

M.A. Comprehensive Examination

American Politics/Applied Politics
Spring, 2005

Directions: This exam consists of questions drawn from the field of American Politics, and also questions drawn specifically from our Applied Politics concentration offered through the Public Affairs and Advocacy Institute, the Campaign Management Institute, and the Women in Politics Institute. **All** students must answer **one** question from **Section I**. Students in the **Applied Politics** concentration must answer **one** question from **Section IV**.

You may not answer more than one question from any section. Identify clearly the questions you choose to answer.

You will write a total of three essays.

You should be able to demonstrate your familiarity with the relevant literature that pertains to the questions you choose to answer. Do not rely on the same literature for different questions.

Please use 12-point type and standard margins when preparing your essays.

Section I (General)

1. Political scientists often see a distinction between the 'practical' and the 'research' side of the field, and very frequently argue that the findings of the scientific branch have little to offer the men and women actually in the field. You have two options with respect to this.

- a. If you disagree, discuss the political science literature which you feel refutes the idea of separation between the practical and the scientific approaches within political science. Do they all fall within a particular methodology? Do you think progress is being made in this unifying trend? Do you think it *should* be made?
- b. If you agree with the statement that the two approaches to political science are separate and not communicating, devise a research program to overcome the division. You should take questions of real interest to the political practitioners, and construct research which will provide real, useful answers. (Include theories, hypotheses, proposed data, and cross-tabulation tables to indicate your approach to analysis.)

2. Numerous theories have been offered to explain how public policy gets made. Paying attention to issues of agenda setting, framing, implementation, and others, describe how policy has been made in a particular issue area.

Section II

1. Conflict and cooperation between the Congress and the President/executive branch are perhaps inevitable in the U.S. separation of powers system. Identify and discuss factors which are likely to affect conflict, and those likely to affect cooperation. Be specific as to parameters (for example, is divided or united government likely to affect the relationship the two branches and how and why), and factors more specific to each branch, or to different types of issues. What can a president do to have his views prevail? What can Congress do? And finally, illustrate your points by briefly discussing a current or recent issue; what was the outcome and how did the factors you have identified and discussed affect that?
2. What do you consider the most critical part of the legislative process? Why?

Section III

1. Much political science research is aimed at gauging whether citizens have any control over the political system, a necessary ingredient to the claim that American democracy is “by the people.” Assess democratic representation and accountability in the United States. Are citizens capable of holding their elected officials accountable? To what extent do they do so? Is there a bias to accountability? In other words, are elected officials more likely to be accountable to some citizens compared to others?
2. In the last presidential election, the “gender gap” in voting was not as evident. What is the gender gap? What have scholars said about it? Make sure to discuss whether it is really a married vs. unmarried gap as well as the role of men in any gender gap analysis.

Section IV

1. The women and politics literature has evolved over time as the number of women in office has increased, first at the state level and then at the national level, allowing for greater analysis of their impact within legislative bodies as well as on policy making. With reference to these literatures, describe and analyze whether women make a difference in legislatures and in what areas.
2. Describe the causes, characteristics and consequences of congressional budget reform on public policy making. Why is it important to know the politics of budgeting and appropriating to be a successful lobbyist? Where appropriate, refer to the scholarly literature in political science in your answer.
3. While the academic analyses of the 2004 presidential election are just starting to be published, the journalistic accounts of the campaign saw the light of day shortly after the election. These accounts generally suggest that the Bush campaign ran a “better

campaign” than the Kerry campaign. What does it mean to run a “better campaign?”
What are the elements of a successful campaign?