

PSCI 2306 • U.S. and Texas Government (Fall 2017)

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Review Sheet for Exam #2

Exam Format

- This examination will feature two sections: a 40-question multiple choice section and a 5-question short answer/identification section. Each multiple choice question is worth one point, and each short answer question is worth two points.
 - The number of questions on each topic in the exam will (approximately) reflect the relative time spent on each topic in the course. A topic that was covered over two lectures should thus have approximately (but perhaps not exactly) twice as many exam questions as a topic that only lasted for one lecture.
 - The exam will draw from both the assigned readings (including both textbook and workbook) and the lecture notes. Around 1/3 of the exam questions will be drawn from materials in the readings that were not covered at all in lecture, with the rest reflecting topics that were only covered in lecture or were covered in both lecture and the readings.
- Note that in the past, questions drawn from the readings (even on concepts or topics specifically listed on the review sheet) have produced the lowest scores of any questions on the test, so you should take special care to study these topics on the review sheet.
- The exam will not be written with the intention of fooling students with trick questions or with the goal of failing as many students as possible. The main goal of this course is to provide students with an understanding of how American (and Texas) government works and why the system was designed this way, so the exam questions will reflect this goal.
 - All needed exam materials (such as Scantron sheets) will be provided for you, except for your preferred pencil. No notes or other materials will be permitted during the exam.
 - Note that no bathroom breaks are permitted during the exam -- once you leave the room, you can't return without a five letter grade penalty. Also, be on time -- once the first person finishes and leaves the room, anybody else who enters will suffer an automatic deduction of five letter grades; be aware that students sometimes finish exams like this in as little as 5-10 minutes.

Advice on Studying

- Be sure to review both the assigned readings (textbook AND workbook!) and the lecture notes for each topic covered in this portion of the course. If you missed one or more days of class, be sure to get a copy of those notes from somebody who was there.
- The textbook offers a number of useful study aids that will help you to prepare for the exam. Each chapter concludes with a list of key terms introduced or discussed in the chapter (with the page where each was covered), as well as a "Review the Chapter" section that lists a number of key points from each section of the chapter that students should understand. These items offer a useful way to evaluate your readiness for the test -- go through every term in the list to see if you can provide a good definition of the term and a good explanation of why it is important from the perspective of this course (how does this help us understand how American government works or why?), and try to answer each of these critical thinking questions.
- The list of topics on this review sheet is not legally binding; these are just suggestions for the most important topics that are most likely to be on the test (some of which may not actually appear on the test). If you understand all of these topics you are much more likely to do well on the test.
- One strategy for using this review sheet is the "foreign student test": imagine that a friend of yours from another country (who doesn't know anything about American government or politics) asked you to explain one of the concepts on this list. Can you give a clear explanation of the concept? If not, you might want to review your notes and the assigned readings until you can.

Topics Covered in This Portion of the Course

Federalism / State & Local Government

The main focus of this topic (including both lecture notes and the assigned reading) is the relationship between different levels of government. While most of the first portion of the course focused on the federal government, the fifty states are an important part of American politics, and there are often important areas of disagreement between the federal and state governments (as well as between the states and their local governments, although local governments are considered to be creations of the states and are not covered directly by the Constitution). Think about the powers assigned to (or forbidden to) each level of government, as well as the reasons that these powers were divided this way.

Topics (Partially) Covered in Lecture

- Definition of federalism, generally and in US system
- Alternatives to federalism (confederation/confederacy, unitary government): how do they differ? how common are they in modern countries?
- Emergence of US federalism: federalist vs. anti-federalist debate, "dual sovereignty" compromise (Supremacy Clause, 10th Amendment), relative number of federal-state-local governments today
- Powers granted to the national government by the US Constitution: enumerated powers (including Commerce Clause, Spending Clause), implied powers (Necessary & Proper Clause), denied powers
- Powers granted to the state governments by the US Constitution: relations with other states (including full faith & credit clause), elections, denied powers, reserved powers (10th Amendment), powers typically reserved to states, dispute settlement between federal & state powers
- Cooperative federalism and intergovernmental grants (including federal mandates, fiscal federalism, categorical and block grants, controversies, unfunded mandates)
- Controversies over federalism (including *McCulloch v. Maryland*, interpretation of Commerce Clause, recent trends; current examples: same-sex marriage, marijuana laws)
- Purpose and typical roles of state and local government (including Dillon's Rule, home rule in Texas, typical division of responsibilities between state and local governments in Texas)
- Types of local governments in Texas (county, municipal, school districts, special purpose districts)
- Typical sources of local government funding, typical types of local government spending

Additional Topics from the Textbook (Edwards Chapter 3)

- More details on federalism in other countries
- Federalism and democracy

Additional Topics from the Workbook (Chapter 2)

- Examples: federalism and marijuana laws, federalism and Medicaid
- More details on block vs. categorical grants
- Example: federalism and education policy (sex education, Common Core)

Additional Topics from the Textbook (Gibson Chapter 3)

- More details on changing patterns in federal-state relationships
- More details on federalism and state finances
- Transnational regionalism

Additional Topics from the Textbook (Gibson Chapter 4)

- Texas city government and politics
- Texas county government and politics
- More details on special districts and independent school districts
- Solutions to problems of local government

Federal Legislative Branch: Congress

The main focus of this topic (including both lecture notes and the assigned reading) is the role of Congress. This includes the organization of Congress, the process by which a bill becomes a law, and the other powers and responsibilities of Congress (such as the "power of the purse" and "power of the sword"). It also includes the relationship of Congresspersons and their constituents, which may not be as clear or straightforward as many people believe.

Topics (Partially) Covered in Lecture

- Importance of Congress under Articles, Constitution
- For both House and Senate: number of members, length of term
- Redistricting and gerrymandering (relevant for House, Senate, or both? impact?)
- Congressional leaders (Speaker of House, President of Senate, President Pro Tempore, Majority/Minority Leaders, Majority/Minority Whips): selection, roles
- Congressional caucuses/conferences: membership, roles
- Congressional committees: main purposes (distributive & informational), purposes of each type (standing-select-joint)
- How a bill becomes a law (introduced, referred to committee/subcommittee, debate in full chamber, vote in full chamber, conference committee, go to president for signature/veto/override)
- Types of vetoes (including pocket vetoes, line item vetoes, veto overrides)
- Ultimate fate of bills in Congress (where do bills stop?)
- Filibusters: purpose, how they can be stopped, role in lawmaking
- Major legislative roles (power of the purse/budgeting, confirmation hearings, power of the sword/foreign policy, War Powers Act, impeachment & conviction)
- Congress members' relationship with constituents-party-lobbyists
- Incumbency and reelection (general pattern, explanations, impact)

Additional Topics from the Textbook (Edwards Chapter 11)

- More details on legislators' backgrounds
- More details on advantages of incumbency
- Congress and democracy

Additional Topics from the Workbook (Chapter 5)

- More details on delegate vs. trustee models of representation
- Differences between Texas and federal legislatures

The Texas Legislature

The main focus of this topic (including both lecture notes and the assigned reading) is on the ways that the Texas legislature is similar to, or different from, the federal Congress.

Topics (Partially) Covered in Lecture

- Basic structure of legislature (number and name of chambers), number of members, length of term
- Gerrymandering?: Redistricting and competitiveness of legislative seats
- Legislative professionalism/institutionalization: how professional is it (and why), impact
- Presiding officers in each chamber (Lt. Governor, President Pro Tem, Speaker, Speaker Pro Tem): selection, powers and responsibilities
- Similarities and differences with U.S. Congress (functions, procedures)

Additional Topics from the Textbook (Gibson Chapter 5)

- More details on redistricting in Texas
- More details on legislative leadership and committees

- More details on the state lawmaking process
- Legislative behavior

Federal Executive Branch: The Presidency

The main focus of this topic (including both lecture notes and the assigned reading) is on the leadership at the top of the executive branch, comprising the president and his or her administration. This includes the way the president is elected (and succeeded, if necessary) as well as the president's powers and relationship with the other branches of government. This topic concludes with a brief overview of the Cabinet, Executive Office of the President, and the rest of the president's administration.

Topics (Partially) Covered in Lecture

- Historical background (why did President take this form?)
- Length of term, qualifications for office
- Selection process (primary election, general election, Electoral College)
- Presidential succession: when/how (how often has this happened?), order of succession
- Major presidential powers and responsibilities: symbolic/leadership, commander in chief, foreign policy, legislative, administrative, judicial
- Limitations of pres. power (both domestic and foreign policy)
- Relationship with the people
- Relationship with Congress: role, tools/techniques, ways to get around Congress (executive orders, executive agreements, foreign policy)
- Relationship with the courts
- Summary of presidential power: pres. restraint vs. pres. activism
- The Administration: composition (VP, Cabinet, Executive Office of the President, White House Office), purpose

Additional Topics from the Textbook (Edwards Chapter 12).

- More details on presidents' backgrounds
- Presidents vs. prime ministers
- More details on the president and the people
- The president and the press
- The president and democracy

Additional Topics from the Workbook (Chapter 6)

- Three primary goals of presidents (good public policy, reelection, historical relevance)
- More details on presidential power
- More details on presidential approval

Federal Executive Branch: The Bureaucracy

The main focus of this topic (including both lecture notes and the assigned reading) is the federal bureaucracy, which includes several million people who make up the majority of the executive branch. This includes the general idea of bureaucracy -- what it includes, how it supposedly helps produce more efficient results, and why it sometimes fails to live up to this promise. This also includes details of the federal bureaucracy such as the types of agencies, their relationship with the other branches of government, and their overall effectiveness.

Topics (Partially) Covered in Lecture

- Bureaucracy: definition (hierarchical authority, task specialization, formalized rules/SOPs); general goals; potential problems

- Elements of U.S. bureaucracy (Cabinet departments, independent executive agencies, independent regulatory commissions, government corporations): purpose of each, examples from lecture
- Selection processes for bureaucrats (both top-level and lower levels)
- Role within the executive branch (interpret-implement-enforce laws, advise federal officials); relationship with the president
- Relationship with Congress (confirm agency leaders, pass laws to be implemented, funding, oversight)
- Relationship with federal courts
- EPA example: role of politics in strengthening and weakening of bureaucratic agencies
- Overall evaluation of U.S. bureaucracy

Additional Topics from the Textbook (Edwards Chapter 14)

- More details on bureaucracy and policy implementation
- Privatization
- More details on bureaucracy and regulation
- Bureaucracies and democracy

Additional Topics from the Workbook (Chapter 8)

- Importance (and difficulty) of interagency coordination

The Texas Executive and Bureaucracy

The main focus of this topic (including both lecture notes and the assigned reading) is on the executive branch in Texas government. The Texas governor is much weaker than the U.S. president, but the governor, other executives, and bureaucracy have many broad similarities to the federal executive branch.

Topics (Partially) Covered in Lecture

- Details of the plural executive, weakness of Texas governor (and benefits/drawbacks of weakness)
- Length of term, qualifications for governor
- Powers and responsibilities of the governor (executive, legislative, judicial)
- Roles and responsibilities of the other executives (Lt. governor, attorney general, comptroller, land commissioner, agriculture commissioner, sec. of state, Railroad Commission, State Board of Education)
- Size and purpose of Texas bureaucracy
- Relationship of the bureaucracy with elected officials, legislature; sunset process

Additional Topics from the Textbook (Gibson Chapter 6)

- More details on governors' backgrounds
- Informal resources of the governor
- Leadership styles of governors

Additional Topics from the Textbook (Gibson Chapter 7)

- More details on issues facing bureaucratic systems in Texas