**American Government**

**Final Exam**

**Study Guide**

**Ch 1: Gov. 101**

* Forms of Government
* Principles of Government
* Rights, Duties, Responsibilities of Citizenship
* What’s the difference between systems of government and systems of economy?
* Why do Democracies use Capitalism as their Economic System?

**Ch2: Origins of US Gov.**

* Origins of Representative Gov.
  + Origins of representative government
  + Magna Carta
  + Petition of Right
  + English Bill of Rights
  + Unicameral vs Bicameral
* What is the Declaration of Independence? What’s in it? Why and to whom was it written?
* What happened at the:
  + Stamp Act Congress
  + 1st Continental Congress
  + 2nd Continental Congress
* Common features of State Constitutions

**Ch3: The Constitution**

* **Know The Articles… what powers are provided in the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th**
* Basic Principles
  + Popular sovereignty
  + Limited government
  + Separation of powers
  + Checks and balances
  + Judicial review
  + Federalism
* Amending the Constitution
  + Amendment
  + Ratification… what’s the process?
  + Bill of Rights… KNOW YOUR RIGHTS!!!
* Interpreting the Constitution
  + Executive agreement
  + Electoral college… whats its purpose?
  + Treaty
  + Cabinet… whats its purpose?

**Ch5: Political Parties**

* What is a political party? … what do they do?
* Why do we have a 2-party system?
* How does our 2-party system compare to multiparty systems?
* (Sec 2) the history of our 2-party system:
  + 4 major eras of our party system
* (Sec 3) Third (minor) Parties:
  + Classifications of minor 3rd parties
  + Effect of minor parties in American politics and government
  + Why they’re important
* (Sec 4) Party Organization:
  + National
  + State
  + Local

**Ch6: Voters and Voter Behavior**

* (Sec 1) The Right to Vote:
  + How have voting rights changed over the course of American history? suffrage, franchise, electorate, poll tax
  + Who has the power to set voting qualifications? Where do those powers originate?
* (Sec 2) Voter Qualifications:
  + What are the qualifications for voting and how have they changed over time? alien, transient, registration, purge, poll, literacy
  + What’s the purpose of laws requiring voter registration? How do registration laws vary from state to state?
  + Why should voter lists be purged regularly?
* (Sec 3) Suffrage and Civil Rights:
  + Which Constitutional amendments have to do with suffrage and civil rights?
  + What are some of the key landmark laws associated with creating greater voter rights equality?
  + How has gerrymandering been used to prevent the fulfillment of the 15th amendment?
  + What is preclearance? What is the process meant to prevent?
* (Sec 4) Voter Behavior:
  + What factors influence voter behavior?
  + Define: off-year election, ballot fatigue, political efficacy, gender gap, party identification, straight-ticket voting, split-ticket voting, independent voter
  + How do the following effect voting behavior: income, occupation, education, gender, age, religion, ethnic background, party identification

**Ch 7: The Electoral Process**

* (Sec 1) The Nominating Process
  + Define: nomination, general election, caucus, direct primary, closed primary, open primary, runoff primary
  + How do parties choose a candidate to run for office?
  + What’s the purpose of a party convention? Why are they less important today that they had been in the past?
* (Sec 2) Elections
  + Define: absentee voting, coattail effect, precinct
  + What degree of federal control exists over elections and election rules?
  + What’s the difference between: an Australian Ballot, Sample Ballot, Bed-Sheet Ballot?
* (Sec 3) Money and Elections
  + Define: PAC, subsidy, hard money, soft money
  + How has the recent “Citizens United” Supreme Court decision changed/ impacted campaign finance and elections?
  + What role does the Federal Elections Commission play in the electoral process? What rules governing elections do they enforce?
  + In what ways can a campaign fund their race?

**Ch 8: Mass Media and Opinion**

* (Sec 1) The Formation of Public Opinion
  + Define: public opinion, mass media, peer group
  + In what ways do the following factors influence public opinion: family, school, peer groups, mass media, historic events,
  + What are the two most important early influences on many people’s political socialization? Why?
* (Sec 2) Measuring Public Opinion
  + Define: mandate, interest group, opinion poll, straw poll, sample, random sample, quota sample
  + Why do victorious candidates sometimes claim a *mandate*?
  + What are the 5 steps in the polling process?
* (Sec 3) The Mass Media
  + How has the technological development of mass media influenced public opinion and politics?
  + How has new media technologies influenced campaigns and their messages?
  + In what ways are the influences of mass media limited?

**Ch 10: Congress**

* (Sec 1) The National Legislature
  + What’s the intended purpose of a bicameral legislature? (historical, practical, theoretical)
  + What is a congressional: term, session, recess, special session?
  + Why is the President’s power to convene and dismiss Congress very limited?
* (Sec 2) The House of Representatives
  + How is the number of representatives from any particular state determined?
  + What qualifications must a member of the House meet?
  + Define: apportion, reapportion, off-year election, single-member district, incumbent
  + What role does gerrymandering play in the struggle for power between the parties in our Congress?
* (Sec 3) The Senate
  + What are the qualifications for office in the Senate?
  + Why is the Senate called a continuous body?
  + How does a senator’s constituency differ from that of a member of the house?
* (Sec 4) The Members of Congress
  + Define: delegate, trustee, floor consideration, oversight function, franking privilege
  + What are the 5 major roles played by members of Congress in their jobs?

**Ch12: Congress in Action**

* (Sec 1) Congress Organizes
  + Identify: Speaker of the House, President of the Senate, President pro tempore, Floor leader, majority leader, minority leader, whip, committee chairman
  + How important/powerful are committee chairmen in Congress? explain
* (Sec 2) Committees in Congress
  + Whats the difference between a: standing committee, subcommittee, select committee, joint committee, and conference committee?
  + What are some of the most important and powerful committees in congress?
  + What are the benefits and drawbacks of the committee and subcommittee system used by Congress?
* (Sec 3) The House
  + What steps does a successful bill follow as it moves through the House?
  + Identify: joint resolution, concurrent resolution, rider, pigeonhole, quorum
  + What role does the Rules Committee play in the law-making process?
  + What happens to most bills in committee? Why?
* (Sec 4) The Senate
  + What are the major differences in the lawmaking process in the House and the Senate?
  + Identify: filibuster, cloture, veto, pocket veto
  + What are the four options a President has when a bill reaches his desk?

**Ch 14: The Presidency in Action**

* (Sec 1) The Growth of Presidential Power
  + Several presidents in American history have substantially expanded the powers of the office. Which presidents have expanded presidential powers? In what ways specifically?
  + How has the Executive Article fueled debate on presidential power?
  + How can the President use the mass media as a tool for the expansion of executive power?
* (Sec 2) The Executive Powers
  + What are the executive powers and how were they established?
  + What is an executive order? When and why might a President use this power?
  + What is executive privilege? Why is this power controversial? How have Presidents used this power in the past? Examples
  + Why is the Appointment power a useful tool for a President?
  + What is the Ordinance power and from what sources does it arise?
* (Sec 3) Diplomatic and Military Powers
  + Define: treaty, executive agreement, recognition, persona non grata
  + How are treaties and executive agreements used differently in matters of foreign diplomacy?
  + In what instances have past Presidents engaged in military action WITHOUT Congressional approval? Is/was that legal? explain
* (Sec 4) Legislative and Judicial Powers
  + In what ways can the President check the actions of the legislative and judicial branches?
  + Identify: pocket veto, line-item veto, reprieve, pardon, clemency, commutation, amnesty
  + When might a President issue a Signing Statement? What is their purpose?
  + Why is the idea of a line-item veto controversial?
  + Explain how these presidential judiciary powers differ: reprieve, pardon, clemency, commutation, amnesty
  + Why is the threat of a Presidential veto a powerful tool AND a check on the power of the legislature?