

Elections and Voting Behavior in the U.S.  
**Midterm 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 six 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, Ch. 1)** Discuss the **Electoral College** by addressing each of the following points:
  - Identify two *major* Electoral College problems. For each type, identify its root cause and describe an historical example.
  - Identify three *minor* Electoral College problems. For each type, identify its root cause and describe an historical example.
  - Identify a *special-case* Electoral College problem that happened once but will not recur. Identify its root cause and explain why that problem cannot recur.
2. **(Wayne, Ch. 2)** Discuss **federal campaign finance legislation** by addressing each of the following points:
  - Describe the following *key provisions* of the legislation —
    - public disclosure,
    - contribution limits,
    - spending limits,
    - matching and grant funds.
  - Identify, define, and discuss the *three major loopholes* that have allowed these restrictions to be circumvented. Tell how the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002 dealt with *two* of these loopholes.

3. (Wayne, Ch. 3) Discuss **election suffrage and turnout** by addressing each of the following points:
  - Define *election turnout*. What incorrect definition is often mistakenly used by the news media?
  - How has federal election turnout level changed over time?
  - Which level(s) and branch(es) of government defined federal election suffrage prior to the Civil War? After the Civil War? Give examples of each.
  - Identify and discuss institutional, political, psychological, and social factors that influence turnout.
4. (Wayne, Ch. 4; Abramson et al., Ch. 1) Discuss **the impact of national presidential nominating convention delegate–selection rules changes** by addressing each of the following points:
  - Compare the level of voter turnout in nomination contests versus general-election contests.
  - Explain how and why voter turnout varies between primary and caucus states, early and late primaries, and more–versus less–competitive states.
  - Explain how and why voter turnout varies with SES and ideological intensity.
  - How representative of rank–and–file party members (in terms of SES and ideology) are the nominating convention delegates?
  - How have delegate–selection rules changes influenced the rise of political “amateurs” or “purists” and the decline in influence of “regulars” or “pragmatists”?
5. (Wayne, Ch. 5; Abramson et al., Ch. 2) Discuss the **typical characteristics of major–party, presidential and vice–presidential nominees** by addressing each of the following points:
  - Describe the three *formal* criteria written into the Constitution by the founding fathers.
  - Identify and give examples of the three *informal* criteria that also affect the kind of presidential nominees selected by the major parties.
  - Discuss the goals, methods, and problems that result from attempting to “balance the ticket” when selecting the vice presidential nominee.
6. (Wayne, Chapter 6) Discuss **building a winning geographic coalition** in contemporary U.S. presidential election campaigns by addressing the following points:
  - Identify the most *basic objective* of any winning presidential-election campaign and discuss it in the context of the *battle-ground states*:
    - Identify the large-state battlegrounds, i.e., the eleven states with more than 13 electoral votes. How many electoral votes do the large states offer, collectively?
    - Identify the middle-tier-state battlegrounds, i.e., the ten states with 10-to-13 electoral votes. How many electoral votes do the middle-tier states offer, collectively?
  - Discuss *recent trends* in major-party competition in presidential elections by addressing the following points:
    - For the period 1980-2000, how many states were leaning or solidly Democratic, i.e., those that voted Democratic in at least 4 of those six presidential elections? Which of these did not go for Gore in 2000?
    - For the period 1980-2000, how many states were leaning or solidly Republican, i.e., those that voted Republican in at least four of those six presidential elections? How many of those states were won by Bush in 2000?
    - For the period 1980-2000, how many states were competitive, i.e., split 3:3 in the last six presidential elections? Which of these were won by Bush in 1992, Dole in 1996, and Bush in 2000?
  - Discuss the *regional bases* of the two major parties in recent elections by addressing the following:
    - Describe the regional base of the Democratic party, 1980-2000. Identify defecting states that went for Bush in 2000.
    - Describe the regional base of the Republican party, 1980-2000. Identify defecting states that went for Gore in 2000.
7. (Wayne, Chapter 7) Discuss the **role of media politics** in contemporary U.S. presidential elections by addressing the following points:
  - Identify the major *print* news media and discuss their historical development.
  - Identify the major *electronic* news media and discuss their historical development.
  - Compare the relative impact of print and electronic news media on the *mass* and *attentive* publics in normal and crisis times.
  - For each of the six following forms of human expression, discuss at least one example that illustrates the treatment of significant politically relevant messages:
    - fiction and nonfiction *books*
    - stage and screen *plays*
    - classical and popular *music*