

Final Examination

Please answer only one question in Part 1 & Part 2 listed below. The question is worth 50 points a piece. Your informed response to the questions must be well-organized, well-written, well-argued, well edited, and liberally footnoted using the Chicago style system. Good luck.

Part 1

1. The relationship between the American people and their representatives in the U.S. Congress (House and Senate) has come under increasing strain in recent decades because of the heavy contributions of money from powerful interest groups, corporations, financial institutions and wealthy individuals to the reelection campaign coffers of our U.S. representatives. In your view, are members of the federal legislature able to secure and advance the public policy interests of the American people while at the same time, satisfying the needs of wealthy campaign donors? If so, why and if not, why not?
2. Liberal Democrats and moderate Republicans argue that the recently enacted Patriotic Act will have a profound impact in diminishing the civil liberties of the American citizen. In your estimation, do you believe that the U.S. government has the right to intrude into the financial, travel and personal affairs of American citizens (and in some case, surveil, search and detain citizens without legal representation) in order to fight the war against Al-Qaida and global terrorism? What is the basis of your argument for supporting or not supporting governmental interference?

Part 2

3. As is well known, California faces a severe budget crisis that threatens to undermine both the quality of its infrastructure and its economic participation in global and regional markets. It is argued that cooperative relations between the executive and legislative branches of state government are considered critical to solving the budget crisis. Do you agree or disagree with this statement and why? What alternative(s) can you suggest to encourage increased cooperation or do you believe that the Governor's approach of "negotiating around" the legislature and dealing directly with factions in the political economy is more useful?
4. The fiscal relationship between the state and local governmental units throughout California has deteriorated with the current budget crisis. On the one hand, local governmental units argue that the state has too much fiscal control over their money, preventing them from paying their public workers and other vendor obligations. On the other hand, the state posits that it has the right to use all available monies to deal with the budget crisis. In your informed view, which side do you support, the state or local governmental units and why?