

*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. "Politics in the 'Age of Trump' is different, limiting what political science on previous periods can teach us about current day politics." Evaluate this claim with respect to at least two political science literatures.
2. What have been the consequences of the Coronavirus for, and for the study of, electoral and campaign politics, leadership, political communication (the media), mass opinion, political participation, partisan politics, government responsiveness, and democracy more broadly in the United States? To start, how should we think about this question? What have the consequences been thus far, and for the longer term?
3. The election and presidency of Donald Trump is viewed by many as an anomaly and a departure from the long-run path of American democracy. But to what extent might we view his electoral victory and his policy pursuits as structural? To what extent are Trump and Trumpism -- and his remaking of the Republican party -- logical extensions of longer-term trends or cycles in US politics? What larger forces might be at play that have brought about the era of Trump and will sustain it for many years to come? Your answer should draw from both behavioral and institutional research.

**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. Discuss the key differences in the behavioral assumptions underlying different theories about political parties. Evaluate the theoretical and empirical evidence underlying these behavioral assumptions. Which of these theories are the most plausible? Why? Identify an important question about political parties that remains unresolved. Discuss a plausible research design.
5. Drawing on theories that stress the potential for, or limitations of, elite opinion leadership, discuss the strategic calculation that contributed to House Democrats moving forward with impeachment against President Trump. Was it reasonable to expect that the impeachment proceedings would produce a shift in public opinion? If so, what kind of shift?
6. Some scholars argue that American politics has become nationalized. What do they mean? What evidence supports this claim? Are these scholars correct?
7. Where do the works of Achen and Bartels, Lenz, Zaller, Page and Shapiro, Gilens, and any other works you have read stand regarding the folk theory (as defined by Achen and Bartels)? What arguments do they make and, especially, what evidence do they describe that leads to their position? This “democratic competence” of the public aside, what is their position regarding the “democratic competence” of elites/leaders?.
8. What does the median voter theorem tell us about the effects of polarization? What are some other reasons why polarization might matter for policy outcomes?
9. The process of gentrification is reshaping cities across the globe. Using the contextual literature as a guide, how might long-time residents respond to influxes of affluent newcomers? Describe different theories of “context effects” and why they might or might not be applicable in the case of gentrification.
10. Studies of American political behavior emphasize the role of political partisanship as a motivating force. Still, even with today’s polarization, self-styled “Independents” (and thus presumably non-partisans) make up about one third of the electorate, with exact numbers varying with the survey house.

What do we know about Independent voters, today and historically? Design a survey that could tell us more about today’s Independent voters.

11. Is there a “deep state” in American government? To what extent and under what conditions can career bureaucrats ignore the preferences of democratically-elected officials and set public policy themselves?
12. President Trump has appointed one in four circuit court judges and almost 200 federal judges overall. What does the literature say will be the impact of this growing number of appointments, with the Supreme Court already having a conservative majority? What would be the impact should a future Democratic President get to make enough appointments to “flip” the Supreme Court the other way? How much do the lower courts matter and why? Consider power within the Supreme Court and various schools of thought on the judicial hierarchy.
13. Should the Supreme Court reverse its decision in *Roe v. Wade*, governments in the United States would be permitted to regulate fully or ban abortions. This situation is ripe for the further study of the relationship between public opinion and policymaking. Assuming you had ample resources, time, and a team of researchers, how would you study this over the years that follow? What research strategies would you take? Which ones would you give priority to? What methodological issues would you be attentive to? To what extent and why would you take up normative concerns as well as empirical ones?