**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?