

PSCI 317: American Political Thought Final Exam Study Guide

Bring this sheet, a blue book, and any books for the course with you to class on FRIDAY April 28 at 1:15. You will then have two hours to answer four questions from among the questions listed below. The four questions will be selected at random on the morning of the exam. You are not allowed to bring any notes with you, and you cannot add any notes to this sheet or the blue book.

Use at least one claim, objection, rejoinder sequence in each answer. Be sure to define your terms carefully, use direct quotations or concrete examples as evidence, cite authors by page number, and provide reasoning for each point you make.

1. The Jacksonian Democrats believed that “without roughly equal conditions ... it would be impossible to sustain equal procedures” (Ellis, 47). Allen would agree with this statement, while Sowell would disagree. Write an essay debating who has the better position.
2. John Hart Ely argues that the provisions of the US Constitution aim primarily at producing fair procedures for American democracy. In his view, this means that the power of judicial review authorizes Supreme Court justices to police “the representative process” to ensure fairness. The approach would authorize unelected judges to overrule legislatures when they use redistricting to rig their own districts. This view forms the basis of the Common Cause (CC) amicus brief in *Moore v. Harper*. The brief by the National Republican Redistricting Trust (NRRT) opposes this view and instead supports the “independent state legislature” theory. Write an essay debating which side has the better position.
3. During the Mormon troubles in Illinois, Governor Thomas Ford saw the strict enforcement of the harm principle as the key to fairness. But this approach risked misunderstanding the majority sentiment against the Mormons in Illinois and underestimating the power of its mob action. Given the very real power of civil society norms in any democracy, is Ford’s approach tenable? Write an essay debating which view is better. Should the harm principle alone guide state action or should the state also act to make transparent (and attempt to check) the normative biases of the majority?
4. Does having different punishments for possession of crack and powder cocaine a racist policy? Kennedy argues no and Alexander argues yes. Review their arguments and defend your own assessment.
5. Does Gaventa prove the existence of the 3rd dimension of power? Use the case of Tony Boyle and the UMA to debate the question and illustrate your position.
6. John Sayles’ *Matewan* tells the story of the fight for a union in a small town during the 1920s in West Virginia. Each of Gaventa’s three dimensions of power is illustrated in the film multiple times. Use examples of each dimension to determine which group in the end, the company or the miners, had more power.
7. Moreton details the way Wal-mart embraced the “family values” of its female Christian workers to establish a “servant leader” ethos for a company which mainly employed men in the boardroom and women in the service aisles. To what extent is it true to claim that Wal-mart empowered women?