

## GOV 2060—Midterm Sample Correction Key

### Language you see on the actual correction key:

This is the correction key that I used to grade your midterm exams. Note, however, I did **not** deduct points if an answer contained something important that was not listed here. Any point deductions in parentheses were ideas that I considered **crucial** to answering the short answer or essay correctly.

Look this over and feel free to come and talk with me if you have further questions.

### Short Answers

Points in (parentheses) are deducted if the point (or one similar to it) was not made.

\*\*I may have reduced points for other reasons as well, including a lack of clarity in the answer

Answer 5 short answers from the list of 10. Answer 2 essays from the list of 4. Each short answer is worth 10 points. Each essay is worth 25 points. Short answers should be answered in 4-5 sentences.

### Short Answers (Sample 5)

#### What is “racialized economics”?

- As stated by the authors: “economic insecurity was connected to partisan choices when it was refracted through racial grievances” (p.156). (-4)
- Or: “the belief that undeserving groups are getting ahead while your group is left behind” (p.175).
- Notably, the authors in *Identity Politics* note in many places that economic anxiety alone was not a great or primary predictor of support for Trump in the primary and general election in 2016. (-4)
- Instead, economic anxiety was expressed through, or as a part of, voters’ broader attitudes about race and prejudice. A good answer would give one example from the book. (-2)

#### What are “independent expenditures”?

- These are expenditures on behalf of candidates that are uncoordinated with the candidate. (-4)
- They are often sponsored by “independent expenditure committees,” also known as super PACs. These committees can accept donations of any size but cannot contribute directly to candidates and must disclose their donors. (-3)
- A good answer should make one of the three following additional arguments (-3):
  - There are other types of groups that can sponsor these ads, including 527s and 501c groups.

- Congress tried to limit who could sponsor these expenditures in the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act, passed in 2002.
- *Citizens United v. FEC* over-turned these restrictions in 2010

### **Are political contributions protected free speech? Explain.**

- The courts treat differently contributions and expenditures. The latter are protected under the First Amendment as speech, while the former—also considered speech—can be restricted and prevented more easily because of fears of corruption. (-4)
- This distinction was first made in the *Buckley v. Valeo* decision in 1976 (-4)
- This is not a universally accepted view of things, however. The book notes (pp. 114-116) that many worry about the role of money in elections. Some emphasize the value of political equality and worry that money, even independent spending, is corrupting and should override protections granted by the First Amendment. (-2)

### **What is a district or state's PVI?**

- This is a commonly used measure of a state's partisan leaning, and stands for Partisan Voter Index (-2)
- It is also used sometimes to estimate the ideological lean of the district or state, sometimes as a proxy for whether a district is populated with liberal or conservative voters. (-2)
- How is calculated? It is measured based on how each district performs at the presidential level compared to the nation as a whole. (-4)
  - It's not important to lay this out exactly as below, but some explanation is helpful.
  - A Partisan Voting Index score of D+2, for example, means that in the 2012 and 2016 presidential elections, that district performed an average of two points more Democratic than the nation did as a whole, while an R+4 means the district performed four points more Republican than the national average.
- A good answer should make one of the three following additional arguments (-2):
  - There are limits of PVI as a measure of district ideological leaning. For example, it's only just a measure of presidential performance in the district.
  - It can range from a D+ to an R+, meaning it can show that a district is skewed more to the Republicans or more to the Democrats.

### **Were endorsements important to Trump's victory in the Republican primary in 2016? Explain.**

- In short, no. Endorsements have historically been a good leading indicator of how a candidate will do in a presidential election. (-3)
- But in 2016, the pace of endorsements, despite a wide field of candidates, was very slow and did not accrue to any particular candidate. The party can do a lot of coordinating early on in the primary by consolidating around a candidate. That didn't happen in 2016. (-3)

- Indeed, Trump got very few endorsements early on; and the candidates with the most early endorsements did not win the nomination. (-4)

## Essays (Sample 2)

### **What campaign era are we in? Is it different than what we have seen previously in American elections, historically?**

- The authors of our textbook note 4 campaign eras. These should be outlined (-5):
  - First: 1788-1824
  - Second: 1828-1892
  - Third: 1896-1948
  - Fourth: 1952-?
- What was characteristic of each era should be briefly outlined. See Sides et al, pages 56-57 and 75. (-5)
- Some detail should focus on the kinds of features in the Fourth Campaign Era. These include: the importance of television; the rise of a candidate-centered electoral environment; the expansion in the use of primary elections; the proliferation in the use of polls. (-5)
- The rise of television had direct impacts on elections. See p.70. (-5)
- While the authors note that the Fourth Era saw all of the above changes, there is also a lot of continuity in this campaign era compared to previous ones across American history. For example, there has always been a need for money in elections; elections have always focused on the personal and entertaining. Even the continued development of new technologies is just a set of modern-day innovation on old ideas (e.g., reaching partisans). (-5)

### **Clinton made many strategic “mistakes” in her 2016 campaign, according to many. Would it be accurate to say that this is the reason she lost the election? Explain.**

- I think it’s fair to say that the authors of Identity Crisis do not think her mistakes are the reason she lost the election. (-5)
- What were those “mistakes”? They list: that her campaign was “arrogant” and relied too much on data analytics over the “art” of reaching out to voters; a messaging failure, namely her choice to attach Trump personally over offering voters a clear policy choice; and on not spending enough on field offices and digital outreach. (-5)
- In fact, the authors show that Clinton’s ads probably were effective at winning votes, as were her field offices. But the authors show that even adding more ads in battleground states—or more field offices—would not have produced an effect that would have closed the gap between her and Trump on Election Day. A good answer here will note the kind of analysis that the authors did to make this claim (i.e., that Clinton had the lead throughout the campaign in the number of ads on

television; that a correlation of field offices and county vote showed that Clinton's field offices seemed to boost her vote totals).(-10)

- More generally, the authors see the outcome of the election as probably more a reflection of the identity politics that they focus on in the book: racialized economic views, the activation of racial attitudes by Trump, general dislike of Clinton, the failure of female votes to accrue in large numbers to Clinton, and the activation of a "diploma divide" among white voters. Some discussion of the analysis here (e.g., using polling data to look for relationships between economic anxiety and vote choice) would help solidify this answer. (-5)