

*Majors in American politics should answer **ONE** question from part I and **TWO** questions from part II (2 hours for each question, 6 hours total).*

*Minors in American politics should answer **ONE** question from part I and **ONE** question from part II (2 hours for each question, 4 hours total).*

**PART I:** The purpose of this section is to examine your capacity to apply political science theory to general questions in American politics. In doing so, you are expected to demonstrate broad knowledge of the American political system. However, your first priority should be to answer the specific question asked.

1. "A mark, a yen, a buck, or a pound is all that makes the world go around."  
Economic inequality in political and policy influence has been debated much recently. Assess what we now know of this literature and contrast what we know about the magnitude/nature of economic inequality with other potential inequalities such as by race, gender, education, etc.
2. Five long years ago, no political scientist would have forecast that Donald Trump or someone like him would be president today. Should this lack of vision be seen as a failure of political science? Did the discipline get something wrong to not see this coming? Or did we have the warning signs? In what ways will the study of US politics change due to Trump's election?
3. In recent work on conundrums of American democracy, much emphasis has been placed on polarization. Over the arc of the country's history since the Civil War, how significant has this factor been in shaping legislative productivity? Which other factors help explain effective lawmaking? In that mix, how much emphasis should be placed on the degrees of division separating both governing elites and citizens?

**PART II:** The purpose of this section is to test your ability to apply political science theory and empirical knowledge to important questions about specific features of the American political system. Be sure to answer each part of the question.

4. Charles M. Tiebout's 1956 article "A Pure Theory of Local Expenditures" has been extremely influential in the way we study cities. Discuss and critique the way Tiebout's model has been incorporated into the study of urban politics. What does this tell us about the importance (or lack thereof) of city politics and the way city politics differs from politics at other levels of government?
5. One remarkable feature of the time-series of approval ratings during the Trump Administration is that they have been essentially flat for the past two years. What does this flat line imply about theories that suggest that presidential approval rises and falls with the state of the economy and news about scandals?
6. Describe the "UCLA school" of political parties. What are the key arguments, predictions, and insights of scholars working within this tradition? Does the UCLA approach compare favorably to prior theories of American political parties? Why or why not?
7. Despite having unified control of the federal government following the 2016 elections, Republicans passed only one piece of major legislation--a tax bill that has met with mixed reviews. With the Democrats now in control of the House and focused on impeachment, little hope remains that anything legislatively would get done before 2020 on pressing issues such as infrastructure, immigration, health care, and climate change. How will this lack of legislative accomplishment impact the 2020 presidential and congressional elections? Do you need to have created a legislative record as a party in order to be generally successful in elections? What theory and empirics can we use to answer this question convincingly?
8. How has research on the bureaucracy complemented or enhanced the study of American politics? Particularly in light of recent events, what are some promising future directions?
9. In the race, ethnicity, and politics literature, scholars often develop theories with specific groups in mind (e.g., linked fate and Black partisanship), but many of these theories are eventually applied to other racial and ethnic minorities. Should the literature prioritize a thorough understanding of a single group's political orientations, or is it preferable to develop more generalizable theories that apply across minority groups?
10. It is often claimed that US elections are won by appeals to the median voter. But others say otherwise, that elections are won by appeals to one's party's

base voters. What are the empirical bases for each of these arguments?  
Which one seems to be more correct?

11. Suppose that you wake up on November 4, 2020 to find that Bernie Sanders has been elected president. Which political science theories would be vindicated by such an outcome, and why? Which theories would take a hit, and why?
12. With five solid conservative votes on the Supreme Court, there is little a possible future Democratic president can do, with or without the Senate, to change the situation with higher or lower-court judicial appointments." Evaluate and respond to this claim with reference to literature on power within the Court, on the judicial hierarchy, and the separation of powers. Consider the situation with or without a Democratic Senate.
13. *The American Voter* (Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes) and *Voting* (Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee) wrote about the importance of particular psychological and sociological variables in the study of voting and public opinion. To what extent have their theorizing, arguments, and findings held up today?