

**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE  
AND  
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**

**POSC 105**

SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR TEST 1

You should mark the **best** response, not one that could conceivably be true if the question were looked at from some strange point of view. In other words, use your knowledge of the material and commonsense to pick the best answer.

I have marked what I consider to be the best response with an asterisk (“\*”).

1. A major purpose of the state in a capitalist system is
  - a. provision of health care.
  - b. protection of the environment.
  - c. management of the business cycle by trying to reduce inflation and recession.\*
  - d. none of the above.

Discussed both in class and the readings. See Shaffer.

2. According to the film on the fourth amendment, a general warrant is best described as
  - a. a police officer's right to stop and search an automobile even if the driver appears to be doing nothing illegal.
  - b. a general grant of authority to search for contraband (smuggled) goods.\*
  - c. the power to arrest someone who might be a threat to the peace.
  - d. the power to ban public demonstrations or marches that might turn violent.

The film makes this point clear. Remember that a general warrant was a major source of friction between colonial merchants and the British government.

3. Which of these is characteristic of “classical” liberals?
  - a. They favor government regulation of the economy.
  - b. They generally support increased spending on welfare programs such as food stamps and public housing.
  - c. They distrust limited government.
  - d. They distrust large government\*.

This term has been discussed several times in class. Remember when I talked about the need for government I mentioned different view points that ran from anarchy to night watchman (minimal government) to “limited” government (classical liberalism”) and on up through Marxism.

4. If everyone purses his or her self-interest and acts rationally, the result is likely to be

- a. the common good will be destroyed.\*
- b. no individual or group will become too powerful.
- c. capitalism will be self-stabilizing.
- d. total chaos.

Discussed in class and the essay “An Argument for Government.”

5. The doctrine of "judicial review" means
- a. that federal courts have the right to review decisions of the president or his cabinet.
  - b. that federal courts have the right to review the acts of local police officials.
  - c. that the Supreme Court can declare acts of Congress or state governments unconstitutional.\*
  - d. The Supreme Court can review legislative proposals before Congress passes them.

I pointed out that judicial review makes the Supreme Court a major player in the policy making game. Don't confuse judicial review with settling disputes. Every society needs a mechanism for peacefully settling disputes. Courts have that function everywhere. But does society need three policy making bodies?

6. Which of these statements about the Bill of Rights is true?
- a. For most of the nation's history it applied only to acts of the national government.\*
  - b. Its authors clearly intended it to apply to both the national and state governments.
  - c. Scholars believe that the Fourth Amendment is by far the vaguest and hardest to interpret.
  - d. The decision *Marbury versus Madison* extended its provisions to the states.

Discussed in the film and in class notes. The Supreme Court over the years has come to decide that most provisions of the Bill of Rights apply to state governments after all. But this is a relatively new decision. Anyone interested in knowing more? Read *Gideon's Trumpet*, by Anthony Lewis. (This has been a very popular book on college campuses for decades.)

7. In order to be elected president a candidate must have a majority of...
- a. popular votes.
  - b. electoral votes.\*
  - c. primary votes.
  - d. both electoral and popular.

Remember that the constitution creates an indirect or republican democracy in which the president is chosen by electors. To win the person must have a majority (270 or more) electoral votes no matter how many popular or votes cast by citizens he or she wins.

8. The lecturer believes that the Republicans who took control of Congress in the 1994 elections and tried to implement the so-called “Republican revolution” failed largely

because

- a. President Clinton was too powerful.
- b. the Republican leadership, especially Speaker Gingrich, was very ineffective.
- c. Americans want socialism.
- d. the American people were not ready to abandon government programs such as aid to education and environmental protection.\*

Choice d is by far the best answer because I have stressed repeatedly that 1) the public is not especially ideological and has shown no signs of becoming more conservative and 2) many of the very programs and government activities the Republicans wanted to roll back are in fact popular. Gingrich was not an inept leader in a “tactical” sense. His strategic vision was flawed, however.

9. National presidential primary elections are used to choose
  - a. delegates to the national party conventions.\*
  - b. the nominees who will compete in the general election in the fall.
  - c. state and local office holders.
  - d. None of the above.

A primary is an election that selects delegates to the national party convention that in turn nominates a candidate to run in the general election. Choice b is not as good as a because the states choose delegates who then (in the summer) pick the nominees.

10. Which of these **original** constitutional provisions created a “moat” or wall around “representatives” or political leaders?
  - a. The electoral college\*
  - b. Judicial review
  - c. Impeachment
  - d. Federalism

The electoral college means people selected the president indirectly and thus in a sense shield him or her from the public.

11. What is the source of a democracy’s legitimacy?
  - a. The people
  - b. God
  - c. Tradition
  - d. Brute power

The reading on the web site, “Popular Sovereignty,” discusses this idea as we did in class.

12. The fact that the president, senators, and representatives have separately or independent constituencies has which of these effects?
  - a. Makes it hard for citizens to hold leaders accountable.\*
  - b. Promotes political unity.

- c. Encourages cooperation between the president and congress.
- d. Enhances democracy defined as rights and accountability.

One of the weaknesses of our constitutional system (I argue anyway) is that it so disperses power and creates so many narrow constituencies that holding anyone accountable for general failures to solve national problems is very difficult. And when people can't hold their leaders accountable, they lose interest and feel alienated and cynical. a is really the best response by far.

13. "Jeffersonians" believe which of these statements?
- a. Yes, people seem politically apathetic but their disinterest is only partly their fault.
  - b. Many political institutions discourage the acquisition of enlightened understanding.
  - c. People do indeed seem apathetic and could be more involved in politics than they now are.
  - d. All of these statements.\*

We will discuss this topic before the test. But keep in mind the idea that I associate optimism about the public's capacity for self government with the name Jefferson and, similarly, pessimism about the public with the name Hamilton.

14. According to the lecturer, which of these is absolutely essential for democracy, especially the representative kind, to work?
- a. Average citizens must be able to run for office no matter how poorly qualified.
  - b. Average citizens must be able to hold decision makers accountable.\*
  - c. Average citizens must be able to hold other citizens accountable.
  - d. Making sure that prejudiced and authoritarian individuals do not become overly powerful.

A no-brainer: The essence of democracy in my view is that citizens have meaningful control of their leaders. And they can only control them if they have some way of assigning responsibility for acts of government. Remember always: being able to assign responsibility leads to power to hold someone accountable.

15. The constitution creates separately elected offices such as the presidency and the members of Congress. Which of these best describes the effects of this separation?
- a. These elected officials have basically the same interests.
  - b. These elected officials have incentives to work together.
  - c. These elected officials have different needs and concerns, a fact that makes cooperation among them difficult.\*
  - d. These elected officials can always be counted on to put aside their differences and compromise in order to promote the national interest.

The Reynolds formula for understanding why things happen as they do or, to be more exact, for understanding "business as usual": the constitution divides up power in such a way that getting leaders to work cooperatively to solve national problems is very difficult.