

American Government AP

Mid-Term Study Guide

Terms to know:

Test 1: Beginnings and Constitutional Underpinnings

Chapter 1

- Government – the institutions, process, and rules designed to facilitate the control of a geographic area and its inhabitants. (No mention of common good) -
- public goods – goods such as clean air and clean water than everyone must share
- politics – a process through which a society settles its conflicts and decides the policies that will be governed
- Political participation – ways in which people get involved in politics. How widespread political participation is can indicate the health of a government. US has one of lowest voter turnouts in world.
- single-issue groups - groups so concerned with one issue that members cast their votes on the basis of that issue only, ignoring a politician's stance on everything else.
- Policymaking – ways that government responds to the priorities of its people
- Linkage institutions – channels or access points through which issues and people's policy preferences get on the government's policy agenda. In the US the 3 main linkage institutions are political parties, interest groups and the mass media (and elections)
- policy agenda – issues that attract the serious attention of public officials and other people actively involved in politics
- political issue – arises when people disagree about a problem and a public policy choice.
- Policymaking institutions - Congress, presidency, the courts, and the bureaucracy. Policymakers select issues on the policy agenda and make policies to address them.
- public policy – a choice that government makes in response to a political issue. A policy is a course of action taken with regard to some problem.
- Democracy – selecting policymakers and organizing government so that policy reflects citizens' preferences. (3 below are traditional democratic theory)
 - Majority rule - in a democracy, choosing among alternatives requires that the majority's desire be respected.
 - minority rights – guarantees rights to those who do not belong to majorities and allows that they might join majorities through persuasion and reasoned argument.

- Representation – relationship between the few leaders and the many followers
- 3 contemporary theories of Democracy
 - Pluralist theory – politics is mainly a competition among groups, each one pressing for its own preferred policies.
 - elite and class theory- societies are divided along class lines and an upper class elite will rule **Dangerous**
 - hyperpluralism – groups are so strong that government is weakened. This is an extreme form of pluralism. **Dangerous**
- Gross domestic product - total value of all goods and services produced in a nation
- Individualism – belief that individuals should be left on their own by government. One of the main reasons for the small scope of the American government is the belief in this.

Chapter 2

- Constitution – a nation's basic law, creates political institutions, assigns or divides powers in government, and often provides certain guarantees to citizens.
- Natural rights – rights inherent to humans, not dependent on governments such as life, liberty, and property. Was key part of Locke's theories and widely accepted by founding fathers.
- consent of the governed – idea that government derives its power by sanction (authorization) of the people
- limited government – idea that certain restrictions should be placed on govt. to protect the natural rights of citizens.
- Articles of Confederation – 1st constitution if US which established a national legislature (Continental Congress) and **most power rested with the state legislatures**
- Shay's Rebellion – a series of attacks on courthouses by a small group of farmers to block foreclosure proceedings. **Prompted amending the Articles and eventually creating the Constitution at the Philadelphia convention.**
- Factions – interest groups arising from unequal distribution of property or wealth that Madison attacked in **Federalist #10**. The political parties and interest groups present today are what Madison warned of.
- NJ Plan – Called for equal representation of each state in Congress regardless of population
- VA Plan – Called for representation in Congress based on population of states
- Connecticut Compromise – established two houses of Congress – the House of Representative where representation is based on population and the senate where each state has two representatives.

- Habeas corpus – a court order requiring jailers to explain to a judge why they are holding a prisoner in custody. (find out cause of their detention)
- separation of powers – feature of Constitution that requires each of the three branches to be relatively independent of on another so that one cannot control the others. Power is shared among the three branches.
- checks and balances – features of Constitution that limit the govt's power by requiring that power be balanced among the governmental institution. The institutions continually constrain one another's activities.
- Republic – form of govt. in which people select representative to govern them and make laws
- Federalists – Supported ratification of US Constitution
- Anti-Federalists – opposed ratification
- Federalist Papers – collection of 85 articles by Hamilton, John Jay and Madison that defended the Constitution
- Bill of Rights – First 10 amendments to US Const. that were drafted in response to Anti-federalist concerns. They include basic liberties such as freedom of religion, speech and press and guarantee defendants' rights.
- Equal Rights Amendment – passed by Congress in 1972 but not by states so not amendment – “equality of rights under law shall not be denied or abridged by US or any state on account of sex.”
- **Marbury v. Madison** (1803) – Chief Justice John Marshall established judicial review.
- judicial review – power of the courts to determine whether acts of Congress and the executive are constitutional.

Test 2: Federalism (Chapter 3)

- federalism – a way of organizing a nation so that two or more levels of government control the same area and people
- Unitary governments – all power resides at one level of govt.
- intergovernmental relations – workings of federal system – interactions among national, state and local governments
- supremacy clause – Article VI(6) of Constitution that makes Constitution “the supreme law of the land” over state laws.
- Tenth Amendment – powers not granted to the federal government nor prohibited to the States by the Constitution are reserved to the States.
- **McCulloch v. Maryland** (1819) - Said Congress has implied powers in addition to enumerated powers

- enumerated powers – powers of fed. govt. specifically addressed in Constitution such as power to coin money, regulate its value, and impose taxes.
- Implied powers – beyond enumerated as those “necessary and proper” to Congress
- elastic clause – last paragraph of Art. 1, Sect. 8 that authorizes Congress to pass all laws “necessary and proper” to carry out the enumerated powers
- **Gibbons v. Ogden (1824)** – broader interpretation of commerce clause – expands power of fed. govt. over states
- Full faith and credit – Art. 4, Sect. 1 – requires each state to recognize the official documents and civil judgments rendered by the courts of other states.
- X extradition- a legal process whereby an alleged criminal offender is surrendered by the officials of one state to officials of the state in which the crime is alleged to have been committed
- dual federalism – states and fed. govt have separate and own powers (in their sphere) – like **layered cake**
- Cooperative federalism - shared responsibility between different levels of government - **like marble cake**
- fiscal federalism – money is building block to major levels of government (federal, state, local) – **expenditure of federal funds on programs maintained by states**
- categorical grants – most restrictive w/strings attached, must be used for specific purposes
 - Project grants- fed. categorical grants for specific purposes and awarded on basis of merits of applications
 - formula grants - fed. categorical grants distributed according to a formula specified in legislation or in administrative regulations.
- block grants – more general as to what \$ can be spent on-proffered by Congress

Test 3: Congress (Chapter 12)

- Incumbents – those already holding office who have advantages in elections
- pork barrel (legislation) The mighty list of federal projects, grants, and contracts available to cities, businesses, colleges, and institutions in the district of a member of Congress.– benefits only the constituents, too much of it in credit claiming -
- bicameral legislature – Congress is two house legislature
- Committee sessions – committees control legislative agenda and guide legislation

- Filibuster – unlimited debate; this is allowed by the Senate only (A strategy unique to the Senate whereby opponents of a piece of legislation try to talk it to death)
- Speaker of the House – leader of the House
- Majority leader – assists the speaker in the House, the most important member of the Senate and spokesperson for the majority party
- Whips – help floor leaders by directing/organizing party members of voting
- minority leader – major spokesperson for minority party and organizes opposition to majority party – same role in both houses
- Committees
 - Standing committees - Separate subject-matter committees in each house of Congress that handle bills in different policy areas.
 - Select committees - Congressional committees appointed for a specific purpose, such as the Watergate investigation.
 - joint committees - Congressional committees on a few subject-matter areas with membership drawn from both houses.
 - conference committees - Congressional committees formed when the Senate and the House pass a particular bill in different forms. Party leadership appoints members from each house to iron out the differences and bring back a single bill.
- legislative oversight – Congress's monitoring of the bureaucracy and its administration of policy, performed mainly through hearings. Not much oversight.
- committee chairs – each committee has a chairperson who is a member of the majority party (The most important influencers of the congressional agenda. They play dominant roles in scheduling hearings, hiring staff, appointing subcommittees, and managing committee bills when they are brought before the full house.)
- Seniority system - until the 1970s, the member who had served on the committee the longest and whose party controlled Congress became chair
- Caucus - A group of members of Congress sharing some interest or characteristic. Most are composed of members from both parties and from both houses.
- Bill - A proposed law, drafted in precise, legal language. – **See how a bill becomes a law**

Test 4: The Presidency (Chapter 13)

- Impeachment - The political equivalent of an indictment in criminal law, prescribed by the Constitution. The House of Representatives may impeach the president by a majority vote for "Treason, Bribery, or other high Crimes and Misdemeanors." After impeachment, Senate tries them.
- Cabinet – 15 depts.- A group of presidential advisors not mentioned in the Constitution, although every president has had one.
- legislative veto - The ability of Congress to override a presidential decision, war Powers Resolution asserts this authority, eventually ruled unconstitutional
- Executive Office of the President – group of advisors to prez.
- Veto – The constitutional power of the president to send a bill back to Congress with reasons for rejecting it. A two-thirds vote in each house can override
- Pocket veto - If Congress adjourns(on break) within 10 days of submitting a bill, the bill is vetoed by the president not taking any action
- War Powers Resolution – requires prez. to inform Congress that he has deployed troops in a combat capacity. President's since Nixon have said it violates their power as commander in chief.
- honeymoon period - First 6-12 months of term that need to be capitalized on
- Legitimacy - representative of the will of the people; every method of prez. selection has look for this
- momentum - gain this win first few primaries; need momentum and the media on your side
- open party caucuses - A meeting open to any registered party voter who wants to attend to help select presidential nominees
- Whig theory - president is limited by what Constitution allows him to do (prevailing belief structure in 1800s)
- Stewardship theory – president's responsibility is to do anything as long as it is not expressly stated in the Constitution - all presidents post TR were stewards except for Hoover and Carter
- approval ratings - indicates the percentage of respondents to an opinion poll who approve and disapprove of a particular person or program. Is generally accepted as a statistically valid indicator of the comparative changes in the popular US mood regarding a President. – usually higher at beginning than end of term

Test 5: The Federal Courts (Chapter 16)

- original jurisdiction - right of a court to be the first to hear a case. All courts have this power
- Appellate jurisdiction – right of a court to rehear (not retry) cases brought by losing parties in lower courts.
- district courts – lowest court at federal level and only trial court

- appellate courts - courts empowered to review all final decisions of district courts, except in rare cases. In addition, they also hear appeals to orders of many federal regulatory agencies.
- Supreme Court - The pinnacle of the American judicial system. The Court ensures uniformity in interpreting national laws, resolves conflicts among states, and maintains national supremacy in law. It has both original jurisdiction and appellate jurisdiction.
- Judicial conference – after hearing justices retire to this for two weeks to discuss case in private and make a decision
- solicitor general – top attorney in nation
- majority opinion – majority of justices agree with legal reasoning
- plurality opinion – no majority decision but **most** justices agree with the legal reasoning
- concurring opinion – agree with decision for a different legal reason
- Dissenting opinion – disagree with decision and the legal reasoning behind it (can become majority opinion)
- judicial review – see above – court can strike down act of other branches as unconstitutional
- precedent (*stare decisis*)- all decisions by court are based on this principle which means “let the decision stand” – based on precedent
- Writ of certiorari – order granting the Court permission to review cases from a lower level. This and *per curiam* are the only way to get cases to the Supreme Court.

- Federalist #51 (Madison) - addresses means by which appropriate checks and balances can be created in government and also advocates a separation of powers within the national government. One of its most important ideas is the pithy and often quoted phrase, "Ambition must be made to counteract ambition."

Test 6: The Federal Bureaucracy (Chapter 15)

- Bureaucracy – effective system of organizing a large number of people
- Patronage – one of the key inducements used by political machines. A patronage job, promotion or contract is one that is given for political reasons rather than for merit or competence alone.
- merit principle – idea that hiring should be based on exams and promotion ratings to produce administration by people with talent and skill
- Federal bureaucracy organizations

- independent executive agency - resemble cabinet department but with a smaller scope and scale; appointed by prez. - ex. NASA
- independent regulatory agency - controls and handles nation's economic activity - Ex. SEC, FTC, FRB, NLRB, FCC
- Government corporation - provide same services as private corporations but at a cheaper rate b/c of federal funding - US Postal Service
- Policy implementation - true source of power and primary function of bureaucracy (creative control)
- presidential commissions - temporary organizations established by prez. that provide assistance and advice such as the Commission of Civil Rights or Fine Arts
- clientele groups - special-interest groups that benefit directly from the activities of a particular bureaucratic agency and are therefore strong advocates of the agency.
- hierarchical authority - chain of command/pecking order necessary in buracracy
- Job specialization - specific roles yield to efficiency, cut out waste

Topic 7: Chs. 6, 8, 10

*****Questions on midterm**

- **2006 - Defense of Marriages Act - no U.S. state is required to recognize as a marriage a same-sex relationship considered a marriage in another state. (can take away marriage license since gay marriage where used to live but not new place)**
- **Conservatives and Liberals Agree/Disagree**
 - **US is a conservative nation today**
 - **40% of US is Conservative (31% conservative, 9% ultraconservative)**
 - **35% of US is moderate**
 - **21% is Liberal (16% liberal, 5% very liberal)**

Ch.8

- Conservatives - those that believe in a less active role in economic affairs, more activist role in upholding traditional values, support more widespread use of military overseas, and oppose abortion, same-sex marriage and stem-cell research
- Liberals - favor activist government in matters of economic issues, reject notion that it is governments job to maintain a particular set of values, and support arms control, aid for developing nations, UN
- Populists - share conservative belief in upholding traditional family values, share liberal belief of intrusion into our economy (Ex. Jimmy Carter) - **Most conservative (extreme)**

- Libertarians – opposition to government intervention in economic and traditional family values – **Most liberal (extreme)**
- probability sample - a sample for a poll in which each individual in the population has a probability of being selected randomly for inclusion in the sample.
- public opinion - those opinions held by ordinary citizens that are willing to express them openly. – **cannot fairly lump all citizens together to have one opinion, so we have multiple publics rather than a single one**
- public opinion poll - a device for measuring public opinion whereby a relatively small number of individuals (the sample) are interviewed for the purpose of estimating the opinions of a whole community (the population).
- sample - in a public opinion poll, the relatively small number of individuals who are interviewed for the purpose of estimating the opinions of an entire population.
- sampling error - measure of the accuracy of a public opinion poll. The sampling error is mainly a function of sample size and is usually expressed in percentage terms. (usually 3% for president)
- Ideology - a consistent pattern of opinion on political issues that stems from a basic underlying belief or set of beliefs.
- political socialization - the learning process by which people acquire their political opinions, beliefs and values.
 - primary tendency – what is learned first is often lodged most firmly in one's mind.
- Apathy - a feeling of personal non-interest or unconcern with politics.
- Alienation - a feeling of personal powerlessness that includes the notion that government does not care about the opinions/votes of people like oneself. = **more appropriate reason not to vote**
 - Voter decrease caused by Tet Offensive (1968) and Watergate (1973) – signify alienated voter
 - *****After scandal occurs, voter turnout decreases**
- retrospective voting - a form of electoral judgment in which voters support the incumbent candidate or party when their policies are judged to have succeeded and oppose the candidate or party when their policies are judged to have failed.
- prospective voting - a form of electoral judgment in which voters choose the candidate whose policy promises most closely match their own preferences.
- civic duty - the belief that civic and political participation is a responsibility of citizenship.
- political participation - a sharing in activities designed to influence public policy and leadership such as voting, joining political parties

- and interest groups, writing to elected officials, demonstrating for political causes and giving money to political candidates.
- voter turnout - the proportion of persons of voting age who actually vote in a given election.
 - Registration - the practice of placing citizens' names on an official list of voters before they are eligible to exercise their right to vote.

Additional: Chapter 4

- Civil liberties - the fundamental individual rights of a free society, such as freedom of speech and the right to a jury trial, which in the United States are protected by the Bill of Rights.
- Bill of Rights - the first ten amendments to the Constitution, which set forth basic protections for individual rights to free expression, fair trial and property.
- First Amendment – freedom of religion, speech, press, assembly and petition – “Congress shall make no law respecting an **establishment** of religion, or prohibiting the **free exercise** thereof...”
 - establishment clause - the First Amendment provision that government may not favor one religion over another, or religion over no religion, and that prohibits Congress from passing laws respecting the establishment of religion. (“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion”)
 - Free-exercise clause - a First Amendment provision that prohibits the government from interfering with the practice of religion or from prohibiting the free exercise of religion.
- **Libel** - a written offense that greatly harms a person's reputation.
- **Slander** - a spoken offense that greatly harms a person's reputation.
- Fifth Amendment - addressees protections against self-incrimination, guarantees of due process, eminent domain, and grand jury indictment for capital crimes
 - (incl. double jeopardy – “[N]or shall any person be subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb”)
 - Self Incrimination - when an individual accused of a crime is compelled to be a witness against himself in court.
 - To "plead the Fifth" is a refusal to answer a question because the response could form self incriminating evidence.
- Fourteenth Amendment – guarantees rights of citizenship, due process, and equal protection - **Makes states accountable for protecting the rights of citizens**
- Due Process -the constitutional requirement that government must follow proper legal procedures before a person can be legitimately punished for an alleged offense.

- **Engel v. Vitale (1962)**- determined that it is unconstitutional for state officials to compose an official school prayer and encourage its recitation in public schools.
- **New York Times v. Sullivan (1964)** - decided in 1964 → established guidelines for determining whether public officials and public figures could win damage suits for libel. To do so, said the Court, such individuals must prove that the defamatory statements made about them were made with "actual malice" and reckless disregard for the truth.
- **Gideon v. Wainwright (1963)**- stated that regardless of financial situation, everyone is entitled to a lawyer, regardless of financial situation
- **Griswold v. Connecticut (1965)**- Constitution protects a right to privacy
 - right to privacy - right to keep details of one's life confidential
→ implicitly protected by Bill of Rights
- **Roe v. Wade (1973)** – legalizes abortion by establishing national abortion guidelines; extends inferred right of privacy

Textbook Chapters

Chapter 1: Introducing Government in America

Chapter 2: The Constitution

Chapter 3: Federalism

Chapter 6: Public Opinion and Political Action

Chapter 8: Political Parties

Chapter 10: Elections and Voting Behavior

Chapter 12: The Congress

Chapter 13: The Presidency

Chapter 15: The Federal Bureaucracy

Chapter 16: The Federal Courts