

## Government 317, Fall 2004 Final Exam Study Guide

The exam will include a number of short-answer questions and one longer essay question. If you are taking the exam in conjunction with having written a long paper, you will complete only the short-answer part. If you are taking the exam in conjunction with the short paper, you will do both parts. In that case, the long essay will count for 40 percent of the exam grade. For the long essay I will give you a choice between two of the following. That is, of the three questions, I'll pick two from which you are to choose one to answer. I expect you both to draw clearly on the required reading and to engage the ideas I talked about in lectures. Wording on the actual exam may vary slightly.

1. "The 2000 presidential election was the worst election in American history." Why would anyone say such a thing? Are the problems in 2000 typical or exceptional? What is being done to produce better elections in the future? What should be done?
2. Some hoped that BCRA would reduce money's dominion over American elections, but one would be hard pressed to show that it did that. And in 2004, with a few notable exceptions, incumbents had if anything less trouble than ever getting reelected. Should we conclude that incumbents are merely reaping their just rewards for wonderful performance? If that's not it, what's going on and what can be done about it?
3. Some strands of the elections literature give American voters a lot of credit for being informed, rational, strategic and even moderate. But more of the literature, one would have to say, finds that view of the American electorate hard to believe, even ludicrous. Is it one or the other, or is there some truth in both perspectives?