

Exam 2: Historical Foundations and Citizen Engagement

PSC101: American Government and Politics

Fall 2019

Western Carolina University

Distributed: **Saturday, December 7 at 12:00PM**

Due via Email in PDF format to treinagel@email.wcu.edu: **Friday, December 13 at 5:00PM**

I will send you a confirmation email when I receive and am able to access your exam.

Instructions: This is a three-part, writing intensive exam. I believe that multiple choice, true/false, and fill-in-the-blank exams do little to further your critical thinking, analytical, or writing skills and are too rudimentary for those working toward a college degree. There will also be few points in your life when you will be working without additional reference material and other resources, so I encourage you to use your materials.

In the first section, you should select seven of the eleven short answer questions. These questions can be answered using material from the textbook, presentations, supplementary readings, and outside resources (as necessary).

In the second section, you should select one of the three multi-part questions. These questions should be answered using both our class materials, as well as outside resources. I suggest resources like the Hunter Library website, Google Scholar, and government resources, among others. These responses should use evidence from these outside sources to strengthen your response/contention and should include proper citations. As you review your response to this long free response question, I suggest going line-by-line and making sure that your responses are substantive (no “fluff” statements or claims) and include evidence to support the claim. Review your responses and ask yourself, “What’s my point?” and “Do I back it up?”

This exam includes a 7-point extra credit question related to Social Security reform. This is completely optional and will have no implications on the remainder of the exam.

Exams should be completed in Times New Roman, size 12 font, double spaced, and saved in PDF format. They should be emailed to treinagel@email.wcu.edu no later than 5:00PM on Friday, December 13. Neither section has length minimums/maximums. There is value in brevity, but I am interested in your ability to clearly, succinctly, and convincingly respond to the question.

The only restriction for this exam is that you may not work with one another or any others in completing the exam. Since I am not with you, this is strictly on the honor system. No matter the class or format, a grade on an exam is not worth compromising your own integrity.

Section I: Short Answer (Respond to seven (7) questions at 10 points each)

1. Three suggestions for reform to the current primary/caucus election model have been the ideas of a “National Primary,” a “Regional Primary,” and a designated “Window Primary.” *In your own words*, briefly describe each of these three models. In addition, provide an substantive

argument for which one of these four (the three proposals or the existing structure) you believe would be most advantageous for the United States.

2. Committees have become increasingly significant in the legislative branch, both in the US House of Representatives and the United States Senate. *In your own words*, identify and describe the three types of committees, explain the structure and role of committees/subcommittees, and discuss why they have become an increasingly influential part of our legislative process.

3. *In your own words*, describe the concept of the “iron triangle” as it relates to government bureaucracy. Using and citing articles, describe *in your own words* once instance of this triangle “in play” since 2015. An example (which may not be used) is the relationship between the Senate Finance Committee, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the AARP in a 2016 effort to mitigate increasing prescription drug costs in the Medicare program (<http://www.thefiscaltimes.com/2016/12/16/Obama-Abandons-Effort-Contain-Medicare-Drug-Prices>)

4. Describe the logistical differences between open, closed, and semi-closed primaries. Identify one potential benefit and one potential drawback for each of these three models.

5. The President of the United States has the ability to pardon a person convicted of a federal crime, such as mail fraud, espionage, or IRS tax evasion. The President does *not* have the ability to pardon a person convicted of a state crime, such as robbery, homicide, or domestic violence. *In your own words*, explain why this is the case and how it relates to the idea of American federalism.

6. Article 1 of the Constitution states “The Congress shall have Power...To declare War...” Technically speaking, there have only been five conflicts have garnered declarations of war by Congress, the most recent being World War II. Since that point, the United States Military has engaged in conflicts in Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Iraq, and others. What were the motives for the power “to declare war” being vested in the legislative branch rather than the executive or judicial branch? Do military engagements post-WWII violate the Constitution? Why/Why not?

7. In an interview, former Vice Chair of the US Federal Reserve System Alice Rivlin asserted that “There is the problem of unequal resources [among the different states and local governments]. I think one has to deal with that in any country, but certainly if one is proposing some reduction of central responsibility, you have to deal with how resources can be distributed more equally across jurisdictions.” Does Rivlin’s comment reflect or contradict the ideas discussed in *The Federalist Papers*? How so? (Provide specific examples)

8. In *Federalist #46*, Madison claims that “Many considerations, besides those suggested on a former occasion, seem to place it beyond doubt that the first and most natural attachment of the people will be to the governments of their respective States” and that “The federal and State governments are in fact but different agents and trustees of the people, constituted with different powers, and designed for different purposes.” *In your own words*, discuss what those different purposes and powers manifested themselves at the time.

9. In Presidential elections, “Super Tuesday” is a defining point in the parties’ nomination process. *In your own words*, explain why this day is so critical. North Carolina’s primary is traditionally held *after* Super Tuesday (for instance, two weeks later in the 2016 Presidential nomination process). Explain the consequences of this timing.

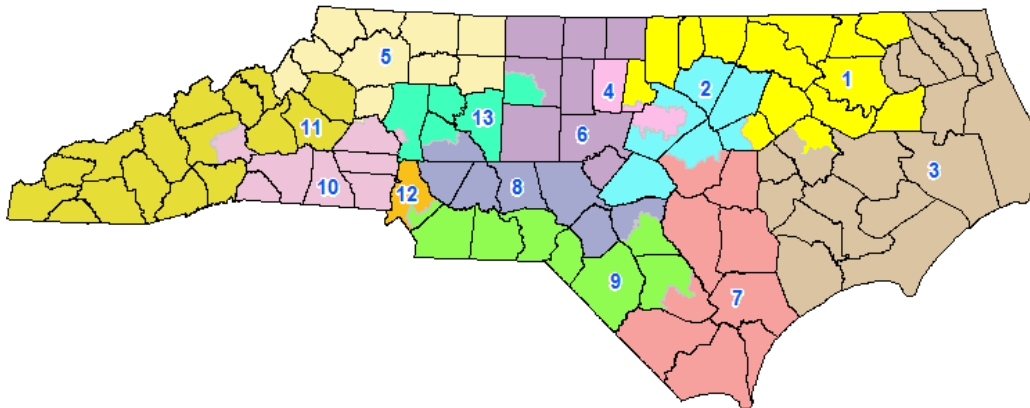
10. The “source” of power in the federalist model is regularly debated. *In your own words*, explain the difference between a “top-down” flow of power among federal, state, and local governments; and a “middle-out” flow of power between the three levels of government. How did articles (like *The Federalist Papers*) and the founding documents of the United States intend the structure to be, and why?

11. According to the US Census Bureau (<https://www.census.gov/prod/2011pubs/fas-10.pdf>), just over \$2,000 in federal funds were provided to state and local governments for every person. Using your knowledge of American Federalism, the balance of power between levels of government, and the notion of the “power of the purse” in public policy, discuss why you think this *is* or *is not* at odds with the state-federal relationship envisioned in *The Federalist Papers*.

Section II: Long Essay (Respond to one (1) questions at 30 points)

1. Examples of specific policies in the United States is the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988, the creation of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) in 2011, and the Safe Drinking Water Act in 1974. *In your own words*, write an evidence driven essay identifying and summarizing a specific American public policy not mentioned above. In this essay, you should discuss how specifically the federal government plays its four roles (regulator, protector, promoter, and manager) in that policy. Conclude your essay by discussing what metrics would be most plausible and useful in gauging the “success” or “failure” of that particular piece of policy.

2. A rather ubiquitous discussion in North Carolina recently has been partisan gerrymandering of Congressional districts. In January 2018, *League of Women Voters of North Carolina v. Rucho* was decided by a federal three-judge panel. In that decision, the panel determined that the Congressional districts developed following the 2010 Census were gerrymandered and should be redrawn. Later in the same month, the Supreme Court of the United States put a stay on that decision, meaning the lines did not have to be immediately redrawn.



In *your own words*, write an evidence-driven essay that discusses 1) the concept of gerrymandering, 2) how “gerrymandering” has been defined in different situations, 3) efforts to combat gerrymandering in the United States, 4) which court decisions have had significant impact on gerrymandering, and 5) the challenges facing efforts to combat gerrymandering.

3. American public policy is an intense undertaking, often taking years to conceive, develop, implement, and evaluate. Another component of the intensity is the interdisciplinary nature of the challenges at hand. There is a degree of inter-relatedness that can’t be escaped, and no policy initiative can exist in isolation in a single discipline. From the material read for the last week of class, an example offered was the “cycle of poverty,” which involved an education policy component, an employment policy component, a housing policy component, and a healthcare policy component. Identify and summarize something (other than poverty) perceived as a major problem in the United States that should be addressed by new or changed public policy. Provide background on the issue, using empirical evidence. Continue by identifying the different policy fields (education, housing, healthcare, etc.) you believe have a proverbial “hand” in the issue, explaining what the vested interest might be. Conclude your essay by discussing what metrics would be most plausible and useful in gauging the “success” or “failure” of the policy issue in those respective fields.

Section III: Extra Credit (Up to 7 additional points)

1. Social Security as a supplemental retirement income was established in the United States in 1935. Since 2010, the Social Security Administration has been paying *out* more funds than the revenue it brings *in* from payroll taxes (6.2% of everyone’s pay up to a statutory cap, seen as “FICA” on your paycheck). The Social Security Trust Fund is projected by the Social Security Administration Trustees to be depleted by 2036 at which point benefits being paid out to retirees will begin to decrease (http://www.ssa.gov/oact/tr/2011/II_D_project.html).

The challenges facing our existing Social Security system are widely known – longer life expectancy causing recipients to receive benefits for many more years than had been the case when the program was established; the “baby boomer” generation leaving the workforce and reaching retirement age, thereby placing significantly more demands on increasingly limited resources; and the changing dynamic of retirement planning and private investment (401K, IRA programs) that has largely redefined the financial aspects of retirees.

In an evidence-driven and fully cited essay, propose how to address the current challenges and looming depletion of funds for the Social Security Administration. Identify, explain, and justify three specific policy changes, and why you think they are necessary to the long-term sustainability of the Social Security program in the United States.