

University of Central Florida (UCF) POS2041 American National Government Midterm 1 Practice Exam (Sample)

Study Guide



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Questions

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1. What authority allows Congress to decide if a change in policy will be considered?
 - A. Legislative Authority
 - B. Gatekeeping Authority
 - C. Policy Control Authority
 - D. Advisory Authority
2. The agreement at the Constitutional Convention that linked representation in the House to state population is known as what?
 - A. Great/Connecticut Compromise
 - B. Three-Fifths Compromise
 - C. New Jersey Plan
 - D. Virginia Plan
3. What is judicial review primarily concerned with?
 - A. Legislation effectiveness
 - B. Executive order enforcement
 - C. Constitutional consistency
 - D. International law compliance
4. What term describes a two-house legislature?
 - A. Unicameral
 - B. Bicameral
 - C. Multicameral
 - D. Tricameral
5. What is typically a major goal of the bargain power used by the president?
 - A. To reduce legislative pressure
 - B. To negotiate budget cuts
 - C. To achieve favorable legislative outcomes
 - D. To eliminate political opposition

6. Which document outlines the foundational principles of the American government?
 - A. The Constitution
 - B. The Articles of Confederation
 - C. The Declaration of Independence
 - D. The Bill of Rights
7. What is considered the supreme law of the land in the United States?
 - A. The Constitution
 - B. The Bill of Rights
 - C. The Declaration of Independence
 - D. The Federalist Papers
8. Who is the chief presiding officer of the House of Representatives, elected at the beginning of every Congress?
 - A. House Majority Leader
 - B. Speaker of the House
 - C. Senate Majority Leader
 - D. House Minority Leader
9. What purpose do the first ten amendments serve in the Constitution?
 - A. They establish the structure of government
 - B. They protect individual liberties
 - C. They outline the processes for legislative action
 - D. They define the powers of the President
10. What are the two main types of federalism in the United States?
 - A. Central and state federalism
 - B. Dual federalism and cooperative federalism
 - C. Confederate and unitary federalism
 - D. Formal and informal federalism

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. What authority allows Congress to decide if a change in policy will be considered?

- A. Legislative Authority
- B. Gatekeeping Authority
- C. Policy Control Authority
- D. Advisory Authority

The authority that allows Congress to decide if a change in policy will be considered is accurately described as Gatekeeping Authority. This concept refers to the power of Congress, particularly in its committee structures and leadership, to control which proposed changes to policy are allowed to move forward for consideration. Gatekeeping Authority is crucial in the legislative process because it enables Congress to filter and prioritize the many proposals that may arise, ensuring that only those deemed significant or relevant get the opportunity for discussion, debate, and potential enactment into law. This authority involves assessing the merits of the proposals, determining their alignment with current priorities, and establishing which issues warrant legislative action. In contrast, legislative authority signifies the broader power to make laws but does not specifically address the initial decision-making process regarding which policies are up for consideration. Policy control authority seems related but isn't a recognized term in this specific context. Finally, advisory authority suggests a role in providing guidance or recommendations, which does not inherently involve the power to decide on changes in policy. Thus, Gatekeeping Authority is the most accurate term to describe Congress's role in determining which policy changes will be taken up for consideration.

2. The agreement at the Constitutional Convention that linked representation in the House to state population is known as what?

- A. Great/Connecticut Compromise
- B. Three-Fifths Compromise
- C. New Jersey Plan
- D. Virginia Plan

The agreement at the Constitutional Convention that linked representation in the House to state population is known as the Great Compromise, also referred to as the Connecticut Compromise. This agreement was reached to address the concerns of both large and small states regarding how representation in the new Congress should be structured. Larger states advocated for representation based on population, believing that their more significant population should grant them more influence in the legislative process. Conversely, smaller states were concerned that such a system would diminish their power and ensure that their interests were overshadowed. The Great Compromise effectively balanced these interests by establishing a bicameral legislature. In this system, representation in the House of Representatives is based on state population, satisfying larger states, while each state has equal representation in the Senate, placating smaller states. This compromise was crucial in moving forward with the creation of the Constitution, as it facilitated a cooperation among states with differing interests, reinforcing the foundational principle of checks and balances within the federal system.

3. What is judicial review primarily concerned with?

- A. Legislation effectiveness
- B. Executive order enforcement
- C. Constitutional consistency
- D. International law compliance

Judicial review is primarily concerned with ensuring that laws and government actions are consistent with the Constitution. This process allows courts, especially the Supreme Court, to evaluate and invalidate legislation, executive orders, or other government actions if they are found to violate constitutional principles. The notion of judicial review was established in the landmark case of *Marbury v. Madison* in 1803, which set the precedent for the judiciary's role in interpreting the Constitution and maintaining the rule of law. In contrast, the other options address different areas of government operations. The effectiveness of legislation relates to its implementation and impact rather than its constitutional standing. Enforcement of executive orders pertains to the actions taken by the executive branch, which may or may not involve constitutional scrutiny. International law compliance focuses on treaties and agreements with other nations, which is outside the scope of judicial review as it primarily deals with domestic legal frameworks.

4. What term describes a two-house legislature?

- A. Unicameral
- B. Bicameral
- C. Multicameral
- D. Tricameral

A two-house legislature is referred to as bicameral. This term is derived from the Latin word "bi," meaning two, which indicates that the legislative body is divided into two distinct chambers, typically known as the House of Representatives and the Senate in the context of the United States Congress. Bicameral legislatures are designed to provide a system of checks and balances and often ensure more deliberate and thorough law-making processes, as legislation typically must be approved by both chambers before becoming law. In contrast, other terms such as unicameral refer to a single-chamber legislature, multicameral means a legislature with more than two chambers, and tricameral indicates a three-chamber legislature. These alternatives do not apply to the definition of a two-house system and illustrate the diversity in legislative structures.

5. What is typically a major goal of the bargain power used by the president?

- A. To reduce legislative pressure
- B. To negotiate budget cuts
- C. To achieve favorable legislative outcomes
- D. To eliminate political opposition

The primary goal of the bargaining power utilized by the president is to achieve favorable legislative outcomes. This involves leveraging their position to influence Congress and gain support for their policy initiatives, which can include passing laws that align with the president's agenda. The president often works to build coalitions, negotiate compromises, and directly communicate with legislators to ensure that proposed legislation aligns with their priorities. In contrast, reducing legislative pressure or negotiating budget cuts may be strategies employed in the process, but they are not the overarching purpose of the presidential bargaining power. Eliminating political opposition may be a long-term political goal for some, but it does not specifically reflect the collaborative aspect of working with Congress to obtain legislative success. Delivering on legislative promises and setting the administration's agenda is the central focus of the president's bargaining efforts.

6. Which document outlines the foundational principles of the American government?

- A. The Constitution
- B. The Articles of Confederation
- C. The Declaration of Independence
- D. The Bill of Rights

The Constitution is the foundational document that establishes the framework for the government of the United States. It outlines the structure of government, delineates the powers of each branch, and establishes the relationship between the federal government and the states. The principles enshrined in the Constitution, such as the separation of powers, checks and balances, and the system of federalism, are central to the American political system. In contrast, the Articles of Confederation served as the first governing document but ultimately proved ineffective, leading to the need for a stronger federal government, which the Constitution addressed. The Declaration of Independence, while crucial as a statement of the colonies' intent to separate from British rule, primarily articulates grievances and philosophical justifications rather than a blueprint for governance. The Bill of Rights consists of the first ten amendments to the Constitution and provides specific protections for individual liberties but does not itself establish governance principles.

7. What is considered the supreme law of the land in the United States?

A. The Constitution

B. The Bill of Rights

C. The Declaration of Independence

D. The Federalist Papers

The Constitution is regarded as the supreme law of the land in the United States due to its foundational role in the governance of the country. It establishes the framework for the federal government, delineating the powers and responsibilities of its various branches while also laying out the rights of the states and the citizens. This supremacy is articulated in Article VI, Clause 2 of the Constitution, often referred to as the Supremacy Clause, which states that the Constitution, as well as federal laws made pursuant to it, take precedence over state laws and constitutions. This means that any law that conflicts with the Constitution is rendered ineffective, ensuring a uniform legal framework across the nation. While the Bill of Rights is a crucial part of the Constitution, as it consists of the first ten amendments that guarantee individual rights and liberties, it does not serve as the supreme law itself but rather as a component of the broader constitutional framework. The Declaration of Independence, although a key historical document proclaiming the American colonies' separation from British rule, does not constitute law. Similarly, the Federalist Papers are a collection of essays advocating for the ratification of the Constitution but do not hold legal authority.

8. Who is the chief presiding officer of the House of Representatives, elected at the beginning of every Congress?

A. House Majority Leader

B. Speaker of the House

C. Senate Majority Leader

D. House Minority Leader

The chief presiding officer of the House of Representatives is the Speaker of the House. The Speaker is elected at the beginning of each Congress and holds a significant leadership role within the House. This position involves overseeing proceedings, ensuring that rules are followed during debates, and managing the legislative agenda. The Speaker is typically a member of the majority party and plays a crucial role in coordinating the actions of other members and representing the House in interactions with the Senate and the President. The other roles mentioned, such as the House Majority Leader and the House Minority Leader, have important functions in organizing their respective parties within the House but do not hold the same authoritative position as the Speaker. The Senate Majority Leader, while a significant leader in the Senate, does not serve the House of Representatives and therefore cannot fulfill the role described in the question.

9. What purpose do the first ten amendments serve in the Constitution?

- A. They establish the structure of government
- B. They protect individual liberties
- C. They outline the processes for legislative action
- D. They define the powers of the President

The first ten amendments to the Constitution, known as the Bill of Rights, serve primarily to protect individual liberties. These amendments were created in response to concerns that the original Constitution did not sufficiently safeguard the rights of citizens against potential government overreach. The Bill of Rights includes fundamental protections such as freedom of speech, the right to bear arms, the right to a fair trial, and protection against unreasonable searches and seizures, among others. These amendments ensure that certain inalienable rights are explicitly recognized and protected from infringement by the federal government. The inclusion of the Bill of Rights was crucial in gaining the support of the Anti-Federalists during the ratification debates, as they feared that a strong central government might abuse its powers and infringe upon individual freedoms. By focusing specifically on civil liberties, the Bill of Rights plays a pivotal role in shaping the relationship between the individual and the government, emphasizing that certain rights are inherent and must be preserved.

10. What are the two main types of federalism in the United States?

- A. Central and state federalism
- B. Dual federalism and cooperative federalism
- C. Confederate and unitary federalism
- D. Formal and informal federalism

The two main types of federalism in the United States are dual federalism and cooperative federalism. Dual federalism, often likened to a layered cake, describes a system in which the federal and state governments operate independently within their own spheres of authority. Each level of government has clearly defined powers and responsibilities, limiting their interaction. This model was predominant in the early years of the U.S. Constitution, particularly until the Great Depression, and it emphasizes distinct separation between national and state powers. Cooperative federalism, in contrast, is often represented by a marble cake analogy, where the layers of government are intertwined and work together to solve problems. This approach reflects a more modern interpretation of federalism, where both levels of government collaborate on policy areas such as education, transportation, and healthcare, often resulting in shared responsibilities and funding initiatives. The distinction between these two types of federalism highlights the evolving relationship between state and federal governments and reflects changes in policies, societal needs, and legal interpretations over time. Understanding this framework is crucial for analyzing how governmental authority is distributed and exercised in the U.S.