

**FOR STUDENTS GRADUATING IN MAY 2023  
INSTRUCTIONS FOR SENIOR COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION  
POLITICS DEPARTMENT  
UNIVERSITY OF DALLAS**

**DATES FOR STUDENTS GRADUATING IN MAY 2023**

- **Monday, February 13, 2023.** Deadline for students to email their choice of texts (for Part II) to poldept@udallas.edu. Students may change their mind (by email) up to February 17.
- **Saturday, February 18, 2023, 9:00 am to 1:00 pm.** Part I (in-class written examination).
- **Friday, March 3, 2023, noon.** Part II begins (the take-home essay on the text). A question will be sent to students by email (or they may receive a printed copy on request).
- **Monday, March 6, 2023, noon.** Deadline for students to turn in their essays on the text question.
- **April 2023 (DATE TBD):** Retake date for those who fail Part I.
- **Monday, April 17, 2023, noon:** Due date for rewrite of take-home essay for those who fail Part II.

## **DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION**

The Senior Comprehensive Examination is administered in two parts.

Part I is a four-hour in-class written examination, given on a Saturday morning in two 2-hour segments. The department will supply blue books for the exam.

Part I-a (political philosophy): Students have two hours to write on one of the three questions listed below. Students must be prepared to write on all three questions. The question will be selected shortly before the examination by the Politics Department.

Part I-b (American politics): Students have two hours to write on one of the American politics questions below. Students choose which question to write on. Students are not permitted to write on questions for which they have not had the relevant Politics course. Part I-b must be completed and handed in during the second two-hour portion of the in-class examination.

Part II is a take-home essay, to be written on the weekend following the in-class examination. Students will be emailed or given their questions on Friday at noon. Students must write an essay on this question, approximately 8 pages, double spaced. The question will be on an author in political philosophy chosen and prepared by themselves from the list of approved authors below. Students should select and study their text with care before the examination. Students are not permitted to select a text which they have not studied for at least 3 weeks in a Politics course.

The take-home essay should begin with a title made up by you, your student number (assigned by the Politics Dept.), and a restatement of the prompt. There is no need for a separate title page. Length should be about 8 to 10 pages. Pages should be numbered. A paper copy of the essay must be handed in to the Politics Department office by noon on the due date.

The footnotes and bibliography should follow the University of Chicago format. A brief internet guide is here: <http://nutsandbolts.washcoll.edu/chicago.html>

You must follow the University's rules on academic policies, in the University Bulletin. If you consult with other students about your question, indicate that in a footnote. You are free to use your text, your class notes, and any secondary materials you find useful. Footnote anything you are drawing from a source.

For both Parts I and II: Comprehensive Examination answers should have a clear thesis and appropriate supporting evidence, quoted or paraphrased from the authors being explained. The Comprehensive Examination is intended to test whether students can recall material learned in different courses and discuss that material in a coherent way. For example, one of this year's questions is to discuss the place of liberty in the political order. Students are asked to focus on three authors, from at least two different courses in the Politics curriculum. The question is meant to test whether students are capable of seeing what the main views of several authors are in regard to this topic, and of showing how these authors agree or disagree on the most important points regarding liberty.

## **GRADING POLICY**

Each student's Comprehensive Examination is graded jointly by at least two faculty members. Students earn one of three grades on the examination: Pass, High Pass with Nomination for Distinction, or Fail. "Pass" is for essays of C- to A- quality. "High Pass" is for solid A-quality work. Students who earn High Pass with Nomination for Distinction will be passed with Distinction upon the successful completion of a

half-hour oral examination with two members of the Politics faculty.

Between 2006 and 2022, an average of between 3 and 4 students per year failed part or all of the Comprehensive Examination. This was almost always because the students had not devoted enough time to prepare adequately.

Students who fail Part I-a or Part I-b will be given a chance to retake the part of the exam that they have failed. Students who retake Part I-a will once again be required to prepare all 3 questions, with the faculty selecting one question just prior to the exam. The retake of Part I-b will be on the question selected by the student.

Students who fail Part II, the take-home portion, will be also given one chance to rewrite that part of the exam.

Dates for retaking Part I or Part II are given above.

Students who fail any part of the retake will be ineligible for graduation until the following semester, when they will be allowed to take the entire Comprehensive Examination again.

**SENIOR COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION  
 SPRING 2023  
 QUESTIONS FOR PART I**

Part I consists of Part I-a (political philosophy) and Part I-b (American politics).

**Part I-a. QUESTIONS ON POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY.** Students will have two hours to write on **one** of the three questions listed below. *Students must be prepared to write on all three questions.* The one question you will be asked to write on will be chosen by the Department.

1. Discuss the understanding of the role of religion in the political order in the writings of three of the following authors: 1) Thucydides or Plutarch (choose one); 2) Augustine or Aquinas (choose one); 3) Machiavelli, Rousseau, Marx, or Nietzsche (choose one).
2. Compare and contrast Aristotle's and Hobbes's teaching on democracy as set forth in the *Politics* and the *Leviathan*, respectively.
3. What constitute the virtues of the good political leader, according to three of the following authors?  
 a) Plato **or** Cicero, b) Augustine **or** Publius, and c) Machiavelli **or** Hobbes

**Part I-b. QUESTIONS ON AMERICAN POLITICS.** Students have two hours to write on one of the American politics questions below. Students choose which question to write on. Therefore, they only need to prepare one question in American politics. *Students are not permitted to write on questions for which they have not had the relevant Politics course* (stated at the beginning of each question). Part I-b must be completed and handed in during the second two-hour portion of the in-class examination.

1. **Constitutional Law.** One of the key principles of the Constitution is separation of powers (including the issue of delegated legislative power). Trace the development of Supreme Court jurisprudence on separation of powers and delegation of legislative power, and discuss its current status.
2. **Civil Rights/Civil Liberties.** Describe the development of the Supreme Court's "substantive due process" jurisprudence from the Fourteenth Amendment through the present day. To what extent has this jurisprudence been consistent with the original understanding of both the Due Process Clause and the other provisions of that Amendment? In what ways has the Court expanded or contracted the rights that it recognizes as protected under this jurisprudence? In your answer, discuss the use of substantive due process as a vehicle for "incorporation," and the use of substantive due process to protect rights of personal autonomy.
3. **Presidency.** The author of *The Federalist* argues that good government requires an energetic executive. Why does he make that argument? Discuss the characteristics necessary to produce energy in the executive. What contemporary threats to that energy have arisen, and how have presidents responded to those challenges over the decades? Use specific examples.
4. **Congress.** According to social compact theory, what does a just exercise of legislative power entail? In reconstituting the legislative power of government at the Constitutional Convention, what arrangements did the Founders embrace to promote a more just exercise of legislative power? (Be sure to explain specifically how each arrangement you discuss promotes justice.) How have 20th century reformers

viewed these arrangements? What reforms, if any, have they urged to address them? Do you think the process through which law is made today is more or less democratic than the Founders' intended? Why?

5. **Lincoln.** In what ways did Lincoln pursue a policy of gradual or accelerated emancipation—and to what extent were such policies consistent with the American Founding? Give evidence on both sides and your own assessment. Quote or paraphrase liberally from Lincoln's major speeches and from at least one of his opponents, such as Stephen Douglas or John Calhoun.

6. **20th Century.** Describe the philosophical transformation lying behind the construction of the administrative state. Who were the professors who were intimately involved with the organization of the Progressive Party of 1912? Why did these professors characterize their politics as a "social politics"? How did their conception of the State differ, on the one hand, from the principles "held by the men of 1776"? How, on the other hand, did it differ from the views of the "extreme socialists"? Finally, why did these professors frequently liken the overall task of public policy to gardening?

### **7. American Foreign Policy**

Compare and contrast one or more of the following presidents (Woodrow Wilson, George W. Bush, Barack Obama, and Donald Trump) with the Founders as to the following points

- (a) The purpose (or purposes) of foreign policy;
- (b) The policies and other means for pursuing this purpose; and
- (c) The moral limits on such means.

Your answer should utilize relevant official documents from the founding as well as the speeches and writings of the pertinent policy maker(s).

### **8. American Political Thought**

Have successive generations of Americans thought the same way about what justice requires of us in relation to race? Choosing one American from each of the following categories, and drawing on specific writings in support of your response, explain the views of:

- 1) Thomas Jefferson or Abraham Lincoln
- 2) John C. Calhoun, Stephen Douglas, or Alexander Stephens
- 3) John W. Burgess, Martin Luther King, or Stokely Carmichael

## TEXTS FOR PART II

The second part of the examination will consist of an essay written on a question that addresses a specific text. The text is to be chosen by the student from the list below, but the question will be written by a Politics professor. Editions to be used are those assigned in Politics classes. *Students must choose a text or author that they have spent at least three weeks on in a Politics course.*

Other texts are possible with the approval of the chairman.

Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*.

Plato, *Republic*.

Aristotle, *Politics*.

Aristotle, *Ethics*

Cicero, *On the Commonwealth*.

Plutarch, *Lives*, selections assigned in Political Regimes.

St. Augustine, *The City of God*, selections assigned in Political Regimes.

St. Thomas Aquinas, "Treatise on Law," selections assigned in Political Philosophy in the Middle Ages.

Thomas More, *Utopia*.

Hobbes, *Leviathan*, selections assigned in Enlightenment.

Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, selections assigned in Enlightenment.

Rousseau, selections assigned in Enlightenment.

Hamilton, Madison, and Jay, *The Federalist*.

Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*.

Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*.

Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morality*