

*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. The American political system was designed in part to constrain executive power. What are these constraints, and how have they evolved over time? What does recent scholarship say about them? Is there, as some might say, a “deep state”?
2. In the book *Democracy for Realists*, what evidence challenges what the authors call the “folk theory” of democracy? Weigh this evidence against countervailing evidence and arguments that demonstrate the public's capabilities. What do you conclude?
3. A fashionable criticism of U.S. politics today is to complain about what some see as a growing political inequality that compounds the obvious growth in economic inequality. How unequal is political representation in the U.S.? Unequal along what lines? What is the theory about whether and why political inequality is on the rise? And is there a case that political inequality has been either over- or under-hyped in the political science literature?
4. John Locke argued that national legislatures constitute the supreme institution of a decent constitutional democracy. Has Congress ever secured this place within the institutional setting of the federal government? If yes, when, and with what consequences? If no, with what implications and with which alternatives? And, would your answer vary by the policy substance under consideration?

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.

5. The 2018 midterm elections resulted in a change in partisan control of the branches of government from unified (all branches controlled by the Republicans) to divided (the Democrats controlling the House). The Trump administration negotiated the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Free Trade Agreement (USMCA) under Trade Promotion Authority, where Congress delegates authority to the president subject to an up-or-down vote. Has the likelihood of enacting the USMCA changed? Do you anticipate any differences in the outcome of the Agreement under the unified and divided government scenarios?
6. Nearly three decades ago, David Mayhew's *Divided We Govern* upended the conventional wisdom, finding that divided government does not seem to hinder the passage of important legislation. How well has Mayhew's conclusion held up in light of subsequent political science research as well as changes in Congress and the broader American political system?
7. Why and when are party leaders in Congress powerful? To what extent can intra-party organizations or blocs limit their power? Your answer should draw on theories of congressional organization as well as illustrative contemporary and historical examples. Also please make comparisons between the House of Representatives and Senate.
8. A key issue in the race for the Democratic presidential nomination is the elimination of the filibuster for legislation in the U.S. Senate. Progressive activists on the left believe that changing the rules of the Senate in this way is essential for enacting many of the policies that they support. Would elimination of the legislative filibuster significantly affect the direction of lawmaking in the U.S.? If so, how? If not, why not? Your answer should consider both short-term and long-term potential effects and draw on both empirical and theoretical literatures.
9. When, and by what process, did the United States come to be a country with clear and fixed borders? How, if at all, did this history of transformation affect the character and dilemmas of federalism as a fundamental feature of constitutional design?
10. How does the Trump presidency inform, reinforce, or challenge theories about how ethnic minorities form and express their political views?

11. Anthony Downs once described a political party as a “team ... seeking to control the governing apparatus in a duly constituted election.” In recent years, political observers have highlighted the substantial divisions within both the Republican and Democratic “teams.” Are the recent intra-party divisions different from intra-party divisions in the past? Evaluate how well the existing political science literature helps us understand the origins and consequences of intra-party divisions.
12. The unorthodox campaign and presidency of Donald Trump has broken many unwritten and possibly even some written rules of American politics. Many are concerned about the long-term impact of Trump on the rule of law, the integrity of the presidency, progress on racial relations, tolerance in American society, and the separation of powers. In fact, some argue that Trump is fomenting the end of American democracy as we know it. What does the political science literature predict about the long-term impact of the Trump presidency? Are there other points in American history where figures like Trump were able to have lasting impact on the course of American political development? Your answer should draw from both the behavioral and institutional literatures.
13. Given the new (relatively solid) conservative Supreme Court majority, should we expect major policy or doctrinal changes to emerge from judicial decisions? Why or why not? Consider both opportunities for change as well as constraints, operating within the Court, within the judicial branch, or across the branches of government.
14. To what extent have the roles of personality and emotions had a resurgence in the study of public opinion and political behavior, and perhaps American politics more generally? What are some of the noteworthy findings that have come out of this work? To what extent are they substantively important? Normatively important?