

Texas A&M University (TAMU) POLS207 State and Local Government Exam 1 Practice Exam (Sample)

Study Guide



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Questions

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1. What is the process to remove a governor from office in Texas?
 - A. Resignation
 - B. Recall
 - C. Impeachment
 - D. Judicial review
2. Which of the following is a term used for the legislative session in Texas?
 - A. Special session
 - B. Extraordinary session
 - C. Regular session
 - D. All of the above
3. What is the term length for a Texas state senator?
 - A. 2 years
 - B. 4 years
 - C. 6 years
 - D. 8 years
4. What system does Texas use to elect its judges?
 - A. Nonpartisan elections
 - B. Partisan elections
 - C. Appointments by the Governor
 - D. Merit-based selection
5. Which amendment grants states the power to regulate their own affairs?
 - A. The First Amendment
 - B. The Fifth Amendment
 - C. The Tenth Amendment
 - D. The Fourteenth Amendment

6. Which of the following is NOT a method for amending certain state constitutions?
- A. Legislative proposal
 - B. Popular initiative
 - C. Executive decree
 - D. Constitutional conventions
7. What is the role of the Texas Comptroller?
- A. To manage state finances, including revenue collection and budgeting
 - B. To supervise local elections
 - C. To draft state legislation
 - D. To provide judicial oversight
8. What does the process of "home rule" allow cities to do?
- A. Establish their own charters and governing laws
 - B. Form alliances with neighboring states
 - C. Limit state legislation within city boundaries
 - D. Restrict funding from the state
9. Which of the following best describes the individualistic culture in governance?
- A. Government is seen as a tool to promote welfare
 - B. Governmental roles are minimized and treated like a business
 - C. Government exists primarily for the benefit of the elite
 - D. Government fosters active community engagement
10. What does the term 'home rule' signify in local governance?
- A. The ability of a city to self-govern without state intervention
 - B. The state's authority to govern over local matters
 - C. A mandatory compliance with federal laws
 - D. The delegation of powers to county officials

Answers

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1. C
2. D
3. B
4. B
5. C
6. C
7. A
8. A
9. B
10. A

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Explanations

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1. What is the process to remove a governor from office in Texas?

- A. Resignation
- B. Recall
- C. Impeachment
- D. Judicial review

The correct process to remove a governor from office in Texas is through impeachment. Impeachment involves a legislative process where the House of Representatives can bring charges against the governor for misconduct or illegal activity. If the House votes to impeach, the governor is then tried in the Senate. If two-thirds of the Senate members vote for conviction, the governor can be removed from office. In contrast, resignation refers to a governor choosing to step down voluntarily, which is not a formal removal process. Recall implies that voters can remove an elected official through a referendum, but Texas does not permit the recall of the governor. Judicial review involves courts assessing the legality of actions taken by the government but does not address the removal of an elected official from office. Thus, impeachment remains the only constitutionally established method for removing a sitting governor in Texas.

2. Which of the following is a term used for the legislative session in Texas?

- A. Special session
- B. Extraordinary session
- C. Regular session
- D. All of the above

The term "legislative session" in Texas encompasses various types of sessions where the legislature convenes to conduct business, and all the options presented are valid terms that are used in this context. A regular session occurs every two years, lasting for 140 days, and is the primary period during which the Texas Legislature meets to debate and pass legislation. Special sessions are called by the governor outside the regular legislative timeline, usually to address urgent matters that arise between regular sessions. They can last up to 30 days and focus on specific issues designated by the governor. Extraordinary sessions is another term often used interchangeably with special sessions to describe these governor-called meetings. Since each of these terms accurately reflects a type of legislative session in Texas, the correct answer includes all of them. Thus, recognizing that all the terms presented are legitimate identifiers of legislative sessions in Texas illustrates the diverse ways in which the legislature can convene and is essential for understanding how Texas's legislative process operates.

3. What is the term length for a Texas state senator?

- A. 2 years
- B. 4 years
- C. 6 years
- D. 8 years

The term length for a Texas state senator is four years. This structure allows for senators to serve longer periods than representatives in the Texas House, who serve two-year terms. The four-year term provides stability and continuity within the legislative process, enabling senators to work on long-term projects and initiatives without the constant reelection pressure that might come with shorter terms. Additionally, Texas senators are not term-limited, meaning they can run for reelection indefinitely as long as they continue to receive voter support. Understanding the term length of state senators is crucial in analyzing the state legislative process and the dynamics of political leadership within Texas.

4. What system does Texas use to elect its judges?

- A. Nonpartisan elections
- B. Partisan elections
- C. Appointments by the Governor
- D. Merit-based selection

Texas utilizes partisan elections to elect its judges, meaning that candidates run for judicial positions while being affiliated with political parties. This system is significant because it reflects the broader political landscape of the state, allowing voters to consider a candidate's party affiliation as part of their decision-making process. In Texas, judges at all levels, from local trial courts to the state's highest appellate courts, are elected through this partisan system, emphasizing the role of political parties in judicial elections. Partisan elections can impact the judiciary by introducing political considerations into the selection process, potentially influencing a judge's decision-making and the type of justice administered. Understanding this system is crucial for grasping how the political climate in Texas can affect the judicial branch of government and how it operates within the state.

5. Which amendment grants states the power to regulate their own affairs?

- A. The First Amendment
- B. The Fifth Amendment
- C. The Tenth Amendment
- D. The Fourteenth Amendment

The Tenth Amendment is the reason states have the power to regulate their own affairs because it explicitly reserves powers not delegated to the federal government to the states and the people. This amendment is a key part of the Bill of Rights and emphasizes the principle of federalism, which maintains a clear distinction between state and federal powers. By establishing that any powers that are not granted to the federal government are reserved for the states, the Tenth Amendment supports the autonomy of state governments to make decisions on matters such as education, law enforcement, and local governance. This is foundational for understanding the balance of power in the U.S. political system and highlights the rights of states in managing their own legislative processes without unwarranted federal interference.

6. Which of the following is NOT a method for amending certain state constitutions?

- A. Legislative proposal
- B. Popular initiative
- C. Executive decree
- D. Constitutional conventions

The correct choice is based on the understanding that amending state constitutions typically involves processes that are established within the constitutions themselves. The methods commonly recognized for amending a state constitution include legislative proposal, popular initiative, and constitutional conventions. Legislative proposals involve the state legislature drafting and voting on an amendment, which often requires a certain supermajority to pass. Popular initiatives allow citizens to propose amendments directly, often requiring a specific number of signatures to qualify for the ballot. Constitutional conventions refer to formal gatherings where delegates are tasked with drafting or revising a constitution. In contrast, executive decrees generally fall under the authority of the executive branch, typically the governor, and are used for administrative decisions rather than the amendment of constitutional text. This makes it an inappropriate method for constitutional amendments, as it does not involve legislative or public input as required by most state constitutional amendment processes. Thus, this distinguishes executive decrees from the recognized practices for amending state constitutions.

7. What is the role of the Texas Comptroller?

- A. To manage state finances, including revenue collection and budgeting
- B. To supervise local elections
- C. To draft state legislation
- D. To provide judicial oversight

The Texas Comptroller's role primarily revolves around managing the state's finances. This includes the responsibilities of revenue collection, which ensures that the state collects taxes and other funds owed to it, and budgeting, which involves planning and allocating financial resources for various state programs and services. The Comptroller also provides financial forecasts and reports that aid in maintaining fiscal responsibility and transparency in state government. This multifaceted role is crucial for ensuring that the state operates within its means and meets its financial obligations. The Comptroller helps track how taxpayer dollars are spent, making them accountable for state spending, which enhances public trust in government operations. In addition, the office offers guidance on the economic health of the state, contributing to policy decisions made by the legislature. The other roles mentioned in the choices do not align with the responsibilities of the Texas Comptroller. For instance, supervising local elections is typically handled by local election officials or the Secretary of State. Drafting state legislation is a function of the Texas legislature, involving lawmakers and their staffs. Lastly, providing judicial oversight is the purview of the judiciary, not the Comptroller's office. Thus, managing state finances clearly outlines the essential duties that define the Texas Comptroller's position in state government.

8. What does the process of "home rule" allow cities to do?

A. Establish their own charters and governing laws

B. Form alliances with neighboring states

C. Limit state legislation within city boundaries

D. Restrict funding from the state

The concept of "home rule" empowers cities to establish their own charters and governing laws. This means that cities can create their own systems of government, define their governance structures, and enact local ordinances tailored to their specific needs without requiring constant approval from the state legislature. Home rule allows for a more localized and adaptable form of governance, enabling cities to address unique local issues effectively. This autonomy is crucial in representing the diverse interests and priorities of communities, allowing them to legislate on matters such as zoning laws, public safety regulations, and local taxation. Home rule typically arises from state constitutional provisions or statutes that grant cities a degree of self-governance, providing them with the flexibility to operate independently in many aspects of governance.

9. Which of the following best describes the individualistic culture in governance?

A. Government is seen as a tool to promote welfare

B. Governmental roles are minimized and treated like a business

C. Government exists primarily for the benefit of the elite

D. Government fosters active community engagement

The individualistic culture in governance emphasizes a limited role for government, which citizens primarily view as a facilitator of personal and economic freedom. In this perspective, government is often seen as a tool that should operate more like a business, focusing on efficiency and practicality rather than extensive social welfare or community engagement. This approach advocates for minimal intervention in both the market and individual lives, suggesting that governmental roles should be streamlined to ensure effectiveness in service delivery rather than being overly expansive in scope. In contrast, other cultural perspectives regarding governance suggest alternative roles for government. The first option focuses on welfare promotion, which aligns more with a moralistic culture that sees government as a means to achieve societal well-being. The third option, which posits that government exists primarily for the elite, reflects a more cynical view of governance often associated with corruption or oligarchy. Lastly, the fourth option relates to a moralistic view as well, where community engagement is highly valued in shaping governance. Therefore, the individualistic culture distinctly prioritizes a business-like efficiency in governmental functions, separating itself from these other conceptualizations.

10. What does the term 'home rule' signify in local governance?

A. The ability of a city to self-govern without state intervention

B. The state's authority to govern over local matters

C. A mandatory compliance with federal laws

D. The delegation of powers to county officials

The term 'home rule' signifies the ability of a city to self-govern without state intervention. This concept allows municipalities to exercise a degree of autonomy over their local affairs, establishing their own governing structures, policies, and regulations, as long as they do not conflict with state or federal laws. Home rule is particularly important because it empowers local governments to tailor their policies to the unique needs and preferences of their communities, fostering a more responsive and effective governance structure. This concept contrasts with situations where state governments exert significant control over local entities, limiting their ability to make independent decisions. Home rule charters typically outline the powers granted to local governments and can vary widely from one jurisdiction to another, reflecting the diverse needs and circumstances of different communities. Understanding home rule is essential for grasping the dynamics of local governance and the balance of power between state and local authorities.