

POSC 10: American Politics  
Midterm Study Guide  
Loren Collingwood

Below is a study guide. The bulk of questions will directly be related to these questions. That said, this is just a guide and everything from the slides/book is “fair game.”

**Chapter 1:**

Be able to define government, broadly.

What is politics? What is power?

Know different forms of government (authoritarian, totalitarian, democratic)

What is a representative democracy? What is popular sovereignty?

What is citizenship?

What is direct democracy? Do we have direct democracy in California?

Know what liberty, political equality, and limited government are.

What is the concept of majority rule/minority rights?

**Chapter 2:**

What is an amendment? What is the Bill of Rights? (not what is 1...10, but in general)

Understand the concept of checks and balances and how the separation of powers allows checks and balances to be effective.

Why was the Articles of Confederation unsuccessful?

What was the 3/5<sup>th</sup> Compromise? What was the Great Compromise (Virginia Plan, New Jersey Plan)

Know that Shay's Rebellion helped trigger the Constitutional Convention. What was the Boston Tea Party? Why were the colonists so radicalized? What groups came together to in response to repressive British gov't policies? What were the two main “rich/wealthy” classes in colonial life?

What is bicameralism? What is the Electoral College? What are key differences between House and Senate? How do each of the branches “check” one another?

What is the Supremacy Clause? What is judicial Review? What court case established Judicial Review?

Who were the federalists and anti-federalists? Who supported/opposed the Constitution and why? What side was Hamilton on? What side was Jefferson on?

Why did people fear tyranny? What is tyranny? What are the ways separation of powers protects us from tyranny?

Who pushed for a Bill of Rights? Anti-federalists or Federalists?

What is the most common way an Amendment is passed? Are Amendments usually successful or not? What is ratification?

Know the key powers of the three different branches (Table 2.1)

Know that federalism is a system of gov't whereby power is shared between national/state/local governments

Elastic clause. Expressed powers

### **Chapter 3:**

What was the traditional system, in terms of federalism?

What is a unitary system of government, and how does it differ from a federal form of government? What is a federal system? What type of nations are more likely to be federal?

Who had more expressed powers initially, the national or state gov'ts?

What are implied powers? What is the necessary and proper clause? How did the gov't use n & p clause to expand power? What is interstate commerce and what is its significance? Know how the commerce clause was used by Supreme Court to grant greater power to federal gov't.

What does national supremacy mean?

Why is the 10<sup>th</sup> Amendment important to anti-federalists? What does reserved powers mean?

What do states mostly do? Know about police powers, coercion

Know the difference between concurrent powers, dual federalism, and cooperative federalism

What is the full faith and credit clause? And why is this relevant to the debate surround same-sex marriage?

What is home rule and how does it apply to local gov'ts.

What are the specializations of governmental functions in the traditional system? Specifically, what were the national gov't domestic specialties (Table 3.2)

How did the New Deal remake gov't? Grants-in-aide, bloc grants, categorical grants. How does the federal governments use these types of grants to coerce states? What is devolution?

What is New Federalism? And what was Ronald Reagan's role?

Understand the concept of states' rights, and how this is was used to continue anti-black policies among Southern states.

#### **Chapter 4:**

Know the difference between civil liberties and civil rights. Do civil liberties protect us from the government, or allow the gov't to protect us from others?

Why wasn't everyone afforded rights in the beginning?

Why did federalists not support a Bill of Rights? (Table 4.1)

What is the difference between procedural and substantive liberties? What does the due process of law mean? Know Innocent until proven guilty.

Understand how the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment created doctrine of incorporation. What is selective incorporation? What Amendment was most recently incorporated?

Know: Establishment clause, free exercise clause, marketplace of ideas, strict scrutiny.

What is the relevance of *Citizens United v. Federal Elections Commission*?

What is the more protected speech: commercial or political?

What is symbolic speech? Can people display a Communist flag? Why?

Why is Cross-Burning usually considered unconstitutional? Why is Westboro Baptist church allowed to display signs that say, "Thank God for Dead Soldiers"?

What is speech plus? And how does it differ from symbolic speech?

What is prior restraint? What are shield laws? Are there federal shield laws?

What is libel and slander and how do they differ? Why are they hard to prove in court?

Why was the CD ACT of 1996 rules unconstitutional?

What are fighting words? How is speech by public school students limited and what are the justifications for this limitation?

What are Miranda Rights/Miranda Rule? What is the exclusionary rule? What are Grand Juries? Do all states have them? What is double jeopardy and what amendment secures this? What is self-incrimination and which amendment protects against this (Fifth)?

What is the right to a fair trial? What does right to counsel mean?

What does the 8<sup>th</sup> Amendment do? That is, how does it deal with cruel and unusual punishment, and what types of cases does this usually refer to?

How is "right to privacy" relevant to abortion?

What Amendments led to developments of Civil Rights? 13-15, and what are these amendments?

What is the separate but equal doctrine? Which Supreme Court case established it?

When did segregation subside? What organization was main driver of bringing down segregation?

What is Jim Crow? Poll tax, education, literacy requirements. What was Smith V. Allwright?

Know that Brown v. Board was most relevant court case in 20<sup>th</sup> century. Why did *Brown* not really work at desegregating schools?

What was Montgomery Bus Boycott?

Know what Civil Rights Act and Voting Rights Act (VRA) accomplished...public accommodations, employment, federal registrars. Did black registration increase substantially after VRA? Why did these Acts work to change attitudes/desegregation when Supreme Court couldn't?

Know how civil rights movement transferred to other groups such as Latinos, Asians, women, gays, and older folks. What are the main goals of affirmative action?

What is massive resistance?

### **Chapter 5:**

What is public opinion? What are values/beliefs? What is an attitude and how does it differ from a value?

What are three fundamental values Americans support strongly? (p. 143) What is liberty, democracy, and equality of opportunity?

What is political socialization? What are the main agents of socialization? Who is more likely to support torture, a man or a woman? How can education change attitudes we gained subconsciously as children?

How do rural vs. urban voting patterns differ? How does the political environment – when we came of age – influence our development of attitudes/opinion?

What is trust in government? Has this increased or decreased since Vietnam War?

How does education influence public opinion? Who are more tolerant of minority groups: more educated or less educated groups?

What is political ideology? What are the two dominant forms of ideology in American politics? What do conservatives/liberals generally stand for? What is the main divider between these groups – role of gov't in the economy.

What is political knowledge? Know who has more/less of it and why that matters? Can people advocate for their interests if they have low political knowledge?

What are shortcuts/cues/heuristics? How does this resolve our scholarly understanding of how people come to hold attitudes?

Which institutions mold opinion?

### **Chapter 6:**

What is agenda setting? Does the media tell us what to think or what to think about?

What is citizen journalism? Has it been on the rise?

What is equal time rule and the fairness doctrine? More broadly, know what objective standard the media supposedly abides by.

What is media framing? Does this vary from news channel to news channel?

What is priming? How is this different from framing?

What is selection bias in the context of news reporting?

What is media fragmentation and how has this led to the rise in partisan media?