowronek, your essay should treat at least three of the "modern" authors cited above.

(2) Rational choice has a track record in explaining many things about the institution of Congress. Recently it has been used to illuminate the relationships between the institutions of Congress and the Presidency. Critically analyze the rational choice approach to Congress and the Presidency. What are its strengths? What are its weaknesses?

**III. Part Three: Constitutional Law**

1. Describe the strengths and weaknesses of the following approaches to constitutional interpretation: textualism; originalism; structuralism; precedent or doctrine; philosophy or moral reasoning. Can these approaches be listed in any order of priority – that is, in terms of their neutrality or objectivity? How effective are these methods in keeping an interpreter’s personal views out of the process of constitutional decision-making?

2. In a number of constitutional cases – most recently the homosexual sodomy case (Lawrence v. Texas) – Justice Scalia has deplored the Supreme Court’s reference to foreign constitutional case law. He has dismissed foreign case law as “irrelevant,” saying that “comparative analysis is inappropriate to the task of interpreting a constitution.” Please comment, underscoring what you think are the legitimate or illegitimate uses (abuses?) of comparative analysis in the interpretation of a domestic constitution.
Choose one question from each of the following three sections.

**Part One: American Democracy**

(1) Representation is a central component of most conceptions of democracy. Thus, any attempt to evaluate the quality of American democracy should consider the quality of representation. According to the empirical literature on American politics, does the American political system provide representation of the interests of the American people? How and why and to what extent? Your answer should evaluate the mechanisms for and evidence of representation in terms of what we know about: mass behavior, mediating institutions, and governing institutions.

(2) Recent work in political science emphasizes the degree to which political actors must be strategic in the pursuit of their goals. The essential interdependency of politics (outcomes are a function of collective, rather than individual, action) means that actors must take into account the goals and actions of other actors when trying to achieve their aims. At the same time, political actors exist within specific institutional settings that both constrain their behavior and offer opportunities for action. Drawing from the empirical literature on American politics, how do institutions and interdependency shape the behavior of members of Congress, Supreme Court justices, and presidents? How are institutional constraints/opportunities and interdependency similar across the three branches and how are they different? What are the consequences for the functioning of American democracy?

**Part Two: Institutions**

(1) Numerous recent authors on Congress have identified a given problem with Congress (such as responsibility, institutional maintenance, etc.) and then attempted to show how and why Congress solves or attempts to solve this problem. Compare and contrast at least two of the following: Mayhew, Cox and McCubbins, Khreibel, Jacobsen. Discuss the adequacy of their explanation of the solution for the specific problem they address, drawing on other literature as appropriate. Comment on the implications for our understanding of the Congress and/or American politics in general.
(2) States vary considerably in their institutional characteristics. But we seem to know rather little about the sources and consequences of those institutional characteristics. Discuss the current state of knowledge on the sources and consequences of state institutions, citing literature as appropriate. Indicate what further research is needed, and why.

**Part Three: Behavior**

(1) Consider major political processes or institutions in the states, such as political parties, interest groups, voting/elections, referenda/initiatives, etc. What does examining these tell us about the nature and the extent of democracy in the American states?

(2) What can rational choice theory tell us about political participation? Discuss the merits and demerits of rational choice-grounded explanations for:

   (a) the individual-level decision to vote and otherwise get involved in politics
   (b) the institutional-level factors that facilitate political involvement

In the course of your answer, be sure to contrast rational choice theory with other lenses through which political participation can be viewed, and thus understood.
Choose one question from each of the following three sections.

Part One: American Democracy

(1) Representation is a central component of most conceptions of democracy. Thus, any attempt to evaluate the quality of American democracy should consider the quality of representation. According to the empirical literature on American politics, does the American political system provide representation of the interests of the American people? How and why and to what extent? Your answer should evaluate the mechanisms for and evidence of representation in terms of what we know about: mass behavior, mediating institutions, and governing institutions.

(2) Recent work in political science emphasizes the degree to which political actors must be strategic in the pursuit of their goals. The essential interdependency of politics (outcomes are a function of collective, rather than individual, action) means that actors must take into account the goals and actions of other actors when trying to achieve their aims. At the same time, political actors exist within specific institutional settings that both constrain their behavior and offer opportunities for action. Drawing from the empirical literature on American politics, how do institutions and interdependency shape the behavior of members of Congress, Supreme Court justices, and presidents? How are institutional constraints/opportunities and interdependency similar across the three branches and how are they different? What are the consequences for the functioning of American democracy?

Part Two: Institutions

(1) How (if at all) can scholarship on legislatures in other countries improve our understanding of the U.S. Congress?

(2) States vary considerably in their institutional characteristics. But we seem to know rather little about the sources and consequences of those institutional characteristics. Discuss the current state of knowledge on the sources and consequences of state institutions, citing literature as appropriate. Indicate what further research is needed, and why.
Part Three: Behavior

(1) Consider major political processes or institutions in the states, such as political parties, interest groups, voting/elections, referenda/initiatives, etc. What does examining these tell us about the nature and the extent of democracy in the American states?

(2) What can rational choice theory tell us about political participation? Discuss the merits and demerits of rational choice-grounded explanations for:

   (a) the individual-level decision to vote and otherwise get involved in politics
   (b) the institutional-level factors that facilitate political involvement

In the course of your answer, be sure to contrast rational choice theory with other lenses through which political participation can be viewed, and thus understood.
Choose one question from each section

American Democracy

1. Representation is a central component of most conceptions of democracy. Thus, any attempt to evaluate the quality of American democracy should consider the quality of representation. According to the empirical literature on American politics, does the American political system provide representation of the interests of the American people? How and why? How and why not? Your answer should evaluate the mechanisms for and evidence of representation in terms of what we know about: mass behavior, mediating institutions, and governing institutions.

2. Assuming (in Madison’s words) that “enlightened statesmen” would not always be at the helm, the Framers endeavored to create a system of political institutions that would channel self-interested behavior to serve the public good. According to the empirical literature on American politics, how well does the American political system achieve the Framer’s aim of controlling self-interest to achieve the greater good?

Your answer should:
(a) describe and discuss the goals which political scientists ascribe to major political actors (choose 3 of the following 4 actors to discuss: parties, members of Congress, presidents, and Supreme Court justices);
(b) analyze the ways in which American political institutions affect, and are affected by, the actions that politicians undertake in pursuit of those goals;
(c) evaluate whether the institutions of American government achieve the Framer’s goal.

(Hint: Your essay should be about a-c, not about Madison or the Federalist Papers).

Institutions

1. Politics in general in the U.S., as well as racial/ethnic politics, is significantly shaped by formal structure and governmental institutions. That is, relationships between the institutions of the national government (such as separation of powers), the relationships between the national and state/local governments (federalism and intergovernmental relations), and the internal rules and organization these various institutions (those of the national government, and those of state and local governments) have implications for racial/ethnic politics. Delineate and systematically examine what you view as an important selection of
literature that considers and explains these implications. (You may focus across and/or within structures and institutions.)

2. In presidential research “the presidency” has been characteristically framed as either an individual actor or as an institutionalized organization. What are the implications of these two frames for the way we understand the presidency? In particular, your essay should incorporate the following points.
   a. Identify two scholars associated with each frame, or perspective, identified above. Explain how these scholars’ research questions are related to the way they have framed the presidency.
   b. Identify and explore two research questions that require conceptualizing the presidency as simultaneously an individual actor and a complex institution.

Behavior

1. In 1996, 83 percent of Puerto Ricans living in Puerto Rico voted in the U.S. presidential election. In that same year, only 47 percent of Puerto Ricans living in the mainland United States turned out to vote for president. These statistics are typical of other years. In other words, voter turnout in Puerto Rico is extremely high. Yet upon moving to the U.S. mainland, Puerto Ricans vote at a low rate. Based on the literature about voter turnout (and political participation more generally), why do you think this might be the case? Be sure to compare and contrast different possible explanations, illuminating the differing perspectives that exist on the subject of participation.

Next, propose a research design to test your proposed explanation(s). This will require you to operationalize your hypotheses, as well as specify how they can be tested empirically. The design can be qualitative, quantitative, or a combination of both. Assume reasonable parameters on your resources as a researcher. That is, you can assume that you have enough grant money to do something, maybe even a few things, but certainly not everything.

You will not be graded on your knowledge of Puerto Rican politics. However, it is important to note that Puerto Ricans are American citizens, so non-citizenship cannot explain their low levels of turnout on the U.S. mainland. Nor is there compulsory voter turnout in Puerto Rico.

2. How does the literature on the political behavior of various racial/ethnic groups alter or influence our theoretical understanding of the larger body of political behavior research, and, more broadly, how does the literature on the political behavior of various racial/ethnic groups alter our understanding of American democracy? Can generalizations really be made, or must we think of different groups (blacks, Latinos, Asians, others) separately? Explain. If we need to think about different groups, what, specific theoretical and/or empirical issues are most relevant? Explain. (Cite literature as appropriate and necessary.)
Choose one question from each section

American Democracy

1. Representation is a central component of most conceptions of democracy. Thus, any attempt to evaluate the quality of American democracy should consider the quality of representation. According to the empirical literature on American politics, does the American political system provide representation of the interests of the American people? How and why? How and why not? Your answer should evaluate the mechanisms for and evidence of representation in terms of what we know about: mass behavior, mediating institutions, and governing institutions.

2. Assuming (in Madison’s words) that “enlightened statesmen” would not always be at the helm, the Framers endeavored to create a system of political institutions that would channel self-interested behavior to serve the public good. According to the empirical literature on American politics, how well does the American political system achieve the Framers’ aim of controlling self-interest to achieve the greater good?

   Your answer should:
   (a) describe and discuss the goals which political scientists ascribe to major political actors (choose 3 of the following 4 actors to discuss: parties, members of Congress, presidents, and Supreme Court justices);
   (b) analyze the ways in which American political institutions affect, and are affected by, the actions that politicians undertake in pursuit of those goals;
   (c) evaluate whether the institutions of American government achieve the Framers’ goal.

   (Hint: Your essay should be about a-c, not about Madison or the Federalist Papers).

Institutions

1. It is clearly accurate to say that there is tremendous variation in the structures and ostensible capacities of state (and local) government institutions. But, so what; i.e., what is the impact of the differences that the governorship, the state legislature, the courts, and bureaucracies have on state politics and policy? Identify and explain some of the major differences between such state institutions and, more importantly, consider the impacts those differences may (or may not) have for various aspects of state politics.
2. Legislative scholars disagree about the extent to which legislatures are organized to facilitate 1) equilibrium policy outcomes; 2) the distribution of goods; or 3) informed policy making. Discuss these three traditions, emphasizing their theoretical and empirical strengths and weaknesses. Are they compatible or irreconcilable?

Behavior

1. How does the civic engagement theory explain the decline in citizens' political participation? What role do civic associations play in the theory, and to what extent does the internal structure of these associations matter?

2. How does the literature on the political behavior of various racial/ethnic groups alter or influence our theoretical understanding of the larger body of political behavior research, and, more broadly, how does the literature on the political behavior of various racial/ethnic groups alter our understanding of American democracy? Can generalizations really be made, or must we think of different groups (blacks, Latinos, Asians, others) separately? Explain. If we need to think about different groups, what, specific theoretical and/or empirical issues are most relevant? Explain. (Cite literature as appropriate and necessary.)
Choose one question from each section

American Democracy

1. Representation is a central component of most conceptions of democracy. Thus, any attempt to evaluate the quality of American democracy should consider the quality of representation. According to the empirical literature on American politics, does the American political system provide representation of the interests of the American people? How and why? How and why not? Your answer should evaluate the mechanisms for and evidence of representation in terms of what we know about: mass behavior, mediating institutions, and governing institutions.

2. Assuming (in Madison’s words) that “enlightened statesmen” would not always be at the helm, the Framers endeavored to create a system of political institutions that would channel self-interested behavior to serve the public good. According to the empirical literature on American politics, how well does the American political system achieve the Framer’s aim of controlling self-interest to achieve the greater good?

Your answer should:
(a) describe and discuss the goals which political scientists ascribe to major political actors (choose 3 of the following 4 actors to discuss: parties, members of Congress, presidents, and Supreme Court justices);
(b) analyze the ways in which American political institutions affect, and are affected by, the actions that politicians undertake in pursuit of those goals;
(c) evaluate whether the institutions of American government achieve the Framer’s goal.

(Hint: Your essay should be about a-c, not about Madison or the Federalist Papers).

Institutions

1. In presidential research “the presidency” has been characteristically framed as either an individual actor or as an institutionalized organization. What are the implications of these two frames for the way we understand the presidency? In particular, your essay should incorporate the following points.
   a. Identify two scholars associated with each frame, or perspective, identified above. Explain how these scholars’ research questions are related to the way they have framed the presidency.
   b. Identify and explore two research questions that require conceptualizing the presidency as simultaneously an individual actor and a complex institution.
2. Politics in general in the U.S. as well as racial/ethnic politics, is significantly shaped by formal structure and governmental institutions. That is, relationships between the institutions of the national government (such as separation of powers), the relationships between the national and state/local governments (federalism and intergovernmental relations), and the “internal” rules and organization these various institutions (those of the national government, and those of state and local governments) have implications for racial/ethnic politics. Delineate and systematically examine what you view as an important selection of literature that considers and explains these implications. (You may focus across and/or within structures and institutions.)

Behavior

1. How does the civic engagement theory explain the decline in citizens' political participation? What role do civic associations play in the theory, and to what extent does the internal structure of these associations matter?

2. How does the literature on the political behavior of various racial/ethnic groups alter or influence our theoretical understanding of the larger body of political behavior research, and, more broadly, how does the literature on the political behavior of various racial/ethnic groups alter our understanding of American democracy? Can generalizations really be made, or must we think of different groups (blacks, Latinos, Asians, others) separately? Explain. If we need to think about different groups, what, specific theoretical and/or empirical issues are most relevant? Explain. (Cite literature as appropriate and necessary.)
Choose one question from each section

American Democracy

1. Representation is a central component of most conceptions of democracy. Thus, any attempt to evaluate the quality of American democracy should consider the quality of representation. According to the empirical literature on American politics, does the American political system provide representation of the interests of the American people? How and why? How and why not? Your answer should evaluate the mechanisms for and evidence of representation in terms of what we know about: mass behavior, mediating institutions, and governing institutions.

2. Assuming (in Madison’s words) that “enlightened statesmen” would not always be at the helm, the Framers endeavored to create a system of political institutions that would channel self-interested behavior to serve the public good. According to the empirical literature on American politics, how well does the American political system achieve the Framer’s aim of controlling self-interest to achieve the greater good?

Your answer should:
(a) describe and discuss the goals which political scientists ascribe to major political actors (choose 3 of the following 4 actors to discuss: parties, members of Congress, presidents, and Supreme Court justices);
(b) analyze the ways in which American political institutions affect, and are affected by, the actions that politicians undertake in pursuit of those goals;
(c) evaluate whether the institutions of American government achieve the Framer’s goal.

(Hint: Your essay should be about a-c, not about Madison or the Federalist Papers).

Institutions

1. Legislative scholars disagree about the extent to which legislatures are organized to facilitate 1) equilibrium policy outcomes; 2) the distribution of goods; or 3) informed policy making. Discuss these three traditions, emphasizing their theoretical and empirical strengths and weaknesses. Are they compatible or irreconcilable?
2. Journalists, citizens, and many scholars have long been concerned that the role of organized interests in the United States is biased and undemocratic, both in terms of the shape and content of the interest group universe and its membership, and in terms of the relationship between organized interests and political decision makers. Yet others have lauded the democratic benefits of group membership and activity. Discuss the major theoretical arguments and empirical evidence for and against these two perspectives. Your answer should consider the multiple ways in which bias may, or may not, characterize the interest group universe and group—government interaction.

Behavior

1. In 1996, 83 percent of Puerto Ricans living in Puerto Rico voted in the U.S. presidential election. In that same year, only 47 percent of Puerto Ricans living in the mainland United States turned out to vote for president. These statistics are typical of other years. In other words, voter turnout in Puerto Rico is extremely high. Yet upon moving to the U.S. mainland, Puerto Ricans vote at a low rate. Based on the literature about voter turnout (and political participation more generally), why do you think this might be the case? Be sure to compare and contrast different possible explanations, illuminating the differing perspectives that exist on the subject of participation.

Next, propose a research design to test your proposed explanation(s). This will require you to operationalize your hypotheses, as well as specify how they can be tested empirically. The design can be qualitative, quantitative, or a combination of both. Assume reasonable parameters on your resources as a researcher. That is, you can assume that you have enough grant money to do something, maybe even a few things, but certainly not everything.

You will not be graded on your knowledge of Puerto Rican politics. However, it is important to note that Puerto Ricans are American citizens, so non-citizenship cannot explain their low levels of turnout on the U.S. mainland. Nor is there compulsory voter turnout in Puerto Rico.

2. Political participation in the United States appears to many as a paradox. On the one hand, American voter turnout ranks near the bottom among the world’s democracies. But on the other hand, by international standards Americans engage in other forms of participation, like contacting elected officials, at very high rates.

First, what explains this apparent paradox? Why are Americans (a) less likely to vote but (b) more likely to engage in other forms of political activity than citizens of other democratic nations? Contrast the differing perspectives on this issue.
within the political science literature, and argue for the explanation(s) you find most convincing.

Second, what are the implications of this paradox for representative democracy in the United States? How does operating in an environment with low turnout but high rates of non-electoral participation affect the actions of elected officials in the United States? How does it affect the substance of public policy? How might the policy landscape be different if the U.S. had high voter turnout but low rates of other forms of political participation?
Choose one question from each section

**American Democracy**

1. Representation is a central component of most conceptions of democracy. Thus, any attempt to evaluate the quality of American democracy should consider the quality of representation. According to the empirical literature on American politics, does the American political system provide representation of the interests of the American people? How and why? How and why not? Your answer should evaluate the mechanisms for and evidence of representation in terms of what we know about: mass behavior, mediating institutions, and governing institutions.

2. Assuming (in Madison’s words) that “enlightened statesmen” would not always be at the helm, the Framers endeavored to create a system of political institutions that would channel self-interested behavior to serve the public good. According to the empirical literature on American politics, how well does the American political system achieve the Framer’s aim of controlling self-interest to achieve the greater good?

Your answer should:
(a) describe and discuss the goals which political scientists ascribe to major political actors (choose 3 of the following 4 actors to discuss: parties, members of Congress, presidents, and Supreme Court justices);
(b) analyze the ways in which American political institutions affect, and are affected by, the actions that politicians undertake in pursuit of those goals;
(c) evaluate whether the institutions of American government achieve the Framer’s goal.

(Hint: Your essay should be about a-c, not about Madison or the Federalist Papers).

**Institutions**

1. Legislative scholars disagree about the extent to which legislatures are organized to facilitate 1) equilibrium policy outcomes; 2) the distribution of goods; or 3) informed policy making. Discuss these three traditions, emphasizing their theoretical and empirical strengths and weaknesses. Are they compatible or irreconcilable?
2. Journalists, citizens, and many scholars have long been concerned that the role of organized interests in the United States is biased and undemocratic, both in terms of the shape and content of the interest group universe and its membership, and in terms of the relationship between organized interests and political decision makers. Yet others have lauded the democratic benefits of group membership and activity. Discuss the major theoretical arguments and empirical evidence for and against these two perspectives. Your answer should consider the multiple ways in which bias may, or may not, characterize the interest group universe and group—government interaction.

**Behavior**

1. In 1996, 83 percent of Puerto Ricans living in Puerto Rico voted in the U.S. presidential election. In that same year, only 47 percent of Puerto Ricans living in the mainland United States turned out to vote for president. These statistics are typical of other years. In other words, voter turnout in Puerto Rico is extremely high. Yet upon moving to the U.S. mainland, Puerto Ricans vote at a low rate. Based on the literature about voter turnout (and political participation more generally), why do you think this might be the case? Be sure to compare and contrast different possible explanations, illuminating the differing perspectives that exist on the subject of participation.

Next, propose a research design to test your proposed explanation(s). This will require you to operationalize your hypotheses, as well as specify how they can be tested empirically. The design can be qualitative, quantitative, or a combination of both. Assume reasonable parameters on your resources as a researcher. That is, you can assume that you have enough grant money to do something, maybe even a few things, but certainly not everything.

You will not be graded on your knowledge of Puerto Rican politics. However, it is important to note that Puerto Ricans are American citizens, so non-citizenship cannot explain their low levels of turnout on the U.S. mainland. Nor is there compulsory voter turnout in Puerto Rico.

2. Political participation in the United States appears to many as a paradox. On the one hand, American voter turnout ranks near the bottom among the world’s democracies. But on the other hand, by international standards Americans engage in other forms of participation, like contacting elected officials, at very high rates.

First, what explains this apparent paradox? Why are Americans (a) less likely to vote but (b) more likely to engage in other forms of political activity than citizens of other democratic nations? Contrast the differing perspectives on this issue within the political science literature, and argue for the explanation(s) you find most convincing.
Second, what are the implications of this paradox for representative democracy in the United States? How does operating in an environment with low turnout but high rates of non-electoral participation affect the actions of elected officials in the United States? How does it affect the substance of public policy? How might the policy landscape be different if the U.S. had *high* voter turnout but *low* rates of other forms of political participation?
Choose one question from each of the following three sections.

Part One: American Democracy

(1) To what extent does the contemporary American political system meet the standards of democracy in regard to political equality and representation? Drawing from the empirical literature in American politics, your answer should address the ways in which American political institutions, political organizations, and mass behavior do and do not succeed in meeting democratic norms. Note that we are not interested in a theoretical defense of certain democratic norms over others (the question enumerates the two we would like you to focus on) but on what political science has to say about how the system actually functions and whether those conclusions are consistent with our expectations for an ideal democracy.

(2) V.O. Key famously observed that: “Unless mass views have some place in the shaping of policy, all the talk about democracy is nonsense.” To what extent does the policy making process in the contemporary United States effectively translate mass preferences into policy? Your answer should draw upon the empirical literature on the linkages between opinion and policy, making reference to parties, interest groups, and mass participation as appropriate.

Part Two: Institutions

1. Throughout the presidential research literature, presidential power is, centrally, the phenomenon to explain. Yet, there are substantial differences among scholars in the ways “power” is conceptualized and its uses explained. Compare and contrast the conceptions of power by Richard Neustadt, Terry Moe, and Stephen Skowronek, and explain these scholars’ explanations of the presidents’ uses of power. Finally, sketch how these approaches to presidential power apply to George W. Bush’s uses of presidential power.

2. In presidential research “the presidency” has been characteristically framed as either an individual actor or as an institutionalized organization. What are the implications of these two frames for the way we understand the presidency? If forced to chose, which of the two offers the best framework for a theoretical understanding of the presidency?
Part Three: Public Law

1. Recent theories of constitutional interpretation are often held to undermine many aspects of the traditional study of Public Law. Taking either (a) the rationale for judicial review as developed in Marbury v. Madison or (b) the case for or possibility of originalist study of important parts of the constitution (like the 14th amendment), discuss whether or not these theories are indeed undermining. Be sure to discuss specific theorists as in, e.g., Garvey and Aleinikoff.

2. What is "dual federalism" and how does it differ from the conception of federalism in John Marshall's opinion in McCulloch v. Maryland? Your answer should discuss the different statements or implications of these two different positions regarding: legal doctrine; the authority in which the Constitution originated; the Constitution's basic normative character; the substantive qualities and values of American life.
Choose one question from each of the following three sections.

**Part One: American Democracy**

(1) To what extent does the contemporary American political system meet the standards of democracy in regard to political equality and representation? Drawing from the empirical literature in American politics, your answer should address the ways in which American political institutions, political organizations, and mass behavior do and do not succeed in meeting democratic norms. Note that we are not interested in a theoretical defense of certain democratic norms over others (the question enumerates the two we would like you to focus on) but on what political science has to say about how the system actually functions and whether those conclusions are consistent with our expectations for an ideal democracy.

(2) V.O. Key famously observed that: “Unless mass views have some place in the shaping of policy, all the talk about democracy is nonsense.” To what extent does the policy making process in the contemporary United States effectively translate mass preferences into policy? Your answer should draw upon the empirical literature on the linkages between opinion and policy, making reference to parties, interest groups, and mass participation as appropriate.

**Part Two: Institutions**

1. Throughout the presidential research literature, presidential power is, centrally, the phenomenon to explain. Yet, there are substantial differences among scholars in the ways “power” is conceptualized and its uses explained. Compare and contrast the conceptions of power by Richard Neustadt, Terry Moe, and Stephen Skowronek, and explain these scholars’ explanations of the presidents’ uses of power. Finally, sketch how these approaches to presidential power apply to George W. Bush’s uses of presidential power.

2. In presidential research “the presidency” has been characteristically framed as either an individual actor or as an institutionalized organization. What are the implications of these two frames for the way we understand the presidency? If forced to chose, which of the two offers the best framework for a theoretical understanding of the presidency?
Part Three: Public Law

1. Critically assess the theory advanced by John Ely in his book, *Democracy and Distrust*. Pay particular attention to its strengths and weaknesses. Identify the leading critics of Ely’s theory and assess the propriety or merits of the criticism.

2. Select one topical area of American constitutional law (for example, the commerce clause cases, equal protection, freedom of speech, church-state relations, etc.). Now describe and assess the Supreme Court’s approach to deciding cases related to the topic. Consider both majority and minority perspectives. How consistent has the Court been in deciding cases within the topical area? What do the cases tell you about the role of judicial review in America?
Choose *one* question from each of the following three sections.

**Part One: American Democracy**

1. To what extent does the contemporary American political system meet the standards of democracy in regard to political equality and representation? Drawing from the empirical literature in American politics, your answer should address the ways in which American political institutions, political organizations, and mass behavior do and do not succeed in meeting democratic norms. Note that we are not interested in a theoretical defense of certain democratic norms over others (the question enumerates the two we would like you to focus on) but on what political science has to say about how the system actually functions and whether those conclusions are consistent with our expectations for an ideal democracy.

2. V.O. Key famously observed that: “Unless mass views have some place in the shaping of policy, all the talk about democracy is nonsense.” To what extent does the policy making process in the contemporary United States effectively translate mass preferences into policy? Your answer should draw upon the empirical literature on the linkages between opinion and policy, making reference to parties, interest groups, and mass participation as appropriate.

**Part Two: Institutions**

1. Throughout the presidential research literature, presidential power is, centrally, the phenomenon to explain. Yet, there are substantial differences among scholars in the ways “power” is conceptualized and its uses explained. Compare and contrast the conceptions of power by Richard Neustadt, Terry Moe, and Stephen Skowronek, and explain these scholars’ explanations of the presidents’ uses of power. Finally, sketch how these approaches to presidential power apply to George W. Bush’s uses of presidential power.

2. In presidential research “the presidency” has been characteristically framed as either an individual actor or as an institutionalized organization. What are the implications of these two frames for the way we understand the presidency? If forced to chose, which of the two offers the best framework for a theoretical understanding of the presidency?
Part Three: Public Law

1. Recent theories of constitutional interpretation are often held to undermine many aspects of the traditional study of Public Law. Taking either (a) the rationale for judicial review as developed in Marbury v. Madison or (b) the case for or possibility of originalist study of important parts of the constitution (like the 14th amendment), discuss whether or not these theories are indeed undermining. Be sure to discuss specific theorists as in, e.g., Garvey and Aleinikoff.

2. What is "dual federalism" and how does it differ from the conception of federalism in John Marshall's opinion in McCulloch v. Maryland? Your answer should discuss the different statements or implications of these two different positions regarding: legal doctrine; the authority in which the Constitution originated; the Constitution's basic normative character; the substantive qualities and values of American life.
Choose *one* question from each of the following three sections.

**Part One: American Democracy**

1. To what extent does the contemporary American political system meet the standards of democracy in regard to political equality and representation? Drawing from the empirical literature in American politics, your answer should address the ways in which American political institutions, political organizations, and mass behavior do and do not succeed in meeting democratic norms. Note that we are not interested in a theoretical defense of certain democratic norms over others (the question enumerates the two we would like you to focus on) but on what political science has to say about how the system actually functions and whether those conclusions are consistent with our expectations for an ideal democracy.

2. V.O. Key famously observed that: “Unless mass views have some place in the shaping of policy, all the talk about democracy is nonsense.” To what extent does the policy making process in the contemporary United States effectively translate mass preferences into policy? Your answer should draw upon the empirical literature on the linkages between opinion and policy, making reference to parties, interest groups, and mass participation as appropriate.

**Part Two: Behavior**

1. In recent years, many scholars have argued that religion has occupied an increasingly important role in shaping how Americans vote. First, consider this subject by examining the behavior of individual voters. How do religious factors -- which you will need to specify -- influence the vote? Second, turn your attention to churches and other religious organizations, and the imprint they leave on the political landscape. Specifically, what role do they play in American elections? Under what conditions do they pull their members into politics, and when do they push them out? In what ways are they like more traditional interest groups, and how are they different? What are the implications of those similarities/differences for their involvement in politics?

2. Rational choice theory has long been criticized for being unable to explain why people turn out to vote. Write an essay in which you evaluate the usefulness of rational choice theory as a theoretical perspective on political participation. In particular, discuss rational choice theory as it relates to the individual’s decision to vote, as well as what it
predicts regarding the behavior of political mobilizers. Compare what we have learned from rational choice theory to what other theoretical perspectives have taught us about political participation. Is it possible to integrate rational choice theory with other theoretical approaches to the study of participation?

Part Three: Institutions

1. Throughout the presidential research literature, presidential power is, centrally, the phenomenon to explain. Yet, there are substantial differences among scholars in the ways “power” is conceptualized and its uses explained. Compare and contrast the conceptions of power by Richard Neustadt, Terry Moe, and Stephen Skowronek, and explain these scholars’ explanations of the presidents’ uses of power. Finally, sketch how these approaches to presidential power apply to George W. Bush’s uses of presidential power.

2. In presidential research “the presidency” has been characteristically framed as either an individual actor or as an institutionalized organization. What are the implications of these two frames for the way we understand the presidency? If forced to chose, which of the two offers the best framework for a theoretical understanding of the presidency?
Choose one question from each of the following three sections.

**Part One: American Democracy**

(1) To what extent does the contemporary American political system meet the standards of democracy in regard to political equality and representation? Drawing from the empirical literature in American politics, your answer should address the ways in which American political institutions, political organizations, and mass behavior do and do not succeed in meeting democratic norms. Note that we are not interested in a theoretical defense of certain democratic norms over others (the question enumerates the two we would like you to focus on) but on what political science has to say about how the system actually functions and whether those conclusions are consistent with our expectations for an ideal democracy.

(2) V.O. Key famously observed that: “Unless mass views have some place in the shaping of policy, all the talk about democracy is nonsense.” To what extent does the policy making process in the contemporary United States effectively translate mass preferences into policy? Your answer should draw upon the empirical literature on the linkages between opinion and policy, making reference to parties, interest groups, and mass participation as appropriate.

**Part Two: Institutions**

1. Throughout the presidential research literature, presidential power is, centrally, the phenomenon to explain. Yet, there are substantial differences among scholars in the ways “power” is conceptualized and its uses explained. Compare and contrast the conceptions of power by Richard Neustadt, Terry Moe, and Stephen Skowronek, and explain these scholars’ explanations of the presidents’ uses of power. Finally, sketch how these approaches to presidential power apply to George W. Bush’s uses of presidential power.

2. In presidential research “the presidency” has been characteristically framed as either an individual actor or as an institutionalized organization. What are the implications of these two frames for the way we understand the presidency? If forced to chose, which of the two offers the best framework for a theoretical understanding of the presidency?
Part Three: Public Law

1. Recent theories of constitutional interpretation are often held to undermine many aspects of the traditional study of Public Law. Taking either (a) the rationale for judicial review as developed in Marbury v. Madison or (b) the case for or possibility of originalist study of important parts of the constitution (like the 14th amendment), discuss whether or not these theories are indeed undermining. Be sure to discuss specific theorists as in, e.g., Garvey and Aleinikoff.

2. What is "dual federalism" and how does it differ from the conception of federalism in John Marshall's opinion in McCulloch v. Maryland? Your answer should discuss the different statements or implications of these two different positions regarding: legal doctrine; the authority in which the Constitution originated; the Constitution's basic normative character; the substantive qualities and values of American life.
Choose one question from each of the following three sections.

**Part One: American Democracy**

(1) To what extent does the contemporary American political system meet the standards of democracy in regard to political equality and representation? Drawing from the empirical literature in American politics, your answer should address the ways in which American political institutions, political organizations, and mass behavior do and do not succeed in meeting democratic norms. Note that we are not interested in a theoretical defense of certain democratic norms over others (the question enumerates the two we would like you to focus on) but on what political science has to say about how the system actually functions and whether those conclusions are consistent with our expectations for an ideal democracy.

(2) V.O. Key famously observed that: “Unless mass views have some place in the shaping of policy, all the talk about democracy is nonsense.” To what extent does the policy making process in the contemporary United States effectively translate mass preferences into policy? Your answer should draw upon the empirical literature on the linkages between opinion and policy, making reference to parties, interest groups, and mass participation as appropriate.

**Part Two: Institutions**

1. Throughout the presidential research literature, presidential power is, centrally, the phenomenon to explain. Yet, there are substantial differences among scholars in the ways “power” is conceptualized and its uses explained. Compare and contrast the conceptions of power by Richard Neustadt, Terry Moe, and Stephen Skowronek, and explain these scholars’ explanations of the presidents’ uses of power. Finally, sketch how these approaches to presidential power apply to George W. Bush’s uses of presidential power.

2. In presidential research “the presidency” has been characteristically framed as either an individual actor or as an institutionalized organization. What are the implications of these two frames for the way we understand the presidency? If forced to chose, which of the two offers the best framework for a theoretical understanding of the presidency?
Part Three: Public Law

1. Recent theories of constitutional interpretation are often held to undermine many aspects of the traditional study of Public Law. Taking either (a) the rationale for judicial review as developed in Marbury v. Madison or (b) the case for or possibility of originalist study of important parts of the constitution (like the 14th amendment), discuss whether or not these theories are indeed undermining. Be sure to discuss specific theorists as in, e.g., Garvey and Aleinikoff.

2. What is "dual federalism" and how does it differ from the conception of federalism in John Marshall's opinion in McCulloch v. Maryland? Your answer should discuss the different statements or implications of these two different positions regarding: legal doctrine; the authority in which the Constitution originated; the Constitution's basic normative character; the substantive qualities and values of American life.
American Comprehensive Exam  

May 2007

General questions

1. Compare and contrast the ability of both Congress and the President to exercise political control over the bureaucracy. You should not only identify the mechanisms of control available to each, but also discuss the degree to which the literature judges each institution as successful in engineering bureaucratic behavior towards its preferred ends. In other words, is the bureaucracy largely autonomous, or is it largely under the control of one or both elected federal branches?

2. It is frequently argued that the major theoretical perspective on American democracy has traditionally been pluralism. Review the basic tenets of conventional pluralist theory. Then discuss the theoretical and/or empirical criticisms directed against it that culminated in the "neo-pluralist" perspective. Offer your own assessment about the theoretical coherence and empirical utility of either variant of pluralism.

3. Some have claimed that the U.S. political system during the 1980s and 1990s and into the present may have become “more open but less democratic” than it had been in previous generations (after 9/11 this may be rather more complicated, but that is another issue.) One might interpret this assertion to mean that formal/legal rules do not assure equal access or representation within the American political system. Assuming we are interpreting the spirit of this assertion correctly, draw on appropriate research to systematically and thoroughly assess the accuracy of this claim. That is, identify and carefully discuss the most relevant and best systematic research on these matters and evaluate the claim thoroughly.

4. Recent work in political science emphasizes the degree to which political actors must be strategic in the pursuit of their goals. The essential interdependency of politics (outcomes are a function of collective, rather than individual, action) means that actors must take into account the goals and actions of other actors when trying to achieve their aims. At the same time, political actors exist within specific institutional settings that both constrain their behavior and offer opportunities for action. Drawing from the empirical literature on American politics, how do institutions and interdependency shape the behavior of members of Congress, Supreme Court justices, and presidents? How are institutional constraints/opportunities and interdependency similar across the three branches and how are they different? What are the consequences of these institutions and interdependencies for the functioning of American democracy?

Mass Behavior/Opinion  Answer one of the following
1. Over the last 10-15 years, there has been a proliferation of scholarship on social capital. Drawing on the political science literature, write an essay in which you critically evaluate both the theory and empirics underpinning the concept of social capital, particularly as it applies within the United States. Specifically, answer the following questions:

A) What have we learned from studies that use social capital as an independent variable?  
B) What have we learned from research that employs social capital as a dependent variable?  
C) Based on the existing literature, is social capital more theoretically useful as a dependent or independent variable?

2. V.O. Key famously suggested that unless there is a real connection between public opinion and public policy, all our talk about American democracy is "nonsense." Discuss the available evidence on the linkage between mass public opinion (and by extension, mass political behavior, such as voting) and policy. In the end, what conclusions do you draw about the quality of American democracy, if we use the correspondence between mass opinion/behavior and governmental policy as the appropriate criterion of evaluation?

American Democracy - Answer one of the following

1. Compare and contrast the Federalist and Anti-federalists views on the proper relationship between representatives and citizens. Given the current state of the literature on the behavior of citizens and legislators, whose ideas about the representational relationship have proven most prescient?

2). Students of democratic theory often think in terms of a succession of "models" of democracy, such as those offered by Held (in Models of Democracy) or Macpherson (in Life and Times of Liberal Democracy). Take either author and briefly review the successive models they discuss, providing some illustrative references to the primary thinkers they invoke. Which model would you argue is the most useful way to interpret contemporary American politics?
General Questions

1. Which party will win the 2008 presidential election? Write an essay in which you discuss what the *American politics literature* can (and perhaps, can not) tell us about the prospects for the upcoming election.

2. How would James Madison *explain* the development of the current American political system as it has developed? How would Madison *assess* the current American political system?

3. Historically oriented political scientists often segment the American political experience into four periods, each entailing a different structure of political relations. These are the patrician period, the party period, the pluralist period, and the plebiscitary period.

   To be meaningful for our understanding of American political development, there must be characteristics distinctive to each that affect the distribution of power in that period. Consider the institutional features of each period, the structures of the political system such as parties, interest groups and communications media as well as governmental institutions. What does political science research teach about the dominant institutional relations of each period? What light can political science shed on the political dynamics that cause the transitions from one period to the next?

4. Political participation in the United States appears to many as a paradox. On the one hand, American voter turnout ranks near the bottom among the world’s democracies. But on the other hand, by international standards Americans engage in other forms of participation, like contacting elected officials, at very high rates.

   First, what explains this apparent paradox? Why are Americans (a) less likely to vote but (b) more likely to engage in other forms of political activity than citizens of other democratic nations? Contrast the differing perspectives on this issue within the political science literature, and argue for the explanation(s) you find most convincing.

   Second, what are the implications of this paradox for representative democracy in the United States? How does operating in an environment with low turnout but high rates of non-electoral participation affect the actions of elected officials in the United States? How does it affect the substance of public policy? How might the policy landscape be
different if the U.S. had *high* voter turnout but *low* rates of other forms of political participation?

**Religion and Politics**

1.

In 1960, John F. Kennedy won the Catholic vote overwhelmingly. In 2004, John Kerry split the Catholic vote with George W. Bush, and lost to Bush among church-attending Catholics. Write an essay in which you discuss:

(a) the changes in American politics, and religion, that have led to this turn-about
(b) the likelihood that church-attending Catholics will continue to favor Republicans in presidential elections to come

2.

America is characterized by a robust religious “marketplace” and a political system in which religion has historically played an important role. Is there a connection between these two characteristics of American society? In your response, be sure to discuss the historical development of the American religious landscape. Also, your essay should address religion’s place in national politics, both in the present and the past.
Choose one question from each of the following three sections.

Part One: American Democracy

(1) Does the American political system, as it actually functions, fulfill the standards of republican democracy, particularly with regard to political equality and representation? Drawing from the empirical literature in American politics, your answer should address the ways in which American political institutions, organizations, and mass behavior do and do not function in ways consistent with generally-accepted norms of democracy. Note that we are not interested in a theoretical defense of certain democratic norms over others (choose a few general ones and move on) but rather on what political science has suggested about how the system actually functions and whether those findings are consistent with our expectations for an ideal democracy.

(2) Pluralism (in one or more of its incarnations) is perhaps the commonly accepted theory of policy making in the United States. Compare and contrast pluralism with its main competitors (institutionalism and class analysis). In the end, which provides in your judgment the best interpretation of political reality?

Part Two: Institutions

(1) During the 20th century the presidency changed in ways that seemed transformational. Fred Greenstein wrote that the late 20th century office was so dramatically changed that the adjective "modern" was required to distinguish it from an earlier, different presidency. That these changes occurred is universally recognized, but we do not have a generally agreed upon explanation for the presidency's 20th century transformation. Instead we have several competing theoretical explanations. Identify at least two such explanations for the presidency's change over time, compare them, and evaluating the capacity of each to satisfactorily explain those changes.

2. If we are to analyze and understand presidents' behaviors we have to conceptualize the relative weight of different factors in shaping those behaviors---the institutional or structural factors on the one hand and personal factors on the other. Write an essay examining how these competing factors have been considered in the work of three of the following political scientists: Fred Greenstein, Terry Moe, Richard Neustadt, and Stephen Skowronek.
Part Three: Public Law

(1) Outline Ronald Dworkin's argument that fidelity to the constitutional text calls for an approach to constitutional interpretation that fuses constitutional law and moral philosophy. How would an originalist like William Rehnquist or Antonin Scalia object to Dworkin's theory on (1) moral-philosophic grounds and (2) semantic grounds? Who do you think has the better argument and why?

(2) Over the years, the Supreme Court has decided several cases implicating the principle of separation of powers. Youngstown Sheet & Tube, Sawyer (1952), Immigration and Naturalization Service v. Chadha (1985), and Morrison v. Olsen (1988) are among the most important of these cases. What theory (or theories) of separation of powers informs these cases? Commentators have distinguished between formalist and functional approaches to the judicial review of separation of powers conflicts. Define these approaches. Which are reflected in the cases mentioned? What are the strongest arguments in favor of formalism? Of functionalism? Which do you prefer as a political scientist? Why?
Part One General – Each student must answer TWO of the Following. Make sure to indicate clearly which question you are answering.

1. As late as summer 2006, a majority of Americans believed that at the time the U.S. entered Iraq, Saddam Hussein was in possession of weapons of mass destruction. What do we know about the ability of political elites to affect the opinions and priorities of average citizens? Under what circumstances are elites more and less likely to be successful in altering public opinion? What are the consequences of elite influence on public opinion for democratic accountability?

2. The question central to empirical democratic theory, and underlying our more particular concerns in mass behavior, parties, interest groups, and elections more generally, is whether, and in what ways, the inputs to the democratic process have a tangible relationship to the outputs, where outputs are defined as either (a) policy outcomes (say, welfare spending), or (b) objective conditions (such as poverty rates or inequality). Discuss what we know about the possible relationships among the factors noted above. In light of that, what general conclusions would you draw for our theoretical interpretation of American politics?

3. The last number of years – say, since 2001 -- has witnessed major events in American history, many, indeed most of which have led to and/or required governmental action and, in turn, affected the American political system in myriad ways (think of 9/11, the “war on terror,” etc., etc.; you choose what you deem the most important events). Drawing on various leading theories of and significant research literature in the field of American politics, provide an assessment of what theory and research “tell us” or provide to us (or DON’T “tell us” or provide to us) in understanding how American governmental institutions or political processes addressed and/or were affected by those events. (These events, and governmental institutions or political processes, are, of course, tremendously complicated and/or interrelated. Do your best, however, to sort out and provide an analytical stance or interpretation -- again, grounded in American politics research.)

4. In contemporary American politics, the ongoing struggle for power between Congress and the presidency has shifted toward the executive. How does the political science literature explain the current state of this power struggle? Be sure to consider, in addition to external events, the structure and history of the institutions themselves, as well as the role of other actors (e.g., parties, the courts, interest groups, voters, the mass media).
Mass Behavior Sub-Field - The student must answer **ONE** of the following. Be sure to indicate which question you are answering.

1. Voting is a central aspect of any democratic society. Trace the developments in the American politics literature about the process by which voters make the decision to participate, as well as their actual vote choice. How do the conclusions from this literature help us understand candidates' electoral behavior?

2. The effect of the media on public opinion has a long and rich intellectual tradition. Despite the fact that media bias is much discussed in the media, it has received little attention from academics. Drawing upon the literature on public opinion, political behavior, and the media (or markets), provide theoretical reasons for and against the existence or type of media bias. After laying out the reasoning for or against media, propose an empirical strategy for detecting the presence of media bias.
Part One General – Each student must answer TWO of the Following. Make sure to indicate clearly which question you are answering.

1. As late as summer 2006, a majority of Americans believed that at the time the U.S. entered Iraq, Saddam Hussein was in possession of weapons of mass destruction. What do we know about the ability of political elites to affect the opinions and priorities of average citizens? Under what circumstances are elites more and less likely to be successful in altering public opinion? What are the consequences of elite influence on public opinion for democratic accountability?

2. The question central to empirical democratic theory, and underlying our more particular concerns in mass behavior, parties, interest groups, and elections more generally, is whether, and in what ways, the inputs to the democratic process have a tangible relationship to the outputs, where outputs are defined as either (a) policy outcomes (say, welfare spending), or (b) objective conditions (such as poverty rates or inequality). Discuss what we know about the possible relationships among the factors noted above. In light of that, what general conclusions would you draw for our theoretical interpretation of American politics?

3. The last number of years – say, since 2001 -- has witnessed major events in American history, many, indeed most of which have led to and/or required governmental action and, in turn, affected the American political system in myriad ways (think of 9/11, the “war on terror,” etc., etc.; you choose what you deem the most important events). Drawing on various leading theories of and significant research literature in the field of American politics, provide an assessment of what theory and research “tell us” or provide to us (or DON’T “tell us” or provide to us) in understanding how American governmental institutions or political processes addressed and/or were affected by those events.

(These events, and governmental institutions or political processes, are, of course, tremendously complicated and/or interrelated. Do your best, however, to sort out and provide an analytical stance or interpretation -- again, grounded in American politics research.)

4. In contemporary American politics, the ongoing struggle for power between Congress and the presidency has shifted toward the executive. How does the political science literature explain the current state of this power struggle? Be sure to consider, in addition to external events, the structure and history of the institutions themselves, as well as the role of other actors (e.g., parties, the courts, interest groups, voters, the mass media).
Dem. Theory Sub –Field – The student must answer ONE of the following. Be sure to indicate which question you are answering.

Roos
1. From Madison to Arrow, Economics has played an important role in the construction of democratic theory. Drawing upon the relevant literatures, assess what you think are the strengths and weaknesses of economic theory in democratic theory. Include a discussion of at least two dimensions; A) the economic phenomena as independent variables, B) economic phenomena as alternative allocative mechanisms, (i.e. markets) C) economic theory and its methodological assumptions as a paradigm for constructing political democratic theory.

2. Probably the leading democratic theorist of the day is Robert Dahl. What is Dahl's theory of democracy? How well does America rate as a democracy? Drawing on what you know of American politics discuss an aspect of the performance of the political system that Dahl does not discuss and assess its implications for his theory. Finally, assess the adequacy of Dahl's theory, not only for its fit with empirical political systems but also for its normative commitments.
Part One General – Each student must answer TWO of the Following. Make sure to indicate clearly which question you are answering.

1. As late as summer 2006, a majority of Americans believed that at the time the U.S. entered Iraq, Saddam Hussein was in possession of weapons of mass destruction. What do we know about the ability of political elites to affect the opinions and priorities of average citizens? Under what circumstances are elites more and less likely to be successful in altering public opinion? What are the consequences of elite influence on public opinion for democratic accountability?

2. The question central to empirical democratic theory, and underlying our more particular concerns in mass behavior, parties, interest groups, and elections more generally, is whether, and in what ways, the inputs to the democratic process have a tangible relationship to the outputs, where outputs are defined as either (a) policy outcomes (say, welfare spending), or (b) objective conditions (such as poverty rates or inequality). Discuss what we know about the possible relationships among the factors noted above. In light of that, what general conclusions would you draw for our theoretical interpretation of American politics?

3. The last number of years – say, since 2001 -- has witnessed major events in American history, many, indeed most of which have led to and/or required governmental action and, in turn, affected the American political system in myriad ways (think of 9/11, the “war on terror,” etc., etc.; you choose what you deem the most important events). Drawing on various leading theories of and significant research literature in the field of American politics, provide an assessment of what theory and research “tell us” or provide to us (or DON’T “tell us” or provide to us) in understanding how American governmental institutions or political processes addressed and/or were affected by those events.

(These events, and governmental institutions or political processes, are, of course, tremendously complicated and/or interrelated. Do your best, however, to sort out and provide an analytical stance or interpretation -- again, grounded in American politics research.)

4. In contemporary American politics, the ongoing struggle for power between Congress and the presidency has shifted toward the executive. How does the political science literature explain the current state of this power struggle? Be sure to consider, in addition to external events, the structure and history of the institutions themselves, as well as the role of other actors (e.g., parties, the courts, interest groups, voters, the mass media).
Parties Sub-Field - The student must answer **ONE** of the following. Be sure to indicate which question you are answering.

1. Most scholars agree that the Democratic and Republican parties have become more polarized during the past thirty years. However there is less agreement about the sources and depth of this partisan divide. Scholars also disagree about the consequences of partisan polarization. On what grounds have scholars argued that America is polarized? What factors have contributed to this polarization? How have the changes in the party system over the past three decades affected governance in the United States? Is contemporary partisan rancor a new development or part of a reoccurring historical pattern?

2. Do parties matter? If so, how? Specifically, your essay should consider whether and how parties matter for: electoral choice and voter mobilization; candidate selection and behavior; the choices and actions of members of Congress, Supreme Court justices, and presidents; and policy outcomes and political decision-making. For all of these areas, your essay should address both whether and how parties matter in the present context and how their role has shifted over time.
Part One General – Each student must answer TWO of the Following. Make sure to indicate clearly which question you are answering.

1. As late as summer 2006, a majority of Americans believed that at the time the U.S. entered Iraq, Saddam Hussein was in possession of weapons of mass destruction. What do we know about the ability of political elites to affect the opinions and priorities of average citizens? Under what circumstances are elites more and less likely to be successful in altering public opinion? What are the consequences of elite influence on public opinion for democratic accountability?

2. The question central to empirical democratic theory, and underlying our more particular concerns in mass behavior, parties, interest groups, and elections more generally, is whether, and in what ways, the inputs to the democratic process have a tangible relationship to the outputs, where outputs are defined as either (a) policy outcomes (say, welfare spending), or (b) objective conditions (such as poverty rates or inequality). Discuss what we know about the possible relationships among the factors noted above. In light of that, what general conclusions would you draw for our theoretical interpretation of American politics?

3. The last number of years – say, since 2001 -- has witnessed major events in American history, many, indeed most of which have led to and/or required governmental action and, in turn, affected the American political system in myriad ways (think of 9/11, the “war on terror,” etc., etc.; you choose what you deem the most important events). Drawing on various leading theories of and significant research literature in the field of American politics, provide an assessment of what theory and research “tell us” or provide to us (or DON’T “tell us” or provide to us) in understanding how American governmental institutions or political processes addressed and/or were affected by those events.

   (These events, and governmental institutions or political processes, are, of course, tremendously complicated and/or interrelated. Do your best, however, to sort out and provide an analytical stance or interpretation -- again, grounded in American politics research.)

4. In contemporary American politics, the ongoing struggle for power between Congress and the presidency has shifted toward the executive. How does the political science literature explain the current state of this power struggle? Be sure to consider, in addition to external events, the structure and history of the institutions themselves, as well as the role of other actors (e.g., parties, the courts, interest groups, voters, the mass media).
Representation Sub-Field - The student must answer **ONE** of the following. Be sure to indicate which question you are answering.

1. Discuss the research that ties political participation (as an independent variable) to improved policy representation. Then discuss the work that links policy representation (as an independent variable) to political participation. Finally, propose a research design to disentangle the directionality of this relationship.

2. Discuss the factors affecting why we might expect that the relationship between citizens' preferences and government action will vary for different branches of government. Then, what does the evidence say? Finally, discuss the normative implications.
1. As late as summer 2006, a majority of Americans believed that at the time the U.S. entered Iraq, Saddam Hussein was in possession of weapons of mass destruction. What do we know about the ability of political elites to affect the opinions and priorities of average citizens? Under what circumstances are elites more and less likely to be successful in altering public opinion? What are the consequences of elite influence on public opinion for democratic accountability?

2. The question central to empirical democratic theory, and underlying our more particular concerns in mass behavior, parties, interest groups, and elections more generally, is whether, and in what ways, the inputs to the democratic process have a tangible relationship to the outputs, where outputs are defined as either (a) policy outcomes (say, welfare spending), or (b) objective conditions (such as poverty rates or inequality). Discuss what we know about the possible relationships among the factors noted above. In light of that, what general conclusions would you draw for our theoretical interpretation of American politics?

3. The last number of years – say, since 2001 -- has witnessed major events in American history, many, indeed most of which have led to and/or required governmental action and, in turn, affected the American political system in myriad ways (think of 9/11, the “war on terror,” etc., etc.; you choose what you deem the most important events). Drawing on various leading theories of and significant research literature in the field of American politics, provide an assessment of what theory and research “tell us” or provide to us (or DON’T “tell us” or provide to us) in understanding how American governmental institutions or political processes addressed and/or were affected by those events. (These events, and governmental institutions or political processes, are, of course, tremendously complicated and/or interrelated. Do your best, however, to sort out and provide an analytical stance or interpretation -- again, grounded in American politics research.)

4. In contemporary American politics, the ongoing struggle for power between Congress and the presidency has shifted toward the executive. How does the political science literature explain the current state of this power struggle? Be sure to consider, in addition to external events, the structure and history of the institutions themselves, as well as the role of other actors (e.g., parties, the courts, interest groups, voters, the mass media).
Mass Behavior Sub-Field - The student must answer **ONE** of the following. Be sure to indicate which question you are answering.

1. Voting is a central aspect of any democratic society. Trace the developments in the American politics literature about the process by which voters make the decision to participate, as well as their actual vote choice. How do the conclusions from this literature help us understand candidates' electoral behavior?

2. The effect of the media on public opinion has a long and rich intellectual tradition. Despite the fact that media bias is much discussed in the media, it has received little attention from academics. Drawing upon the literature on public opinion, political behavior, and the media (or markets), provide theoretical reasons for and against the existence or type of media bias. After laying out the reasoning for or against media, propose an empirical strategy for detecting the presence of media bias.
Part One General – Each student must answer TWO of the Following. Make sure to indicate clearly which question you are answering.

1. As late as summer 2006, a majority of Americans believed that at the time the U.S. entered Iraq, Saddam Hussein was in possession of weapons of mass destruction. What do we know about the ability of political elites to affect the opinions and priorities of average citizens? Under what circumstances are elites more and less likely to be successful in altering public opinion? What are the consequences of elite influence on public opinion for democratic accountability?

2. The question central to empirical democratic theory, and underlying our more particular concerns in mass behavior, parties, interest groups, and elections more generally, is whether, and in what ways, the inputs to the democratic process have a tangible relationship to the outputs, where outputs are defined as either (a) policy outcomes (say, welfare spending), or (b) objective conditions (such as poverty rates or inequality). Discuss what we know about the possible relationships among the factors noted above. In light of that, what general conclusions would you draw for our theoretical interpretation of American politics?

3. The last number of years – say, since 2001 -- has witnessed major events in American history, many, indeed most of which have led to and/or required governmental action and, in turn, affected the American political system in myriad ways (think of 9/11, the “war on terror,” etc., etc.; you choose what you deem the most important events). Drawing on various leading theories of and significant research literature in the field of American politics, provide an assessment of what theory and research “tell us” or provide to us (or DON’T “tell us” or provide to us) in understanding how American governmental institutions or political processes addressed and/or were affected by those events.

(These events, and governmental institutions or political processes, are, of course, tremendously complicated and/or interrelated. Do your best, however, to sort out and provide an analytical stance or interpretation -- again, grounded in American politics research.)

4. In contemporary American politics, the ongoing struggle for power between Congress and the presidency has shifted toward the executive. How does the political science literature explain the current state of this power struggle? Be sure to consider, in addition to external events, the structure and history of the institutions themselves, as well as the role of other actors (e.g., parties, the courts, interest groups, voters, the mass media).
Race and Ethnicity Sub-Field - The student must answer ONE of the following. Be sure to indicate which question you are answering.

1. Construct an essay that examines the relevant issues related to political participation along racial and ethnic lines in America. Are there significant differences between groups? If not, why? If so, along what dimensions of political behavior are these differences the most significant? Moreover, what explains these gaps? Should we expect relevant gaps to close over time?

2. Despite general impressions about the importance of race/ethnicity in American politics, historically but also into the present, there are ongoing scholarly (and popular) debates about whether (and, if so, how) “race matters”?

Engage this debate directly by drawing on what you deem appropriate analytical frameworks (and extending and/or modifying frameworks if and as desirable) to examine the issue of whether (and, if so, how) “race matters” in contemporary American politics. In doing so, you might, perhaps should focus on any two or three or so of several areas or subfields of American politics (e.g., public opinion, voting behavior, the party system, institutions, interest groups, etc., etc.) you believe most important and helpful in addressing the question. Include in your discussion a consideration, and careful explanation thereof, regarding how and how much race matters in assessing the overall “quality of democracy” in the United States.
American Comprehensive Exam
Joshua Bandoch

Part One: General

Answer two of the following questions. Indicate clearly which question is answered by each essay.

1. The political representation and incorporation of traditionally excluded groups in American politics (what has been termed “democratic inclusion”) has been a recurrent challenge and concern throughout American history. Drawing from the literature on American politics, how would you describe the current state of democratic inclusion for women and people of color? Where has progress been made, and where is progress still necessary? How do you explain the uneven and incomplete nature of inclusion? Or would you argue that inclusion is complete? Your answer should consider such facets of democratic inclusion as political participation, representation, and influence over political and policy outcomes.

2. Discuss the role of elections in a representative democracy, including work on elections and accountability, political knowledge and interest among the mass public, the effects of campaigns, etc. Be certain to incorporate empirical studies as well as work on democratic theory.

3. How do citizens formulate their orientations toward public policies and political issues? In other words, do people respond to political controversies on the basis of self-interest, rational benefit/cost calculations, emotional reactions, long-term predispositions, or what? And, what is the “quality” of the resultant issue attitudes? That is, are mass preferences well-formed, consistent, reasoned judgments? Or, are they shallow, disorganized, and fragmentary reactions to superficial messages from the “political world?” Your essay should be constructed around prominent concepts in the field of public opinion; however, it would also be useful if you can illustrate your general arguments with evidence pertaining to mass attitudes on specific political issues.

4. In a political system purported to be (highly) democratic -- such as the United States -- public opinion should presumably matter a great deal in the policy decisions of government. Is this actually the case? Address this question by summarizing and assessing some of what you deem the most relevant and important research literature on public opinion and policy responsiveness in U.S. national and/or state politics. To the extent there is responsiveness, explain how and why this occurs, as argued in major scholarly analyses. To the extent it is not the case, how and why is that so? That is, to the extent the U.S. political system does, or does not, achieve “full” or authentic democracy as indicated by the importance of public opinion on political outcomes, explain that by carefully drawing on and analyzing research that speaks to these questions.
Democratic Theory Sub-field

Answer one of the following questions, indicating clearly which one you have chosen.

1. Some theorists have argued that the basis of conflict in American Democracy is stable, and centers on property. (i.e. Madison and Beard in different ways.) Others argue that the basis of conflict is unstable, with issues and formulation of issues changing to provide benefit to political entrepreneurs. (i.e. Arrow, Riker, some theories of spatial modeling.) Outline the two basic theoretical approaches, and argue which you think best characterizes American Democracy.

2. As a known expert on the political thought of James Madison, you have been asked by the editors of Vanity Fair to write a longish article reviewing from Madison's perspective the most important instances of democratic theory produced in the 20th Century.
Part One: General

Answer two of the following questions. Indicate clearly which question is answered by each essay.

1. The political representation and incorporation of traditionally excluded groups in American politics (what has been termed “democratic inclusion”) has been a recurrent challenge and concern throughout American history. Drawing from the literature on American politics, how would you describe the current state of democratic inclusion for women and people of color? Where has progress been made, and where is progress still necessary? How do you explain the uneven and incomplete nature of inclusion? Or would you argue that inclusion is complete? Your answer should consider such facets of democratic inclusion as political participation, representation, and influence over political and policy outcomes.

2. Discuss the role of elections in a representative democracy, including work on elections and accountability, political knowledge and interest among the mass public, the effects of campaigns, etc. Be certain to incorporate empirical studies as well as work on democratic theory.

3. How do citizens formulate their orientations toward public policies and political issues? In other words, do people respond to political controversies on the basis of self-interest, rational benefit/cost calculations, emotional reactions, long-term predispositions, or what? And, what is the “quality” of the resultant issue attitudes? That is, are mass preferences well-formed, consistent, reasoned judgments? Or, are they shallow, disorganized, and fragmentary reactions to superficial messages from the “political world?” Your essay should be constructed around prominent concepts in the field of public opinion; however, it would also be useful if you can illustrate your general arguments with evidence pertaining to mass attitudes on specific political issues.

4. In a political system purported to be (highly) democratic -- such as the United States -- public opinion should presumably matter a great deal in the policy decisions of government. Is this actually the case? Address this question by summarizing and assessing some of what you deem the most relevant and important research literature on public opinion and policy responsiveness in U.S. national and/or state politics. To the extent there is responsiveness, explain how and why this occurs, as argued in major scholarly analyses. To the extent it is not the case, how and why is that so? That is, to the extent the U.S. political system does, or does not, achieve “full” or authentic democracy as indicated by the importance of public opinion on political outcomes, explain that by carefully drawing on and analyzing research that speaks to these questions.
Answer one of the following questions, indicating clearly which one you have chosen.

1. Scholars continue to debate whether American political parties are in a period of decline or resurgence, and the extent to which strong parties help make our political system more democratic. Review the arguments for party decline and party resurgence, focusing on how this literature evaluates the roles that parties play in facilitating the representational relationship between citizens and their government. Are American parties declining or resurgent? Then assess the consequences for American politics of strong or weak parties. Are stronger parties better for American democracy? Why or why not?

2. Political parties are relevant to understanding the nature and extent of democracy and representation in U.S. (national) politics as well as in the American states. Critically assess -- i.e., systematically compare and contrast -- the research literature on parties at the national and state levels. Identify how the questions addressed, the major findings, and the implications thereof are similar and/or different when we consider national and state party systems. In your estimation, what does this mean for the role and importance of parties and for democracy in the larger political system? Explain carefully.
American Comprehensive Exam
Matthew Holbreich

Part One: General

Answer two of the following questions. Indicate clearly which question is answered by each essay.

1. The political representation and incorporation of traditionally excluded groups in American politics (what has been termed “democratic inclusion”) has been a recurrent challenge and concern throughout American history. Drawing from the literature on American politics, how would you describe the current state of democratic inclusion for women and people of color? Where has progress been made, and where is progress still necessary? How do you explain the uneven and incomplete nature of inclusion? Or would you argue that inclusion is complete? Your answer should consider such facets of democratic inclusion as political participation, representation, and influence over political and policy outcomes.

2. Discuss the role of elections in a representative democracy, including work on elections and accountability, political knowledge and interest among the mass public, the effects of campaigns, etc. Be certain to incorporate empirical studies as well as work on democratic theory.

3. How do citizens formulate their orientations toward public policies and political issues? In other words, do people respond to political controversies on the basis of self-interest, rational benefit/cost calculations, emotional reactions, long-term predispositions, or what? And, what is the “quality” of the resultant issue attitudes? That is, are mass preferences well-formed, consistent, reasoned judgments? Or, are they shallow, disorganized, and fragmentary reactions to superficial messages from the “political world”? Your essay should be constructed around prominent concepts in the field of public opinion; however, it would also be useful if you can illustrate your general arguments with evidence pertaining to mass attitudes on specific political issues.

4. In a political system purported to be (highly) democratic -- such as the United States -- public opinion should presumably matter a great deal in the policy decisions of government. Is this actually the case? Address this question by summarizing and assessing some of what you deem the most relevant and important research literature on public opinion and policy responsiveness in U.S. national and/or state politics. To the extent there is responsiveness, explain how and why this occurs, as argued in major scholarly analyses. To the extent it is not the case, how and why is that so? That is, to the extent the U.S. political system does, or does not, achieve “full” or authentic democracy as indicated by the importance of public opinion on political outcomes, explain that by carefully drawing on and analyzing research that speaks to these questions.
Public Law Sub-field

Answer one of the following questions, indicating clearly which one you have chosen.

1. “Originalism” emerged as a normative theory of constitutional interpretation in reaction to leading decisions of the Warren Court. Different understandings of originalism developed over the years, however, and now some originalists defend the Warren Court. Outline at least three understandings of originalism and show which ones can and cannot serve as platforms for criticizing the Warren Court.

2. Assess the strengths and/or weaknesses of the attitudinal model of decision-making on the Supreme Court in the light of your knowledge of American constitutional doctrine and the methodologies employed by the justices to decide cases and controversies arising under the Constitution.
American Comprehensive Exam  
Kasey Swanke

Part One: General

Answer two of the following questions. Indicate clearly which question is answered by each essay.

1. The political representation and incorporation of traditionally excluded groups in American politics (what has been termed “democratic inclusion”) has been a recurrent challenge and concern throughout American history. Drawing from the literature on American politics, how would you describe the current state of democratic inclusion for women and people of color? Where has progress been made, and where is progress still necessary? How do you explain the uneven and incomplete nature of inclusion? Or would you argue that inclusion is complete? Your answer should consider such facets of democratic inclusion as political participation, representation, and influence over political and policy outcomes.

2. Discuss the role of elections in a representative democracy, including work on elections and accountability, political knowledge and interest among the mass public, the effects of campaigns, etc. Be certain to incorporate empirical studies as well as work on democratic theory.

3. How do citizens formulate their orientations toward public policies and political issues? In other words, do people respond to political controversies on the basis of self-interest, rational benefit/cost calculations, emotional reactions, long-term predispositions, or what? And, what is the “quality” of the resultant issue attitudes? That is, are mass preferences well-formed, consistent, reasoned judgments? Or, are they shallow, disorganized, and fragmentary reactions to superficial messages from the “political world?” Your essay should be constructed around prominent concepts in the field of public opinion; however, it would also be useful if you can illustrate your general arguments with evidence pertaining to mass attitudes on specific political issues.

4. In a political system purported to be (highly) democratic -- such as the United States -- public opinion should presumably matter a great deal in the policy decisions of government. Is this actually the case? Address this question by summarizing and assessing some of what you deem the most relevant and important research literature on public opinion and policy responsiveness in U.S. national and/or state politics. To the extent there is responsiveness, explain how and why this occurs, as argued in major scholarly analyses. To the extent it is not the case, how and why is that so? That is, to the extent the U.S. political system does, or does not, achieve “full” or authentic democracy as indicated by the importance of public opinion on political outcomes, explain that by carefully drawing on and analyzing research that speaks to these questions.
Mass Behavior and Public Opinion Sub-field

Answer one of the following questions, indicating clearly which one you have chosen.

1. After a long period of neglect, more and more research empirical research has been dedicated to the ways in which religion affects both behavior and public opinion. Write an essay in which you discuss at least one (but preferably more than one) general theoretical question in the behavior/public opinion literature which a study of religion, religious institutions, etc. has helped to answer, or can help to answer.

2. Political behavior relies heavily upon surveys to measure behaviors, motivations, and opinion. Unfortunately, response rates to surveys are often low and people worry that respondents and non-respondents differ in important ways. Please explain theoretically which topics are confounded by non-response bias and which topics are largely immune to the problem. Then, describe how non-response bias would affect the established empirical results of at least one important literature in American politics.
American Comprehensive Exam
Felix Valenzuela

Part One: General

Answer two of the following questions. Indicate clearly which question is answered by each essay.

1. The political representation and incorporation of traditionally excluded groups in American politics (what has been termed “democratic inclusion”) has been a recurrent challenge and concern throughout American history. Drawing from the literature on American politics, how would you describe the current state of democratic inclusion for women and people of color? Where has progress been made, and where is progress still necessary? How do you explain the uneven and incomplete nature of inclusion? Or would you argue that inclusion is complete? Your answer should consider such facets of democratic inclusion as political participation, representation, and influence over political and policy outcomes.

2. Discuss the role of elections in a representative democracy, including work on elections and accountability, political knowledge and interest among the mass public, the effects of campaigns, etc. Be certain to incorporate empirical studies as well as work on democratic theory.

3. How do citizens formulate their orientations toward public policies and political issues? In other words, do people respond to political controversies on the basis of self-interest, rational benefit/cost calculations, emotional reactions, long-term predispositions, or what? And, what is the “quality” of the resultant issue attitudes? That is, are mass preferences well-formed, consistent, reasoned judgments? Or, are they shallow, disorganized, and fragmentary reactions to superficial messages from the “political world?” Your essay should be constructed around prominent concepts in the field of public opinion; however, it would also be useful if you can illustrate your general arguments with evidence pertaining to mass attitudes on specific political issues.

4. In a political system purported to be (highly) democratic -- such as the United States -- public opinion should presumably matter a great deal in the policy decisions of government. Is this actually the case? Address this question by summarizing and assessing some of what you deem the most relevant and important research literature on public opinion and policy responsiveness in U.S. national and/or state politics. To the extent there is responsiveness, explain how and why this occurs, as argued in major scholarly analyses. To the extent it is not the case, how and why is that so? That is, to the extent the U.S. political system does, or does not, achieve “full” or authentic democracy as indicated by the importance of public opinion on political outcomes, explain that by carefully drawing on and analyzing research that speaks to these questions.
Public Law Sub-field

Answer one of the following questions, indicating clearly which one you have chosen.

1. “Originalism” emerged as a normative theory of constitutional interpretation in reaction to leading decisions of the Warren Court. Different understandings of originalism developed over the years, however, and now some originalists defend the Warren Court. Outline at least three understandings of originalism and show which ones can and cannot serve as platforms for criticizing the Warren Court.

2. Assess the strengths and/or weaknesses of the attitudinal model of decision-making on the Supreme Court in the light of your knowledge of American constitutional doctrine and the methodologies employed by the justices to decide cases and controversies arising under the Constitution.
American Comprehensive Exam
Kate Schuenke

Part One: General

Answer two of the following questions. Indicate clearly which question is answered by each essay.

1. The political representation and incorporation of traditionally excluded groups in American politics (what has been termed “democratic inclusion”) has been a recurrent challenge and concern throughout American history. Drawing from the literature on American politics, how would you describe the current state of democratic inclusion for women and people of color? Where has progress been made, and where is progress still necessary? How do you explain the uneven and incomplete nature of inclusion? Or would you argue that inclusion is complete? Your answer should consider such facets of democratic inclusion as political participation, representation, and influence over political and policy outcomes.

2. Discuss the role of elections in a representative democracy, including work on elections and accountability, political knowledge and interest among the mass public, the effects of campaigns, etc. Be certain to incorporate empirical studies as well as work on democratic theory.

3. How do citizens formulate their orientations toward public policies and political issues? In other words, do people respond to political controversies on the basis of self-interest, rational benefit/cost calculations, emotional reactions, long-term predispositions, or what? And, what is the “quality” of the resultant issue attitudes? That is, are mass preferences well-formed, consistent, reasoned judgments? Or, are they shallow, disorganized, and fragmentary reactions to superficial messages from the “political world”? Your essay should be constructed around prominent concepts in the field of public opinion; however, it would also be useful if you can illustrate your general arguments with evidence pertaining to mass attitudes on specific political issues.

4. In a political system purported to be (highly) democratic -- such as the United States -- public opinion should presumably matter a great deal in the policy decisions of government. Is this actually the case? Address this question by summarizing and assessing some of what you deem the most relevant and important research literature on public opinion and policy responsiveness in U.S. national and/or state politics. To the extent there is responsiveness, explain how and why this occurs, as argued in major scholarly analyses. To the extent it is not the case, how and why is that so? That is, to the extent the U.S. political system does, or does not, achieve “full” or authentic democracy as indicated by the importance of public opinion on political outcomes, explain that by carefully drawing on and analyzing research that speaks to these questions.
Parties and Interest Groups Sub-field

Answer one of the following questions, indicating clearly which one you have chosen.

1. Scholars continue to debate whether American political parties are in a period of decline or resurgence, and the extent to which strong parties help make our political system more democratic. Review the arguments for party decline and party resurgence, focusing on how this literature evaluates the roles that parties play in facilitating the representational relationship between citizens and their government. Are American parties declining or resurgent? Then assess the consequences for American politics of strong or weak parties. Are stronger parties better for American democracy? Why or why not?

2. Citizens and presidential candidates alike bemoan the influence of “special interests” in American politics, yet political scientists have often struggled to produce systematic evidence of interest group influence on political decision making in the United States. Review the research on the form and consequence of interest group influence in American politics. What are the conclusions we can draw from this literature, and what are the roadblocks to greater progress in this research area? Then propose your own research design for answering the question, Do interest groups influence the outcome of American public policy?
Write on one question from each of the three sections. Indicate clearly which question you are answering.

American Democracy

(1) At its most basic level, most of the empirical work on American politics is concerned with the question of whether the American political system actually functions according to democratic ideals. In particular, representation is a central concern. According to the empirical literature on American politics, does the American political system represent the interests of the American people? How and why? How and why not? Your answer should consider the potential for, evidence of, and mechanisms for representation. What does theory and empirical evidence suggest about the quality of representative democracy in the United States?

(2) The goals of political actors, and the ways in which the actions undertaken in pursuit of those goals shape the operation of American government, are recurring themes of the literature on American politics. Describe and discuss/critique the goals scholars have imputed to three different political actors, the ways in which American political institutions affect, and are affected by, these actors’ goals, and the implications of this work for our understanding of the functioning of American government, especially vis-à-vis democratic principles.

Institutions

(1) Much attention in the study of Congress in recent years has focused on the way in which particularism in re-election seeking congresspersons leads to collective dilemmas, and then attempts to theorize how congress does or might find institutional solutions to these collective dilemmas. Compare and contrast how at least three of three of the following authors address these questions; Mancur Olson, Cox and McCubbins, Mayhew, Jacobsen, Douglas Arnold, Lowi. In each, identify the unit of analysis, the motive(s) assumed, the precise nature of the collective dilemma, and the theorized or proposed solution. Include in your analysis your appraisal of the relative strengths of the alternative approaches.
Fred Greenstein observes "that a modifier such as 'modern' is needed to characterize the post-1932 manifestations . . . that had evolved from the . . . circumscribed traditional presidency."

What are the "manifestations" that distinguish the "modern" presidency from an earlier form of the institution? How can we explain the development of those new characteristics within the presidency? Compare and contrast explanations for the evolution of the modern presidency that you find in the work of three of the following: Theodore Lowi, Sidney Milkis, Stephen Skowronek, and Jeffrey Tulis.

Constitutional Law and Interpretation

(1) Compare any substantive or doctrinal area of American constitutional case law with the constitutional experience of other nations (e.g., Canada, Germany, and/or European Court of Human Rights). Your response should consider sources of constitutional interpretation, methods of judicial review, and underlying normative values or perspectives. Conclude your response with reflections on how comparative constitutional law might be used as an aid in the interpretation of the United States Constitution.

(2) How does the rise of plebiscitary institutions in California either alter or confirm Madison's view of both the functions and the social pre-conditions of constitutional institutions?

(3) What is the basic normative relationship between constitutional government and religion in America? Is "neutrality" the key concept of a successful answer? Would "subordination" be a more honest term? Defend your answer.
American Democracy

(1) At its most basic level, most of the empirical work on American politics is concerned with the question of whether the American political system actually functions according to democratic ideals. In particular, representation is a central concern. According to the empirical literature on American politics, does the American political system represent the interests of the American people? How and why? How and why not? Your answer should consider the potential for, evidence of, and mechanisms for representation. What does theory and empirical evidence suggest about the quality of representative democracy in the United States?

(2) The goals of political actors, and the ways in which the actions undertaken in pursuit of those goals shape the operation of American government, are recurring themes of the literature on American politics. Describe and discuss/critique the goals scholars have imputed to three different political actors, the ways in which American political institutions affect, and are affected by, these actors’ goals, and the implications of this work for our understanding of the functioning of American government, especially vis-à-vis democratic principles.

Institutions

(1) Much attention in the study of Congress in recent years has focused on the way in which particularism in re-election seeking congresspersons leads to collective dilemmas, and then attempts to theorize how congress does or might find institutional solutions to these collective dilemmas. Compare and contrast how at least three of three of the following authors address these questions; Mancur Olson, Cox and McCubbins, Mayhew, Jacobsen, Douglas Arnold, Lowi. In each, identify the unit of analysis, the motive(s) assumed, the precise nature of the collective dilemma, and the theorized or proposed solution. Include in your analysis your appraisal of the relative strengths of the alternative approaches.
(2) Fred Greenstein observes "that a modifier such as 'modern' is needed to characterize the post-1932 manifestations . . . that had evolved from the . . . circumscribed traditional presidency."

What are the "manifestations" that distinguish the "modern" presidency from an earlier form of the institution? How can we explain the development of those new characteristics within the presidency? Compare and contrast explanations for the evolution of the modern presidency that you find in the work of three of the following: Theodore Lowi, Sidney Milkis, Stephen Skowronek, and Jeffrey Tulis.

Constitutional Law and Interpretation

(1) Sotiros Barber has recently claimed that the enterprise of post-New Deal Constitutional theory has come to an end, a recognized failure. That theory was characterized, says Barber, by the attempt to justify judicial review and more broadly, the large role of the judiciary in American politics not as contrary to democratic principle, but as a higher or true realization of "democracy properly understood."

• Is Barber correct to characterize the main efforts in constitutional theory in the post-New Deal period (e.g. Ely Perry, Dworkin) in this way?
• Is he correct to say it has failed (and is recognized to have failed)?
• Does more recent constitutional theory (e.g. Barber himself, Moore, Zuckert, Tushnet, Kahn) bear out Barber’s view that constitutional theory has become importantly different from what it was? (You need not feel obligated to write on all the authors cited in this question.)

(2) How does the rise of plebiscitary institutions in California either alter or confirm Madison's view of both the functions and the social pre-conditions of constitutional institutions?

(3) What is the basic normative relationship between constitutional government and religion in America? Is "neutrality" the key concept of a successful answer? Would "subordination" be a more honest term? Defend your answer.
American Democracy

1. At its most basic level, most of the empirical work on American politics is concerned with the question of whether the American political system actually functions according to democratic ideals. In particular, representation is a central concern. According to the empirical literature on American politics, does the American political system represent the interests of the American people? How and why? How and why not? Your answer should consider the potential for, evidence of, and mechanisms for representation. What does theory and empirical evidence suggest about the quality of representative democracy in the United States?

2. The goals of political actors, and the ways in which the actions undertaken in pursuit of those goals shape the operation of American government, are recurring themes of the literature on American politics. Describe and discuss/critique the goals scholars have imputed to three different political actors, the ways in which American political institutions affect, and are affected by, these actors’ goals, and the implications of this work for our understanding of the functioning of American government, especially vis-à-vis democratic principles. Finally, what does a focus on goal-oriented behavior contribute to our understanding of American politics?

Institutions

1. "Perhaps the most fundamental change in the presidency over time is that it was democratized, in effect. Having been insulated by design from democratic impulses, over time it has succumbed to those impulses in American politics."

   What are the elements of democratic change to which the quote above alludes? Do you consider these changes to be wholly beneficial for the quality of American politics and governance? Relate the work of three of the following scholars to those changes, and show how these writers help us understand the causes and consequences of the democratization of the presidency: James Ceaser, Samuel Kernell, Theodore Lowi, Richard Neustadt, and Jeffrey Tulis.

2. Drawing upon scholarly literatures where appropriate, discuss the question of presidential power vis-à-vis the Congress. What are the chief definitional questions? What are different approaches to measuring Presidential Power? What are the main variables that affect degree of Presidential power versus Congress?
Constitutional Law and Theory

1. What do the following writers describe as the basic relationship between religion and the American constitutional order? You should relate their views on such questions as the propriety of religious exemption from generally applicable laws and what, if anything, the constitutional system presupposes regarding the intensity of religion relative to other personal commitments typical of Americans. Stephen Carter, Chuck Colson, Walter Berns. Whose position do you think is most faithful to the Constitution and why?

2. Discussions of judicial review often run together considerations of legitimacy and utility. You are being asked here to help disentangle these issues. Assess the institution with regard (a) to whether it is legitimate, paying attention to the different levels and criteria of legitimacy that may be relevant, and (b) whether in its consequences it has been a useful or salutary institution. Be concrete in your discussion of court performance.
Write on one question from each of the three sections. Indicate clearly which question you are answering.

American Democracy

1. At its most basic level, most of the empirical work on American politics is concerned with the question of whether the American political system actually functions according to democratic ideals. In particular, representation is a central concern. According to the empirical literature on American politics, does the American political system represent the interests of the American people? How and why? How and why not? Your answer should consider the potential for, evidence of, and mechanisms for representation. What does theory and empirical evidence suggest about the quality of representative democracy in the United States?

2. The goals of political actors, and the ways in which the actions undertaken in pursuit of those goals shape the operation of American government, are recurring themes of the literature on American politics. Describe and discuss/critique the goals scholars have imputed to three different political actors, the ways in which American political institutions affect, and are affected by, these actors, goals, and the implications of this work for our understanding of the functioning of American government, especially vis-à-vis democratic principles. Finally, what does a focus on goal-oriented behavior contribute to our understanding of American politics?
Institutions

1. Journalists, citizens, and many scholars have long been concerned that the role of organized interests in the United States is biased and undemocratic, both in terms of the shape and content of the interest group universe and its membership, and in terms of the relationship between organized interests and political decision-makers. Yet others have lauded the democratic benefits of group membership and activity. Discuss the major theoretical arguments and empirical evidence for and against these two perspectives. Your answer should consider the multiple ways in which bias may, or may not, characterize the interest group universe and group-government interaction.

2. Much of the literature on the U.S. Congress raises the question of the relationship between motives of individual Congresspersons and overall performance of the legislature. Compare and contrast the way in which at least three of the following authors address the question of individual level motivation, and the way in which they see this as affecting institutional performance; Mayhew, Cox and McCubbins, Jacobsen, Fenno, Poole and Rosenthal, Douglas Arnold. Include in your answer an evaluation of the relative strengths and different approaches.

Behavior

1. In recent years, scholars and pundits have paid increasing attention to the role of religious organizations and religious values in organizing elections and the American party system. Some say that the cleavage that matters most in the party system of the last twenty years has its roots in religion. Others say that religious values sometimes rationalize other values – e.g., race, gender, patriotism – or economic interests and that the religious divide is only part of what motivates current voting and party politics.

Assess this debate, bringing to bear literatures from religion and politics, voting behavior, and party politics. Discuss at least the following:

(1) In what ways does religion influence partisanship, voting, and public policy?
(2) What limits are placed on the role of religion in American politics?
(3) Is religion the strongest factor, or have economic interests, nationalist concerns, racial and ethnic differences, or differences over gender roles played more important parts in recent Presidential elections?

2. Analyses of political behavior in the U.S. most often emphasize individual level factors. At the same time, we are aware that, as a federal system with states having significant political and policy authority, there are a host of “federalist” and/or within-state factors that shape behavior. Discuss and explain major factors or influences on behavior that emanate from the federal structure and/or within-state characteristics as those have been addressed in research on these questions. How, and how much, does this literature add to our understanding of political behavior? Be specific and explain and support your arguments carefully.
American Democracy

1. At its most basic level, most of the empirical work on American politics is concerned with the question of whether the American political system actually functions according to democratic ideals. In particular, representation is a central concern. According to the empirical literature on American politics, does the American political system represent the interests of the American people? How and why? How and why not? Your answer should consider the potential for, evidence of, and mechanisms for representation. What does theory and empirical evidence suggest about the quality of representative democracy in the United States?

2. The goals of political actors, and the ways in which the actions undertaken in pursuit of those goals shape the operation of American government, are recurring themes of the literature on American politics. Describe and discuss/critique the goals scholars have imputed to three different political actors, the ways in which American political institutions affect, and are affected by, these actors, goals, and the implications of this work for our understanding of the functioning of American government, especially vis-à-vis democratic principles. Finally, what does a focus on goal-oriented behavior contribute to our understanding of American politics?
Institutions

1. "Perhaps the most fundamental change in the presidency over time is that having been designed to be insulated from democratic impulses, over time it has succumbed to democratic impulses in American politics."

What are the elements of change to which the quote above alludes? Relate the work of three of the following scholars to those changes, and show how these writers help us understand the causes and consequences of the democratization of the presidency: James Ceaser, Samuel Kernell, Theodore Lowi, Terry Moe, and Jeffrey Tulis.

2. Political scientists are strongly inclined to believe that “institutions matter.” The American states are characterized by considerable institutional variation, i.e., the formal structural characteristics and authority of the governorship, of legislatures, and of courts (and bureaucracies) vary substantially across the states. Carefully consider any one, or some combination, of these state governmental institutions discussing how, and how much they vary; and what explains that variation. Also, examine how, and how much (if at all) that variation seems to matter in explaining state politics and policy. Explain and support your arguments carefully.

Behavior

1. Analyses of political behavior in the U.S. most often emphasize individual level factors. At the same time, we are aware that, as a federal system with states having significant political and policy authority, there are a host of “federalist” and/or within-state factors that shape behavior. Discuss and explain major factors or influences on behavior that emanate from the federal structure and/or within-state characteristics as those have been addressed in research on these questions. How, and how much, does this literature add to our understanding of political behavior? Be specific and explain and support your arguments carefully.
2. Verba, Schlozman and Brady’s *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics* (1995) is arguably one of the more important works on political participation and behavior in some time. Explain whether (or not) you agree with this assessment, and why? What are the major contributions of this book; delineate and explain thoroughly? How does the work fit within the broader literature on mass behavior and American democracy? What additional questions does the book suggest need and/or ought to be pursued?
Choose one question from each category.

Democracy

(1) At its most basic level, most of the empirical work on American politics is concerned with the question of whether the American political system actually functions according to democratic ideals. In particular, representation is a central concern. According to the empirical literature on American politics, does the American political system represent the interests of the American people? How and why? How and why not? Your answer should consider the potential for, evidence of, and mechanisms for representation. What does theory and empirical evidence suggest about the quality of representative democracy in the United States?

(2) Much of the central literature in American politics is concerned with the way in which purposive political actors create and shape endogenous political institutions to serve their needs (e.g. Mayhew, Cox and McCubbins, Aldrich), and respond to and work within exogenous institutional constraints and structures in pursuit of their objectives (e.g. Murphy, Epstein and Knight, Skowronek). Indeed, the same institutions have aspects that may be alternatively endogenous and exogenous. Discuss and critique the ways in which scholars have argued that purposive political actors both create and shape institutions, and work within institutional constraints. (You are neither limited to the authors mentioned or required to write about any of them, but your essay should show that you recognize and can discuss the important works that speak to this question).

Institutions

(1) Fred Greenstein observes “that a modifier such as ‘modern’ is needed characterize the post-1932 manifestations . . . that had evolved from the . . . circumscribed traditional presidency.” In what respects are these “manifestations” to which Greenstein alludes changes in the scale and organizational forms of the presidency? Describe those organizational changes and explain how they were supportive of other dimensions of what Greenstein means by post-1932 “modern” manifestations in the presidency. In your explanation, be sure to identify the scholarship that you understand as most relevant to expaining the presidency’s modern organizational development.

(2) From the perspective of its responsiveness to popular (democratic) politics, compare and contrast the modern presidency to the presidency conceived by the framers and
specified in the Constitution. Does a presidency engaged in popular politics threaten the Constitution’s conception of the role of the executive? Your essay should consider how the works of James Ceaser, Samuel Kernell, Jeffrey Tulis, and Theodore Lowi help us understand the consequences of a democratized presidency.

Public Law and Jurisprudence

(1) At one time there was a fairly firm consensus that the power of judicial review was a usurped power, of questionable legitimacy in a democratic system. What is the state of scholarly opinion on the legitimacy of judicial review today? Would you attack or defend its presence in the American democratic system?

(2) "Dual federalism" is a judicial doctrine of state-federal relations that contrasts with various nationalist doctrines of federalism, principally John Marshall's and, in modern times, Harry Blackmun's. What does dual federalism hold about the scope of Congress's power vis-a-vis the states? Give a general statement of the history of dual federalism up to the early 1940s. And specify how at least two of the following cases can be said to return to dual federalism: U.S. v. Lopez (1995), Printz v. U.S. (1997), Morrison v. U.S (2000).
Choose one question from each of the following three categories.

Democracy

(1) At its most basic level, most of the empirical work on American politics is concerned with the question of whether the American political system actually functions according to democratic ideals. In particular, representation is a central concern. According to the empirical literature on American politics, does the American political system represent the interests of the American people? How and why? How and why not? Your answer should consider the potential for, evidence of, and mechanisms for representation. What does theory and empirical evidence suggest about the quality of representative democracy in the United States?

(2) Much of the central literature in American politics is concerned with the way in which purposive political actors create and shape endogenous political institutions to serve their needs (e.g. Mayhew, Cox and McCubbins, Aldrich), and respond to and work within exogenous institutional constraints and structures in pursuit of their objectives (e.g. Murphy, Epstein and Knight, Skowronek). Indeed, the same institutions have aspects that may be alternatively endogenous and exogenous. Discuss and critique the ways in which scholars have argued that purposive political actors both create and shape institutions, and work within institutional constraints. (You are neither limited to the authors mentioned or required to write about any of them, but your essay should show that you recognize and can discuss the important works that speak to this question).

Institutions

(1) Journalists, citizens, and many scholars have long been concerned that the role of organized interests in the United States is biased and undemocratic, both in terms of the shape and content of the interest group universe and its membership, and in terms of the relationship between organized interests and political decision makers. Yet others have lauded the democratic benefits of group membership and activity. Discuss the major theoretical arguments and empirical evidence for and against these two perspectives. Your answer should consider the multiple ways in which bias may, or may not, characterize the interest group universe and group—government interaction.

(2) Since the publication of David Mayhew's Congress the Electoral Connection, so called rational choice has been one of the dominant approaches to studying the institution of Congress. Analyze this literature, with special attention to the following:
A) What was the distinctive contribution of Mayhew?
B) Discuss at least two authors after Mayhew who have gone beyond his original work employing a rational choice approach.
C) What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of the rational choice approach to studying Congress?

Mass Behavior

(1) What factors shape American public opinion? What are the mechanisms by which this opinion is translated into electoral results, and what are the individual-level and institutional factors that affect this process? What does your answer say about the quality of democracy in the United States?

(2) What role do political parties play in American elections, and how has this role changed over time? In their organization and effects, how do American parties compare to parties in other democracies? What accounts for any differences?
Choose one question from each of the following three sections.

**Part One: American Democracy**

1. Does the American political system, *as it actually functions*, fulfill the standards of republican democracy, particularly with regard to political equality and representation? Drawing from the empirical literature in American politics, your answer should address the ways in which American political institutions, organizations, and mass behavior do and do not function in ways consistent with generally-accepted norms of democracy. Note that we are not interested in a theoretical defense of certain democratic norms over others (choose a few general ones and move on) but on what political science has had to say about how the system actually functions and whether those conclusions are consistent with our expectations for an ideal democracy.

2. It is commonly believed that the policy preferences of racial minorities in the United States have less of an impact on the policies that government produces than do those of the white majority. Discuss any evidence supporting or refuting this proposition, as well as the various reasons why we might expect it to be true (or false). Finally, develop a research design which would adjudicate between the various reasons that minorities may be underrepresented.

**Part Two: Behavior**

1. There has been much discussion in the contemporary United States about diminishing rates of political participation. Most indicators are down, and a variety of explanations have been offered for the decline. Compare and contrast at least three explanations for the drop-off in political engagement (but drawing on multiple sources, so it is not enough to cite one work that offers more than one explanation). Discuss the merits of the various proposed causes. Recognizing that different explanations can complement one another, which do you find most convincing and why?

2. In *Something Within: Religion in African-American Political Activism*, Harris describes how African American churches mobilize their members into political activity. His theory is focused on the Black Church. Can it, however, be applied more generally? Based on your reading of Harris and other authors who discuss the general links between religious participation and political involvement, which aspects of mobilization within historically African American denominations are unique to the Black Church? Which can be applied to the study of faith-based institutions across different religious traditions?
In your essay, be sure to discuss the various ways that religious organizations facilitate political activity, as well as any ways that they may inhibit it. Also, feel free to discuss relevant differences across religious traditions.

**Part Three: Public Law**

1. Describe the strengths and weaknesses of the following approaches to constitutional interpretation: originalism, textualism, structuralism, doctrine, and moral philosophy. Can these approaches be listed in any order of priority in terms of their neutrality or objectivity? How effective are these methods in keeping an interpreter's personal views out of the process of constitutional decision-making?

2. In a number of recent constitutional cases, Justice Scalia has deplored the Supreme Court's reference to foreign constitutional case law in support of a given judicial outcome. He has dismissed foreign case law as "irrelevant," saying that "comparative analysis is inappropriate to the task of interpreting a constitution." Please comment, underscoring what you think are the legitimate or illegitimate uses (abuses?) of comparative analysis in the interpretation of the United States Constitution.
Choose one question from each of the following three sections.

**Part One: American Democracy**

(1) Does the American political system, *as it actually functions*, fulfill the standards of republican democracy, particularly with regard to political equality and representation? Drawing from the empirical literature in American politics, your answer should address the ways in which American political institutions, organizations, and mass behavior do and do not function in ways consistent with generally-accepted norms of democracy. Note that we are not interested in a theoretical defense of certain democratic norms over others (choose a few general ones and move on) but on what political science has had to say about how the system actually functions and whether those conclusions are consistent with our expectations for democracy.

2. It is commonly believed that the policy preferences of racial minorities in the United States have less of an impact on the policies that government produces than do those of the white majority. Discuss any evidence supporting or refuting this proposition, as well as the various reasons why we might expect it to be true (or false). Finally, develop a research design which would adjudicate between the various reasons that minorities may be underrepresented.

**Part Two: Institutions**

1. Over the last several years, Republicans and Democrats in the Senate have battled over President Bush's judicial nominees. After several failed attempts to invoke cloture on some of the most controversial nominees, Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-TN) put forward a proposal to reduce the number of Senators required to invoke cloture from 60 to a smaller and smaller number, after each failed attempt, until only a bare majority would be needed. Not surprisingly, the Democrats filibustered Frist's proposal to change the filibuster rule.

Discuss the role of the cloture requirement in the Senate. What effect does it have on lawmaking, thinking specifically of the pivotal politics argument by Krehbiel? Can you imagine a circumstance when 60 Senators would agree to reduce the cloture requirement to a bare majority, and how likely is this? Most importantly, what effect would a bare majority cloture requirement on all legislation have on U.S. politics generally, including the likelihood of responsible party government?
2. Arguably, the structures of state governmental institutions reflect and reinforce the goals and values of a polity. Consider the varying structures and related capacities of one (or more) set of state governmental institutions--legislatures, the governorship, or the courts--and critically assess how different structural traits, internal characteristics, or other qualities sustain or encourage various value orientations or preferences. You may also discuss how these structural traits, internal characteristics, and capacities have varied over time and across the states.

Part Three: Behavior

1. There has been much discussion in the contemporary United States about diminishing rates of political participation. Most indicators are down, and a variety of explanations have been offered for the decline. Compare and contrast at least three explanations for the drop-off in political engagement (but drawing on multiple sources, so it is not enough to cite one work that offers more than one explanation). Discuss the merits of the various proposed causes. Recognizing that different explanations can complement one another, which do you find most convincing and why?

2. In Something Within: Religion in African-American Political Activism, Harris describes how African American churches mobilize their members into political activity. His theory is focused on the Black Church. Can it, however, be applied more generally? Based on your reading of Harris and other authors who discuss the general links between religious participation and political involvement, which aspects of mobilization within historically African American denominations are unique to the Black Church? Which can be applied to the study of faith-based institutions across different religious traditions? In your essay, be sure to discuss the various ways that religious organizations facilitate political activity, as well as any ways that they may inhibit it. Also, feel free to discuss relevant differences across religious traditions.
University of Notre Dame
Department of Political Science
Comprehensive Examination in American Politics
January 2004
(Schaal)

Choose one question from each of the following three sections.

**Part One: American Democracy**

1. Does the American political system, as it actually functions, fulfill the standards of republican democracy, particularly with regard to political equality and representation? Drawing from the empirical literature in American politics, your answer should address the ways in which American political institutions, organizations, and mass behavior do and do not function in ways consistent with generally-accepted norms of democracy. Note that we are not interested in a theoretical defense of certain democratic norms over others (choose a few general ones and move on) but on what political science has had to say about how the system actually functions and whether those conclusions are consistent with our expectations for an ideal democracy.

2. It is commonly believed that the policy preferences of racial minorities in the United States have less of an impact on the policies that government produces than do those of the white majority. Discuss any evidence supporting or refuting this proposition, as well as the various reasons why we might expect it to be true (or false). Finally, develop a research design which would adjudicate between the various reasons that minorities may be underrepresented.

**Part Two: Institutions**

1. Over the last several years, Republicans and Democrats in the Senate have battled over President Bush's judicial nominees. After several failed attempts to invoke cloture on some of the most controversial nominees, Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-TN) put forward a proposal to reduce the number of Senators required to invoke cloture from 60 to a smaller and smaller number, after each failed attempt, until only a bare majority would be needed. Not surprisingly, the Democrats filibustered Frist's proposal to change the filibuster rule.

Discuss the role of the cloture requirement in the Senate. What effect does it have on lawmaking, thinking specifically of the pivotal politics argument by Krehbiel? Can you imagine a circumstance when 60 Senators would agree to reduce the cloture requirement to a bare majority, and how likely is this? Most importantly, what effect would a bare majority cloture requirement on all legislation have on U.S. politics generally, including the likelihood of responsible party government?
2. “The most fundamental change in the presidency in American political development is that having been designed as insulated from democratic impulses, over time the office increasingly opened to popular appeals and democratic impulses in American politics.”

What are the elements of democratic change to which this quote refers? Relate the work of at least three of the following scholars to those changes, and show how these writers help us explain the causes and consequences of the democratization of the presidency: James Ceaser, Samuel Kernell, Theodore Lowi, Terry Moe, Stephen Skowronek, and Jeffrey Tulis.

Part Three: Public Law

1. In a number of recent constitutional cases, Justice Scalia has deplored the Supreme Court's reference to foreign constitutional case law in support of a given judicial outcome. He has dismissed foreign case law as "irrelevant," saying that "comparative analysis is inappropriate to the task of interpreting a constitution." Please comment, underscoring what you think are the legitimate or illegitimate uses (abuses?) of comparative analysis in the interpretation of the United States Constitution.

2. Prior to 1950 judicial review -- i.e., the power of a court to review the constitutionality of laws -- was identified almost exclusively with American constitutionalism. Since then judicial review has been adopted by almost all of the world's political democracies. Three questions: A. What explains this phenomenal institutional development? B. Why have most of the world's democracies concentrated the power of judicial review in specialized constitutional courts instead of allowing this power to reside in all judges, as in the United States? C. Can Europe's constitutional tribunals claim a greater measure of democratic legitimacy than the United States Supreme Court?