



Advanced GCE

F853QP

GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

Unit F853: Contemporary US Government
and Politics

Specimen Paper

Time: 2 hours

Additional Materials: Answer Booklet (16 pages)



INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

- Answer the **question** in section A and **three** questions from section B.
- Write the numbers of the questions you answer on the front of your answer booklet.
- If you use additional sheets of paper, fasten these securely to your answer booklet.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

- The number of marks for each question is given in brackets [] at the end of each question or part-question.
- The total number of marks for this paper is **100**.
- You will be awarded marks in all questions for the quality of written communication including legibility, clarity of expression, structure and presentation of ideas, spelling, punctuation and grammar.

ADVICE TO CANDIDATES

- Read each question carefully and make sure you know what you have to do before starting your answer.
- You are advised to spend 30 minutes answering each question.

This document consists of **3** printed pages and **1** blank page.

Answer the question in section A and **three** questions from section B.

You will be rewarded for your ability to draw together the knowledge, understanding and skills which you have acquired from your study of all parts of this course.

In answering each question, you should draw upon the knowledge and understanding gained from your study of Politics of both the UK and the United States, its theoretical basis as well as contemporary practice, and show a thorough understanding of how it operates. Where appropriate, you should also make reference to other political systems, as well as to the European Union.

Section A

Answer the question in this section

Use the source and your own knowledge to answer Question 1.

Source for Question 1

The bitterly disputed Florida vote in 2000 greatly resulted in calls for the abolition of the Electoral College. Four years later these demands seem to have disappeared and the Electoral College seems set to remain a part of the political landscape in the United States despite the fact that it takes the choice of president out of the hands of the ordinary voters.

- 1 (a) Outline how the Electoral College functions. [10]
- (b) Analyse the factors which explain the continued survival of the Electoral College. [15]

Section B

Answer **three** questions from this section

- 2 Evaluate the importance of the role played by Ross Perot and Ralph Nader in the presidential elections of 1992 to 2004. [25]
- 3 Examine the claim that pressure groups hinder rather than assist democracy in the US. [25]
- 4 Has the US been successful in avoiding concentrating too much power with federal government in Washington? [25]
- 5 What purpose do parties serve in the US Congress? [25]
- 6 Discuss the claim that appointments to the Supreme Court are the most important appointments a president makes. [25]
- 7 Discuss the claim that rights and liberties in the United States are better protected in theory than in practice. [25]
- 8 Examine the reasons why presidential second terms have so often been a failure. [25]

Paper Total: [100]

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OXFORD CAMBRIDGE AND RSA EXAMINATIONS

Advanced GCE

GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

F853MS

Unit F853: Contemporary US Government and Politics

Specimen Mark Scheme

GENERAL MARKING INSTRUCTIONS

Examiners should reward any connections made with the AS units. Details of the parts of the AS specifications which are relevant to each question are detailed for each particular question.

The Assessment Matrix

Broadly speaking, and depending on the question, examiners should look for:

- a balanced and well-focused answer;
- which correctly identifies a number and range of relevant and important factors;
- in detail;
- and communicates these clearly in a logical, fluent and coherent style;
- containing few, if any, errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling.

And credit answers which display knowledge and understanding of:

- current examples;
- political concepts, theories and language;
- other political systems including the EU;
- parallels, connections, similarities and differences.

The Mark Scheme

The mark scheme is indicative of the kinds of points likely to be raised by candidates in answering the questions, however, because of the nature of the subject, they cannot be regarded as definitive and the professional judgement and training of individual examiners will inevitably apply.

All substantive issues surrounding the paper will be settled at the standardisation meeting and through the arrangements made by OCR to ensure a consistent approach by all examiners. Examiners should contact the Principal Examiner if they have any concerns about the way an individual script should be marked.

Examiners must refer to the OCR booklet Instructions to Examiners issued in each examination session for details about administrative procedures.

The maximum mark for this paper is **100**.

ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES & MARKING LEVELS

Question 1a

	A01	A03
Level 4	7-8	2
Level 3	5-6	2
Level 2	3-4	1
Level 1	1-2	1

Question 1b

	A02	A03
Level 4	10-12	3
Level 3	7-9	2
Level 2	4-6	2
Level 1	0-3	0-1

Questions 2 - 8

	AO1	AO2	AO3
Level 4	9-10	9-10	5
Level 3	6-8	6-8	4
Level 2	3-5	3-5	2-3
Level 1	0-2	0-2	0-1

Advanced GCE Assessment Matrix

There are **four** levels of assessment of all three AOs in the A2 units. Level 4 is the highest level that can reasonably be expected from a candidate at the end of an Advanced GCE course.

Level	Assessment Objective 1	Assessment Objective 2	Assessment Objective 3
4	Thorough and accurate knowledge and clear and detailed understanding of relevant concepts, ideas and political systems. Ability to make valid comparisons between them.	High level of skill in the interpretation, analysis and evaluation of relevant political information (including the identification of parallels, connections, similarities and differences between aspects of the political systems studied). Ability to recognise bias and faulty argument and to reason effectively towards an individual and informed conclusion.	Ability to correctly distinguish relevant and important factors and integrate these into a balanced, well focused argument. Ability to communicate this clearly and present it legibly and logically in fluent coherent style containing few, if any, errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling.
3	Good knowledge and confident understanding of relevant concepts, ideas and political systems. Ability to make some valid comparisons between them.	Good level of skill in the interpretation, analysis and evaluation of the relevant political issues (including the identification of parallels, connections, similarities and differences between aspects of the political systems studied). Some attempt to recognise bias and faulty argument and to reason sensibly towards a sound conclusion.	Ability to identify the most important factors and present a relevant argument legibly and clearly if, at times, lacking incisiveness. There may be occasional errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling.
2	Limited knowledge and understanding of relevant concepts, ideas and political systems. Limited awareness of standard points of comparison.	Limited level of skill in the interpretation, analysis and evaluation of the relevant political issues (including the identification of parallels, connections, similarities and differences between aspects of the political systems studied). Limited attempt to explain a few of the more obvious points central to the question and to recognise and describe some differing viewpoints. Reasoning will be incomplete and while opinions may be offered, they are unlikely to be supported by argument.	Limited attempt to distinguish relevant material which is assembled into a limited argument with some sense of order and legibility. There may be some errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling.
1	Basic and generalised knowledge and understanding of relevant concepts, ideas and political systems. Such knowledge and understanding will be incomplete and/or of tenuous relevance and may contain significant errors. Basic awareness of standard points of comparison.	Basic skill in the interpretation, analysis and evaluation of some of the relevant political issues (including the identification of parallels, connections, similarities and differences between aspects of the political systems studied). Basic attempt to explain the simpler points central to the question and it is likely that only one viewpoint will be recognised. There will be little evidence of reasoning.	An attempt is made to shape an argument at a basic level which lacks coherence, legibility and direction, and is unselective. Contains intrusive errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling.

Question Number	Answer	Max Mark
1(a)	<p>Outline how the Electoral College functions. <i>Specification: elections: the Electoral College.</i></p> <p>AO1 [8] AO3 [2]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates display knowledge and understanding of the Electoral College. This may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the intentions of the Founding Fathers; ○ allocation of electoral college votes; ○ the need for an absolute majority; ○ the winner-takes-all system; ○ examples of recent election results in the Electoral College. ○ Reference to other electoral systems such as FPTP (simple plurality) in UK general elections or the use of AMS for Scotland and Wales (hybrid) and list systems for the EP. 	[10]
1(b)	<p>Analyse the factors which explain the continued survival of the Electoral College.</p> <p>AO2 [12] AO3 [3]</p> <p>Candidates discuss the arguments against the reform of the Electoral College.</p> <p>Candidates examine strengths such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The emphasis on gaining an absolute majority of the popular vote; ○ This might be contrasted with alternative systems as used in the UK which are based upon different principles such as proportionality. ○ Preserving the voice of the small population states. ○ Problems of reform ○ Performance in recent elections apart from 2000 ○ Credit candidates who also discuss the viability or likelihood of any course of action being proposed. <p>To reach the top of Level 4, candidates demonstrate appropriate knowledge of the American political system, its theoretical basis as well as contemporary practice, and a thorough understanding of how it operates. They demonstrate sophisticated analytical skills, in particular the ability to argue and support a case, clearly and succinctly, showing genuine awareness and understanding of alternative views. Candidates demonstrate the ability to view American politics from an American perspective, showing awareness of the particular issues affecting politicians in the United States.</p>	[15]

Question Number	Answer	Max Mark
2	<p>Evaluate the importance of the role played by Ross Perot and Ralph Nader in the presidential elections of 1992 to 2004.</p> <p><i>AS Unit content: Unit F851: Political parties. Concepts: representative government, democracy, pluralism, roles and functions of parties, one two, multi-party systems.</i></p> <p><i>A2 Unit content: The role and impact of third parties, party renewal and decline.</i></p> <p>A01 [10]; A02[10]: A03[5]</p> <p>A01: Candidates should display knowledge and understanding of the conduct of presidential elections, and specifically of those held between 1992 and 2004.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They also display knowledge and understanding of how and why Perot and Nader came to enter these presidential races, the issues they particularly addressed and why the political climate at the time did or did not especially favour their candidacies. • References to developments in the 2008 election should be rewarded (Bloomberg) • Reference might be made to the role of independents (Taylor, Galloway, Bell) and smaller parties in the UK <p>A02: Candidates evaluate the relative importance of the role played by these candidacies in these four elections.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They evaluate the importance of their candidacies in terms of both their effect on the policy debate and the outcome of each election, as well as any lasting effects they had on the political agenda. • They differentiate between the important role played by Perot in 1992 and Nader in 2000, compared with the relative unimportance of their candidacies in 1996 and 2004, respectively. • Comparisons may be made with the role of third parties and independents in the UK. <p>A03: Credit the ability to communicate legibly, fluently, coherently, using specialist vocabulary, taking into consideration spelling, punctuation and grammar.</p>	[25]

Question Number	Answer	Max Mark
3	<p>Examine the claim that pressure groups hinder rather than assist democracy in the US.</p> <p><i>AS Unit content: Unit F851: Pressure groups. Concepts: representation, democracy, power, influence; pluralism; elitism; corporatism. Contribution to the democratic process.</i></p> <p><i>A2 Unit content: Roles and functions of pressure groups; methods used; implications for the democratic process; issues concerning power and influence</i></p> <p>AO1: Candidates may display knowledge and understanding of the role of interest groups in the political process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This may include references to the decline of political parties and the functions performed by interest groups. In this regard there may be discussion of their role in terms of participation, representation, accountability and scrutiny, education and information. • Credit any references to US interest groups, especially those who can go beyond the standard NRA and NAACP examples. Recent developments such as the Abromoff scandal or the role of “big oil” in the Bush administration, should be credited. • The role of interest groups in the electoral and legislative process could profitably be outlined. PACs and the “revolving door” syndrome and iron triangles will be relevant in this regard. • There may be reference to the competing theories surrounding the activities of interest groups and the authors associated with these views; pluralism /Dahl, New Right / Olsen, Elitist & Marxist views / C Wright-Mills. • Candidates could also place their discussion in context by reference to UK interest groups such as F4J, Countryside Alliance etc. and the different political systems (parliamentary government) and climate (post Thatcher New Right / Public choice, Blair distancing himself from the unions). <p>AO2: Candidates should attempt to make some sort of judgement relating to the role of pressure groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the top end of the mark levels expect candidates to apply one of the theories above to the US and adopt a balanced approach which recognises the beneficial and detrimental effects of their activity. • References might be made to the inequality of resources and the importance of money in US politics. The role of PACs / 527 groups and the impact of the Bipartisan Campaign Finance Act are relevant in this regard. • The decline of parties provides an opportunity to extol the role of pressure groups. • Similarly contrasts might be made with the UK to illustrate argument. <p>AO3: Credit the ability to communicate legibly, fluently, coherently, using specialist vocabulary, taking into consideration spelling, punctuation and grammar.</p>	[25]

Question Number	Answer	Max Mark
4	<p>Has the US been successful in avoiding concentrating too much power with federal government in Washington?</p> <p><i>AS Unit content: Unit F852: The Executive, legislative and judiciary and European Union. Concepts: power; parliamentary sovereignty; parliamentary government; representation; devolution; separation of powers; federalism, subsidiarity; sovereignty.</i></p> <p><i>A2 Unit content: Federalism</i></p> <p>AO1: Candidates will display knowledge and understanding of federalism in the USA. This might include reference to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developments over time such as cooperative / creative/ new/ permissive federalism • Discussion of the states' institutional and fiscal revival should be credited • The role of the Supreme Court in recent years. • Recent developments under the Bush administration such as NCLB Act, increased welfare spending and homeland security could also be detailed. • There may be reference to the ideological principles which relate to these developments such as fiscal conservatism. • Contrasts might be made to the UK and the introduction of devolution and the principle of subsidiarity in the EU. <p>AO2: Candidates should examine the extent to which federal government has been successful in its attempts to give powers back to the states.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion of the states' fiscal and institutional revival will be of relevance here. • The impact of the Supreme Court in cases such as US v Lopez 1995 and Alden v. Maine amounting to a federalism revolution in the Rehnquist era will also help answer the question. • The extent to which states have always administered programmes could be explored although recent intrusions in education and social policy would provide a counter view. • Discussion of the impact of Katrina and other recent developments such as post 9/11 homeland security arrangements and bridge disaster in St Paul also provide scope for relevant discussion. • Contrast might be made with the unitary government in the UK, the impact of the devolution and federal arrangements in other countries. <p>AO3: Credit the ability to communicate legibly, fluently, coherently, using specialist vocabulary, taking into consideration spelling, punctuation and grammar.</p>	[25]

Question Number	Answer	Max Mark
5	<p>What purpose do parties serve in the US Congress?</p> <p><i>AS Unit content: Unit F852: The legislature. Concepts: democracy; accountability; representation, role of parties in parliament; whips and the whipping system.</i></p> <p><i>A2 Unit content: Political parties; roles and functions. The Congress; role of political parties.</i></p> <p>AO1: Expect candidates to display a knowledge and understanding of the role of parties in the legislature. This may include reference to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The domination of both chambers by the Democrats and Republicans • The role played in the organisation of the chambers re. the speaker and majority and minority leaders, whips and the committee chairmen. • The legislative process • Confirmation and impeachment proceedings • Influences on voting in the Congress • References to the impact of the 2006 mid terms will be rewarded such as Pelosi's 6 for 06 and the attitude of the Congress to Bush's planned "surge" in Iraq. Increased partisanship since 1994 might be discussed with Gingrich likened to a British PM and the Contract for America to a manifesto from a UK political party. • References could be profitably made to the role of UK political parties in Parliament. <p>AO2: Look for a balanced and well reasoned assessment which will allow the candidate to reach different conclusions about the role of parties depending upon the function being discussed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contrasts with the UK could be useful here given the string contrasts between the two countries. The importance of candidate centred campaigns and impact of the "folks back home" on Congressional voting provide two good points of comparison with the UK where the reverse applies. • Some reference might be made to the party decline thesis and this could be countered by the arguments in favour of party revival. <p>AO3: Credit the ability to communicate legibly, fluently, coherently, using specialist vocabulary, taking into consideration spelling, punctuation and grammar.</p>	[25]

Question Number	Answer	Max Mark
6	<p>Discuss the claim that appointments to the Supreme Court are the most important appointments a president makes.</p> <p><i>AS Unit content: Unit F852: the Judiciary. Concepts: law; justice; separation of powers; the rule of law; judicial independence; judicial neutrality. Membership of the judiciary; appointment process to the higher judiciary; judicial review; relationship between the judiciary, executive and the legislature; the European Convention of Human Rights.</i></p> <p><i>A2 Unit content: The Supreme Court; membership, appointment process, judicial review, judicial activism and restraint, the role of the Court in the development of rights of states and individuals and of deciding other constitutional issues. The Presidency; the cabinet, Executive Office the President.</i></p> <p>AO1: Candidates should display a knowledge and understanding of the appointment process and the role of the Court in US government and politics. This will allow a comparison to be made with other appointments the president makes. This then might include reference to some of the following;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The appointment process. Role of the president, Senate Judiciary Committee, and Senate. • Recent nominations; Roberts, Alito and Miers. • The impact of appointments upon the balance and voting blocs upon the Court. The resignation of O'Connor and death of Rehnquist. • The power of judicial review – US v Lopez 1995 • The role of the Courts in the defence of rights. Possible impact upon Roe v Wade 1973. • Other appointments made by the president to cabinet and the EOP, ambassadors, agency directors. • The respective roles of the cabinet and EOP in US government • The appointment process for senior judges in the UK and the impact of the Constitutional Reform Act 2005. <p>AO2: Candidates should attempt to evaluate the relative importance of these appointments and not merely focus on the appointment process in isolation. Marks can be awarded for discussion of the following;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The significance of life tenure • The power of the Court checking the executive and legislative branches • The power of the Court in defining states' and individual rights • The importance of the Rule of Law and judicial independence. • Significance of past appointments & the present balance of the (Kennedy) Court, • The frequency of appointments over time (Carter v Nixon) • An assessment of the role of cabinet and EOP. 	

Question Number	Answer	Max Mark
6 cont'd	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Debate may be linked to the UK and recent reforms designed to end “politicisation” of the judiciary and enforce a clearer separation of powers. <p>AO3: Credit the ability to communicate legibly, fluently, coherently, using specialist vocabulary, taking into consideration spelling, punctuation and grammar.</p>	[25]

Question Number	Answer	Max Mark
7	<p>Discuss the claim that rights and liberties in the United States are better protected in theory than in practice.</p> <p><i>AS Unit content: Unit F852: Rights, liberties duties and the redress of grievance. Concepts: equality; liberty; justice; rights; duties. Rights; natural, positive, human and civil rights. Protection of rights: roles and importance of the ECHR, judiciary, parliament, media, pressure groups and other methods.</i></p> <p><i>A2 Unit content: Civil rights and liberties; concerning race religion, gender, freedom of speech and expression. The role of institutions and of the Constitution in defending rights; current issues associated with rights and liberties.</i></p> <p>AO1: Candidates will display knowledge and understanding of the protection of rights in the US. This might include reference to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of the Supreme Court both in the past and present. Expect the inevitable references to Roe and Brown but reward those who can go further. The significance of the Warren Court and later rulings should be assessed. • Candidates would do well to separate rights on the basis of the bill of rights. So separate consideration of first amendment rights, guns, the rights of the accused, states' rights and abortion will allow candidates to access marks. • Reward those who are able to refer to recent developments such as same sex marriages, flag burning and homosexuality (Texas v Lawrence) abortion (Gonzales v. Carhart). • Congressional legislation such as the Patriot Act. • The role of the President in this area especially since 9/11. • Reference to interest groups such as the ACLU • Comparisons may be made with the UK with regard to the impact of the ECHR and the role of pressure groups such as Liberty. <p>AO2: Candidates may comment upon the changing role of the Court from the Warren to Rehnquist era and hopefully to the Roberts Court, and offer a commentary on its role.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of Congress and the Presidency should be considered. • Central to this discussion is the notion of "paper rights" – segregation, homosexuality and internment of Japanese Americans could all be used to support relevant argument. • Contrasts with the UK and the "fragility" of rights given derogation and parliamentary sovereignty. <p>AO3: Credit the ability to communicate legibly, fluently, coherently, using specialist vocabulary, taking into consideration spelling, punctuation and grammar.</p>	[25]

Question Number	Answer	Max Mark
8	<p>Examine the reasons why the presidential second terms have so often been a failure.</p> <p><i>Specification: the Presidency; presidential policy-making; problems of the co-ordination of the executive branch theories and practice of presidential power; relations with congress.</i></p> <p>AO1 [10]; AO2 [10]; AO3 [5]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AO1: Candidates display knowledge and understanding of recent second term presidencies, namely those of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Nixon (1973-74); ○ Reagan (1985-89); ○ Clinton (1997-2001); ○ George W. Bush (from 2005). • They also display knowledge and understanding of the principal difficulties and failures which occurred during these second terms, which may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Watergate; ○ the Iran-Contra affair; ○ the impeachment and trial of Bill Clinton; ○ some of the issue in the George W. Bush second term. • AO2: Candidates examine a number of reasons why recent second terms have often been a failure. These may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the effects of the 22nd Amendment turning the second-term president into a lame duck; ○ the effect of governing with one or both houses of Congress controlled by the 'opposition' party (Nixon, Reagan and Clinton); ○ exhaustion of the cabinet and White House staff and the increasing difficulty of recruiting new people in the second term; ○ over-confidence and carelessness; ○ the diminution of the president's clout in Congress; ○ falling public-opinion ratings. • Credit candidates who challenge the assumption of the question. • To reach the top of Level 4, candidates demonstrate appropriate knowledge of the American political system, its theoretical basis as well as contemporary practice, and a thorough understanding of how it operates. They demonstrate sophisticated analytical skills, in particular the ability to argue and support a case, clearly and succinctly, showing genuine awareness and understanding of alternative views. Candidates demonstrate the ability to view American politics from an American perspective, showing awareness of the particular issues affecting politicians in the United States. 	

Question Number	Answer	Max Mark
8 Cont'd	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• AO3: Credit the ability to communicate legibly, fluently, coherently, using specialist vocabulary, taking into consideration spelling, punctuation and grammar.	[25]
Paper Total		[100]

Assessment Objectives Grid (includes QWC)

Question	AO1	AO2	AO3	Total
1a	8		2	10
1b		12	3	15
2/3/4/5/6/7/8	10	10	5	25
2/3/4/5/6/7/8	10	10	5	25
2/3/4/5/6/7/8	10	10	5	25
Totals	38	42	20	100

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