

Government 317, Fall 2006 Final Exam Study Guide

The exam will include a number of short-answer questions and one longer essay question. 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 appallingly bad, some have said the worst election in American history, but 2004 was markedly better." Discuss.
2. Voter turnout was up in 2004, especially among young people. It remained high (for a midterm) in 2006. For instance, one exit poll report found 75 percent turnout among evangelicals in 2004 and 72 percent turnout among the same group in 2006. Many observe that the political parties and candidates are especially polarized and divisive. Is there a connection?
3. Some have described the 2006 midterm election as a once-a-decade "wave" election, while others have said it was just a return to the historically usual pattern. Which is it? Does theory suggest there is something about the current president's unpopularity that is especially important when explaining the 2006 results?