

Study sheet for Final, Pol210, Fall 2005.

Identification. Five of these items will be on the examination. For each item, you will be asked to “define and state the significance.” Make sure you do both. Answers will be graded according to comprehensiveness and citation of appropriate literature.

1. “Hard” vs. “Soft” methodology
2. Preference ordering
3. Condorcet cycle / voting cycle
4. Arrow’s theorem
5. The median voter
6. Downsian party competition
7. Proportional representation and first past the post / plurality voting
8. Voting as consumption
9. Strategic mobilization
10. Individual resources (related to participation)
11. Citizen duty (“D”) term
12. The status quo point
13. “Wasted” vote
14. The collective action problem
15. Public goods
16. Tragedy of the commons
17. Selective incentives
18. Tit for tat
19. Perceptual dilemma
20. The chicken game
21. Operationalization

Essays: Some subset of these essays will be on the final examination. There may be minor variations in the wording. There will be choice among the essays. As with the identifications, both accuracy and citations of appropriate readings will be evaluated for the answers.

- 1) Defend the scientific approach in the study of politics. You should both identify the main characteristics of the scientific method and what you think are one or two important areas worthy of study. Finally, show how the scientific approach helps us answer or illuminate the areas that you have identified.
- 2) Describe how institutions (understood broadly to be decision making rules, laws, and norms, as well as the more commonly understood decision making bodies) “solve” a problem or problems of majority rule. To answer the question, you’ll want to identify at least one problem and show how an institution or institutions solve (or ameliorate) that problem.
- 3) Identify a political activity of your choosing, and demonstrate how you might conceptualize this activity using rational choice theory, then describe how you might test your conceptualization using empirical analysis.
- 4) You are studying abroad, and students in a class that you are attending attack the American system of translating votes into seats as unfair. Defend the American system on some set of criteria that you deem important.
- 5) You are part of a non-profit group dedicated to increasing the influence of disempowered segments of American society. Because you wear a Political Science 210 merit badge, you are assigned the task of writing a briefing paper which identifies a major institutional reform which you argue will increase voting turnout in the US. Describe the bias in voting turnout in the US, and how your reform will reduce this bias.