

Elections and Voting Behavior in the U.S.
Final Exam Review Questions

DIRECTIONS

- *Two* of these seven review questions will appear on your exam. Your essay may address *either one*.
- To receive full credit, your exam essay should be written in well-organized paragraphs composed of complete sentences expressed in standard English.
- Begin your essay with an introductory paragraph (simply rewrite the essay question in your own words so that the reader will know each major point that your essay will discuss). Continue with a body of paragraphs (answering each of the major points raised in the essay question). End with a concluding paragraph (summarizing all of the major points covered).
- You may *not* use any notes or dictionaries to assist you in your essay writing. However, I *will* be happy to answer any questions you may have about spelling, punctuation, grammar, and syntax.
- You will *not* need to bring a "blue book" — a test booklet will be provided.

STUDY HINTS

- Instead of trying to memorize a complete essay for any of the seven **topics, memorize an outline**. Locate the section of the chapter outline that addresses each of the seven topics and construct an outline for each. Review your textbook readings and class notes to expand the detail in each essay's outline.
- Make sure that each outline addresses each point raised in its respective essay question. Each of the seven essay questions raises three to five major points.

GRADING

- The essay you write is worth a total of 50 points. A maximum of 40 points will be awarded for *content*. **It is more important to address every point raised in the essay topic you select than it is to cover fewer points in greater detail.**
- A maximum of 10 points will be awarded for *presentation*. **Make sure to budget adequate time to thoroughly proof read your essay before turning it in.** Significant points will be subtracted for obvious errors such as subject-verb disagreement, confusion of plurals and possessives, and misspelling of commonly used words. **Don't forget to include an introductory paragraph and a concluding paragraph.**

ESSAY QUESTIONS

1. (Wayne, Chapter 8; Abramson et al., Chapter 3) Discuss the process of **converting electoral choice into public policy** by addressing the following points:
 - Give operational definitions for *close* and *landslide* elections.
 - Define and give a 20th-century example of each of the following:
 - realigning elections
 - maintaining elections
 - deviating elections
 - dealigning elections
 - Give examples of inflated presidential expectations produced by media, crises, and presidential ego.
 - Explain and give examples of crippled presidential performance produced by constitutional checks and balances.
 - Analyze and give examples of how at least two contemporary presidents have countered the increasingly adversarial relationship of the media to the president.

2. **(Abramson et al., Chapter 4)** Discuss **why turnout in presidential elections has declined since 1960** by addressing the following points:
 - Factors that have slowed the rate of decline in voter turnout.
 - Factors that have accelerated the rate of decline in voter turnout.
 - Short-term factors positively correlated with voter turnout.
 - The impact of increases in voter cynicism or distrust on voter turnout.
3. **(Abramson et al., Chapter 5)** Discuss **social forces and the vote in the 2000 presidential election** by addressing turnout and vote choice variations within the following group divisions:
 - Race.
 - Ethnicity.
 - Region.
 - Among whites:
 - Gender.
 - Marital status.
 - Age.
 - Social class.
 - Union membership.
 - Religion.
4. **(Abramson et al., Chapter 6)** Discuss **strategic voting among supporters of 3rd-party or independent candidates** by addressing the following points:
 - What is Aldrich's definition of strategic voting among supporters of protest candidates?
 - What is Nader's definition of strategic voting among supporters of protest candidates?
 - Who was the protest candidate and how strategic were his supporters in:
 - 1968?
 - 1980?
 - 1992?
 - 1996?
 - 2000?
5. **(Abramson et al., Chapter 7)** Discuss **retrospective voting in presidential elections** by addressing the following points:
 - Define retrospective voting.
 - Who were the three seminal theorists of retrospective voting and how did their basic notions differ?
 - Discuss how the incumbent status of the presidential candidate can influence how strong retrospective voting is likely to be.
 - Which was a stronger influence on vote choice in the 2000 presidential election: prospective evaluations or retrospective? Why? Which candidate benefitted the most from each?
6. **(Abramson et al., Chapter 8)** Discuss **partisan identification in the voting-age public** by addressing the following points:
 - What percent identified with the Democratic party in 2000? How has this changed since 1960?
 - What percent identified with the Republican party in 2000? How has this changed since 1960?
 - What percent identified as pure or leaning independents in 2000? How has this changed since 1960?
 - What are Aldrich's conclusions about current partisan advantages in presidential and congressional elections? Why does he reach those conclusions?
7. **(Wayne, Chapter 9; Abramson et al., Chapter 12)** Describe each of the following **four proposals to reform the Electoral College**: 1) the automatic plan, 2) the proportional plan, 3) the district plan, and 4) the direct election plan. For *each* reform proposal, discuss the following points:
 - Identify what changes the plan proposes.
 - Give examples of past problems that each change would reduce or eliminate.
 - Evaluate the pro's and con's associated with each change from the current system.
 - If relevant, identify which states or parties would be winners and which losers should that plan be adopted.