

Guidelines: You will have three hours to complete the exam, though I expect that many or most of you will finish in two.

The first part of the exam should take you about 30 minutes in total; you will be asked to answer **5 out of 7** short-answer questions (paragraph-length responses, or whatever it takes to fully answer the question and briefly justify your answer).

In the second part of the exam, you will respond to **3 out of 5** longer essay questions. I'm not asking for novel-length responses here, but your essays should take you *approximately* 20-30 minutes each to outline and write, which means I expect at least four blue-book-page-length responses per essay.

The exam will be graded out of a possible 100 points; each essay will be worth 20 points (60 in total) and each short answer question will be worth 8 points (40 in total), so plan your time/focus accordingly.

The exam will be closed-book; no notes or computer. Phones must be off during the exam. You do NOT need to cite your sources if the question doesn't require it, but it goes without saying that the more thorough your answers, the better your overall grade. Additionally, certain questions may appear on the exam that will all but require remembering an author's name (e.g., were I to ask you to describe the judicial philosophy of textualism, I would expect you to attribute the philosophy to Justice Scalia).

An additional word on grading: Since this is not a multiple-choice exam, your answers will necessarily be judged somewhat subjectively, which means that quality counts. In other words, you won't earn full credit simply for failing to get something explicitly *wrong*. I have provided an example below of the type of response that will constitute a full-credit response on a short answer question, as well as a few more short-answer questions and longer essay questions that I hope will guide you in your preparation.

I: SHORT ANSWER

1. What branch of government did the framers of the US Constitution consider to be the strongest? Why?

The Framers considered the legislature to be the strongest branch of government, because the Constitution provides Congress with more official/formal powers (like the power to declare war and to regulate interstate commerce) than the other two branches. The Framers justified granting Congress this power because it is the branch that is most accountable to the American people—the House of Representatives is the only federal institution that is directly elected, for example—and therefore the most democratic.

2. Briefly describe Justice Antonin Scalia's judicial philosophy.

3. In which way(s) does a direct democracy (akin to the system in Athens, Greece) differ from an American-style republican democracy?
4. Why might Chief Justice John Roberts have changed his mind at the last minute about whether or not the Affordable Care Act (“Obamacare”) was constitutional?
5. Why might a president decide to “go public” with a particular issue he supports?
6. Imagine that you’re a campaign strategist for a presidential candidate in the general (non-primary) election. Would you advise your candidate to use negative advertising against his opponent? Why or why not?
7. Briefly discuss why the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) under Director Michael Brown failed in its efforts to provide effective emergency relief services after Hurricane Katrina in 2005.
8. What was the Southern Realignment, and why was it important?
9. Is it rational for a person to use “cognitive shortcuts” or “information shortcuts” to decide who to vote for in major elections? Why or why not?
10. Thomas Patterson claims that the media’s incentives and the average American’s incentives are categorically opposed when it comes to politics. What incentives drive media behavior?

II: ESSAYS

1. The US is generally considered to have a less generous “welfare state” (public social spending) than most other Western countries (particularly the countries in the European Union). To name a few examples, levels of public spending in the US are significantly lower than they are in the average EU country, the US has a less progressive tax code than every EU nation, and Americans are far more tolerant of inequalities in income/wealth than are Europeans. Discuss at least two major reasons that might account for these differences.
2. Over the past 40-plus years, voter turnout in US presidential elections has declined from a high of approximately 68% in 1968 to a low of approximately 55% throughout the 1990s. Over the past three presidential election cycles (2004, 2008 and 2012), turnout has stayed relatively stable at approximately 58%. Discuss at least two reasons for the decline in the proportion of eligible voters who actually go to the polls, and at least one reason for the slight uptick in turnout over the last few election cycles.
3. Imagine that a bill (H.R. 45) banning assault weapons for sale in the United States has just been introduced in the US House of Representatives. What is the basic process this bill must go

through before it becomes a law? Discuss at least three hurdles/problems that the bill may encounter along the way, and how the bill's supporters might get around these problems.

4. Imagine that it is August of 2012, and you have just been appointed the chief campaign strategist for either Mitt Romney or Barack Obama (your choice). Write an essay describing how you would run your selected candidate's presidential campaign. What issues would you highlight and why? How would you mobilize people to get to the polls? What kind of campaign ads would you run? Be creative here—there's no "wrong" answer (or wrong way to run a campaign), as long as you effectively justify your strategy using the course materials.