

FRQ National Common Themes 2002-2010

Presidential Elections

- Presidential Approval Ratings
- Participation in Political campaigns
- Minor Parties in Elections
 - Obstacles to Third-Party Candidates
 - Contributions Third-Parties make to an election
- Campaign Finance Reform
 - Soft Money
 - Independent Expenditures
 - Limiting Individual Contributions

Electoral College

- What is the winner-take-all?
- How does the winner-take-all feature affect the way candidates campaign?
- How does it hinder Third-Party Candidates?

Federalism

- Know what it is
- Categorical v. Block Grants
- Federal Mandates
- 10th Amendment
- How it can limit the power of the executive branch?
- How checks and balances can limit the power of the Executive Branch?

Bureaucracy

- State and Local Government Bureaucracy v. Federal Bureaucracy
- How do they execute Federal Law? What leeway does Congress give them?
- How does Congress insure Bureaucracy is following legislative intent?
- Know the functions of certain Bureaucracies, such as: EPA, FCC, Federal Reserve Board
- How the Merit System affects bureaucracy
- How the following can check bureaucracy: The Courts, The Congress, SIGs

Congress

- Congressional Committee System; Party and Influence on Bills
- Reapportionment
 - What is it?
 - Gerrymandering? Limits placed this by the Supreme Court?
 - Redistricting? Goals of it?
- Passing a Bill through Congress
 - Advantages the House of Representatives has over the Senate in passing a bill?
 - Different rules in the House and Senate that might make it easier for a bill to pass one chamber and not the other?
- Congressional Elections
 - How being an Incumbent is an advantage?
 - How Gerrymandering is an advantage?

Foreign Policy

- Congressional Formal and Informal Powers
- Presidential Formal and Informal Powers
- War Powers Resolution of 1973
 - Constitutional Conflict between the Congress and the President?
 - How does it limit the War-Power of the President?

Special Interest Groups

- Tactics; i.e.: Litigation, Grassroots campaigns, Campaign contributions
- Interest Groups v. Political Parties
- How Interest Groups helps Political Parties in an Election
- Federal Regulations of Interest Groups?

Loss of Trust in the Government

- How Divided Government has led to a decline in trust in the government
- How costs of elections have led to a loss of trust
- How a loss of trust affects political behavior

Judicial Branch

- How is the court insulated from the public?
- What factors are used to keep the court in line with Public Opinion?

Federal Power

- Power to tax
- Necessary and Proper {Elastic} Clause
- Commerce Clause
- Laws and how they contributed to increased Federal Power
 - Americans with Disabilities Act
 - Civil Rights Act of 1964
 - Clean Air Act

Selective Incorporation

- Supreme Court decisions relevant to selective incorporation and each of the following examples have been incorporated using specific case examples:
 - Rights of criminal defendants
 - First Amendment
 - Privacy Rights
- How Selective Incorporation can limit the power of states?
- How the 14th Amendment can limit the power of the states?

Entitlement Programs

- What is it?
- Social Security Revenue?
- Threats to Social Security
- Demographic trends that threaten Social Security

Early Constitutional Underpinnings

- Why was the bicameral legislature created?
- Powers unique to the House of Representatives?
- Powers unique to the Senate?
- Why hasn't the Electoral College been abolished?
- Federalist Paper #10
 - Which branch of government most closely associated with the people?
 - Limiting majority rule? How is it done in the Constitution?

The First Amendment to the Constitution

- Being able to identify the clause within the First Amendment dealt with in different cases, such as: *Engle v. Vitale*, *Lemon v. Kurtzman*, *Reynolds v. United States*, *Oregon v. Smith*
- How it can limit the power of the Federal Government?

Monetary v. Fiscal Policy?

- What does this mean?
- How does the Executive and Legislative Branch influence fiscal policy?
- How does the Federal Reserve Board affect monetary policy?

African-American Voting Discrimination

- Laws passed in some states to limit African-American voting?
- Methods used to change voting policy?

Voting Characteristics

- Age?
- Education?
- Linkage Institutions and how they help increase voter turnout?
- Religions
- Labor Unions
- Women
- Liberals
- Conservatives

How the Media influences politics

- Policy Agenda
- Setting the agenda
- Older v. Younger viewing patterns