

## POL2 – Midterm Study Guide

### **Based on all reading and lectures before the midterm.**

Be sure to bring blue books – **not** the big “law school” kind – to class. Please do not write your names in them prior to class, as they will be exchanged once you arrive.

There will be two parts to the exam (each worth 50 points):

- Part I: Short answer – similar to the homework. Please feel free to write a number, a word, a few words, a sentence, a few sentences, or even in bullet point form. However, if you get an answer incorrect, you may still be able to get partial credit if you have provided not only the answer, but also a compelling explanation for your answer.
- Part II: Essay – I give you 1 essay question and everyone is required to answer it. In the essays, you should write in complete sentences, and in standard paragraph form. You should make an argument in the first paragraph (ideally, the first sentence) and then support that argument with your discussion in the rest of the essay.

At the top of the exam, you will have the following instructions:

Midterm – February 18, 2016

POL2 – Scheiner

100 points total

### **There are questions on the FRONT & BACK of this paper!**

**Instructions:** Please write on your blue book: (1) [Your name], (2) “POL2 – Midterm,” (3) the name of your TA & section day/time, and (4) Today’s date. Other instructions:

- When you are done with the exam, **PLEASE BE VERY, VERY QUIET** as you get up, turn in your exam, and leave the classroom.
- If possible, please write only on one side of each page. (It can be hard to read when front & back of pages have writing on them.) For this reason, you might need 2 blue books.
- Please give the exam to your TA (unless the TA is not present).
- **Please turn in the exam questions with your answer sheet. Blue books turned in without exam questions will not be accepted.**
- Be sure to write legibly, preferably with blue or black pen ink. (Illegible answers will get a zero.)
- Nothing but pens and blue books on your desks. (No dictionaries or phones, please.) **If you have anything besides the blue book, exam question, and pen out, we will automatically take away your exam and give you a score of 0** (unless an instructor has given you permission).
- Pace yourself well – you only have a limited amount of time.
- Your answers should be written in your blue book.
- Also, please write the question number and letter (e.g., Part I, 1a) prior to each answer in the blue book.

### **For your essay answer (Part II):**

- Be sure to make an argument that you state clearly at beginning of each essay. You should present a thesis statement very early (ideally first sentence of the essay or, at latest, the end of the first paragraph).
- Be sure to cite authors and their arguments by name.

- Probably a good idea to outline your answer before writing it. Be sure to focus on answering the question as you go along (and not meander around, simply showing all you know on the topic).

In the remainder of this study guide, I offer suggestions for what you should emphasize in studying for the Midterm. The study guide is intended to highlight the most important ideas. However, **you are responsible for everything we have covered in lecture**, and you should be able to use the readings as examples for arguments/ideas.

### **Basic concepts:**

- Social science
- Scientific method
- Model
- Hypothesis
- “Testable implications”
- U.S. nomination and presidential selection processes
- Variables
  - Independent (explanatory)
  - Dependent (outcome)
  - Importance of variation
- Comparative politics
  - And the differences between comparative politics and other subfields in political science
- Correlation vs. Causation
- Mechanism (process)
- Social cleavages
- All of the electoral rules discussed in class
  - And examples of countries that use each system
- Presidential vs. parliamentary systems
- Single party majority vs. Coalition government
- Party “discipline”
- No confidence motions
- “Politics in space”
  - Relationship between electoral rule and ideological placement
  - Median voter theorem
- Congruence

**Authors/Scholars whose arguments/analysis/work you should know – you should be able to name each scholar and explain his/her work:**

- Lave and March
- Levitt and Dubner (Freakonomics)
- Brady et al.
- Duverger
- Cox
- Linz
- Mainwaring and Shugart
- Downs
- Huber and Powell

**Should understand everything in the homework**

**Be able to write essays on the following:**

Again, be sure to make an argument that you state clearly at beginning of the essay. You should present a thesis statement very early (ideally first sentence of the essay or, at latest, the end of the first paragraph).

- Determine criteria (e.g., stability) for what you want from a government/political/party system. What types of institutions will help you achieve these aims? And why would you choose the institutions that you do (i.e., how do the institutions you choose help you achieve the aims you laid out)?
  - Presidential or parliamentary system?
  - What type of electoral rules to elect people to the legislature? (Be specific – e.g., if you say PR, do you want closed-list or open-list?)
  - How do combinations of the above (e.g., presidential system + first-past-the-post with primaries to elect politicians to the legislature) help/hurt you in achieving your aims?
- Do the institutions that you chose in the above question help or hurt your ability to achieve the following aims? (Also, please explain why the institutions – including the combination of rules – that you choose help or hurt you in achieving these aims.)
  - Government/political stability?
  - Representation of society?
  - Ease of passing legislation?
- Can any set of institutions help with all of these aims at the same time? If no, which factor(s) (stability, representation, ease of passing legislation) is/are most important to you and why?
- **Be sure to justify your answers and, where possible, refer to points and arguments made in lecture and the reading. Where possible, refer to authors from the reading and lecture by name.**