AP US GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

UNIT ONE: CONSTITUTIONAL UNDERPINNINGS (10-15%) Border cards in BLUE
1. Define democracy. What makes a society democratic?
2. What are three unique features of democracy in the United States?
3. What were three things wrong with the Articles of Confederation? What motivated the framers of the Constitution?
4. What are the differences between unitary, federal, and confederal systems of government?
5. What were the original two parties in the US and what were three principles espoused by each?
6. How does a presidential system of democracy differ from a parliamentary system?
7. What are the basic principles of separation of powers and checks and balances? Give three examples.
8. What are three benefits and consequences of our federal system?
9. What are the three types of mandates?
10. What is the difference between a block and categorical grant?
11. Explain the current relationship between the federal government and the state governments.
12. What was the main point of Federalist #51?

Additional Vocab:
A. Centralists/Decentralists  F. Concurrent power
B. Checks and Balances  G. Implied Power
C. Republicanism  H. Elastic Clause
D. Federalism  I. Federalist Papers
E. Confederation  J. Supermajority

UNIT TWO: THE POLITICAL PROCESS (10-15%) Border cards in ORANGE
13. What is political socialization? Identify the five main agents of socialization in the United States.
14. Explain how James Madison in Federalist #10 defined factions. Why did Madison fear factions, and how was the Constitution designed to cure the “mischief of faction”?
15. What is an interest group? Give me three examples and tell me what each does.
16. What is a PAC? How is it different from an interest group?
17. What are three techniques to interest groups use to influence government?
18.
19. Identify and describe the main elements of the 2002 McCain-Feingold Finance Reform Act.
20. What is Citizens United vs. F.E.C.?
21. What is a political party? What is the difference between an interest group and a party?
23. What is a third party? Identify three main obstacles to third parties candidates’ success in US election.
24. Define realignment. What is a critical and secular realignment?
25. Identify and describe four realigning periods in the history of political parties.
26. What coalitions make up the two main parties?
27. Define de-alignment and discuss factors that influence this. How has it affected political campaigns?
28. Are parties strong today or are they in decline? Give four reasons for each side.
29. Define majority and plurality elections. Define winner-take-all and proportional representation.
30. Define primary, caucus, and convention.
31. How has the process of electing presidential candidates changed?
32. What were the effects of the McGovern-Fraser Commission?
33. What is meant by front loading?
34. How does the Electoral College system work?
35. Discuss and give three examples of how campaigns have become candidate centered.
36. What are five essential elements of a typical campaign for President, Senate, and the House of Representatives?
37. Identify trends in voter turnout in the last forty years.
38. Identify three major institutional obstacles and major demographic obstacles to voter turnout.
39. Identify demographic groups that vote frequently and demographic obstacles to voter turnout. Give at least three example of each.
40. Why does the media seem to have little effect on political preferences?

Additional Vocab:
- A. Balancing the Ticket
- B. Types of primaries (Closed, blanket, open)
- C. Gender gap
- D. General election
- E. Incumbent
- F. Party Identification
- G. Realigning election
- H. *Amicus curiae*
- I. Iron triangle
- J. Lobbying
- K. Political Action Committee
- L. Factions

UNIT THREE: THE POLITICAL PROCESS (50%) Border cards in GREEN

CONGRESS

41. What is the demographic composition of Congress and what are three reasons why it doesn’t it reflect the national population?
42. What is the impact of reapportionment and redistricting on the composition of Congress? What is the role of the state legislature in the process (gerrymandering)? What Supreme Court rulings have affected the process? What types of gerrymandering are unconstitutional?
43. What are the two main Constitutional powers of Congress? List five enumerated powers.
44. How does incumbency affect House and Senate races? Why? Why is there higher turnover in the House?
45. Identify and describe the at least five factors which influence the legislative process (this includes internal influence structure of Congress and committee and outside influences such as interest groups, constituencies, staff, parties and the president).
46. What affect did the 1994 election have on the committee system?
47. Why do Americans “love their Congressman,” yet dislike Congress as a whole?
48. Identify and describe the major positions in Congress (Speaker of the House, majority/minority leaders and whips). List their last names as well.
49. Identify and describe the types of committees and their functions: Ways & Means, Finance, Appropriations, Rules and conference.
50. Discuss how Congress oversees the bureaucracy. Why is it often an ineffective procedure?
51. How and why do members of Congress participate in the practice of logrolling, consensus building and pork barrel? Define each term.
52. What is the significance of a committee assignment for a member of Congress?
53. What was the Budget and Impoundment Act and the Gramm Rudman Hollings Act?
54. What is the War Powers Act? Why was it passed by Congress?

PRESIDENCY

55. What are five formal and five informal powers of the President?
56. Why are the informal roles more important?
57. Define executive orders, executive agreements, executive privilege and impoundment of funds?
58. What is the role of the President during a war?
59. What is the role of the President in forming a national budget? What is the purpose of the OMB and was its Congressional equivalent?
60. What is the relationship between the President and the Congress?
61. What is a veto threat and what are the consequences of it?
62. How frequently are vetoes overridden? Why?
63. To what extent does the president have the power to persuade? What are his tools for doing so?
64. What is the relationship between Presidents and the media?
65. What is the cabinet? List the four or five most important members?
66. Who are White House (EOP, NSC, etc) staffers and what has their effect been on the modern presidency?
67. What is the process of impeachment/conviction of a president?
68. What is meant by the imperial presidency?

BUREAUCRACY

69. What is the size of the federal bureaucracy? How is it organized and what role does it play in making and implementing public policy?
70. What is the difference between agencies, departments, independent regulatory agencies/commissions and government corporations?
71. What impact do the executive and legislative branches have on the federal bureaucracy? Specifically how does the Congress oversee the bureaucracy?
72. In what ways does the bureaucracy exercise powers that are quasi-legislative?
73. What is the role of the bureaucracy in the budget process?
74. What are iron triangles/issue networks and how do they influence policy making in the bureaucracy?
75. What is the spoils system and how did it change to the “merit” system?
76. Why is it so hard to fire a bureaucrat?
77. What is the Hatch act and its 1993 follow-up?
78. Major criticism of the federal bureaucracy and are they justified?

THE COURTS
79. How is the national court system organized?
80. What is the relationship between the national and state court systems?
81. Identify and describe the three levels of the federal court system? What cases do each have jurisdiction over?
82. How does a case reach the Supreme Court?
83. In what cases does the Supreme Court have original jurisdiction?
84. How do most cases in the US end?
85. Identify and discuss the steps involved in appointing and confirming a federal judge? What is a “litmus test”? What steps does the Senate take?
86. How does politics influence judicial selection?
87. What evidence suggests that public opinion affects the judicial decisions?
88. Compare judicial activism and judicial restraint.
89. Identify and discuss major rulings of the Warren, Burger and Rehnquist courts.

Additional Vocab:
A. Original v. Appellate jurisdiction
B. Conference committee
C. Cloture
D. Executive agreement
E. Executive order
F. Filibuster
G. Franking privilege
H. Gerrymandering
I. Impeachment
J. Impoundment
K. Rule of Four
L. Rules Committee
M. Ways and Means Committee

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UNIT FOUR: CIVIL LIBERTIES & CIVIL RIGHTS/PUBLIC POLICY (20%)

90. How was the Bill of Rights nationalized and made applicable to the states? What was the Barron v. Baltimore ruling and how was it modified? Gitlow v. NY?
91. What does the First Amendment to the US Constitution consist of? How do the Free Exercise and Establishment clauses sometimes contradict each other?
92. What is the Lemon test established in Lemon v. Kurtzman?
93. How has the Lemon test been applied to separation of Church and State (see lesson plan)? This includes nativity scenes, menorahs, public monies to secular schools, etc.
94. What is the Miller test and how has it been interpreted?
95. What is strict scrutiny and heightened interest?
96. How have various constitutional rights evolved?
97. What is meant by each of the following: equal protection clause, due process clause, reserved clause?

PUBLIC POLICY

98. What is public policy? Who/what is involved in the process?
99. What are the stages of the policy-making process?
100. Identify and describe major public policy models: incrementalism, elite and class theory, pluralist, and hyperpluralism.

Additional vocab:
A. Clear and present doctrine
B. Civil liberties
C. Civil rights
D. Establishment clause
E. Exclusionary rule
F. Incorporation
G. Miranda warnings
H. Prior restraint.