

Mark Scheme (Results)

January 2012

GCE Government & Politics 6GP03 3C
PROCESSES IN THE USA

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January 2012

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1.	To what extent do minor parties have an impact on US politics?
Indicative content (<i>this is not an exhaustive account of relevant points</i>)	
<p>Evidence that minor parties have an impact includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in presidential elections, minor party candidates have periodically had an effect on the campaigns of Democratic and Republican candidates, e.g. Wallace/Nixon in 1968 and 1972, Perot/Bush and Clinton in 1992 and Nader/Gore in 2000 • they may also have had an effect on the result, Perot possibly in 1992 and Nader very probably in 2000 <p>Evidence that minor parties have only a limited impact includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in Congress, the influence of minor parties is nil; after the 2010 midterms, all 535 representatives are Democrats or Republicans, and the only senators not members of the two main parties are independents • the strongest performance by a gubernatorial candidate of a minor party in 2010 was Tom Tancredo's strong second for the American Constitution Party in the Colorado race for governor • consistent impact of minor parties is limited to local politics such as city councils 	
LEVELS	DESCRIPTORS
Level 3 (11-15 marks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good to excellent knowledge and understanding of relevant institutions, processes, political concepts, theories or debates. • Good to excellent ability to analyse and explain political information, arguments and explanations. • Good to excellent ability to construct and communicate coherent arguments, making good use of appropriate vocabulary.
Level 2 (6-10 marks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited to sound knowledge and understanding of relevant institutions, processes, political concepts, theories or debates. • Limited to sound ability to analyse and explain political information, arguments and explanations. • Limited to sound ability to construct and communicate coherent arguments, making some use of appropriate vocabulary.
Level 1 (0-5 marks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very poor to weak knowledge and understanding of relevant institutions, processes, political concepts, theories or debates. • Very poor to weak ability to analyse and explain political information, arguments and explanations. • Very poor to weak ability to construct and communicate coherent arguments, making little or no use of appropriate vocabulary.

2.	What is the invisible primary, and how important is it?
Indicative content (<i>this is not an exhaustive account of relevant points</i>)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the invisible primary is the first stage of the presidential campaign, in the year preceding the election and before the first actual primary • potential candidates try to generate momentum behind their campaign by establishing name recognition and political identity, creating a campaign infrastructure and organisation in key states, and raising as much money as possible; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • they will also try to secure prominent endorsements, e.g. Oprah Winfrey's endorsement of Barack Obama in November 2007 <p>Evidence for its significance includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a strong showing in the invisible primary is essential: by December 2007, the Democratic field had been reduced to three (and realistically two) contenders, and, while the Republican race remained more open, the moderate performance of candidates such as Rudy Giuliani and Fred Thompson presaged their eventual fate • momentum is arguably more important than front-runner status though, and the 'winners' of the Democratic invisible primary in 2004 and 2008, Howard Dean and Hillary Clinton, both failed to gain the nomination • arguably the trend towards 'front loading' increases the significance of the invisible primary • the 2012 invisible primary saw a number of apparently well qualified candidates (e.g. Mike Huckabee, Mitch Daniels, Chris Christie) declare their non-candidacy; the withdrawal of Tim Pawlenty and Herman Cain, and a decline in the fortunes of Michele Bachmann and Rick Perry, such that their early withdrawal from the race was inevitable; the emergence of 'super PACs'; a series of debates which had a significant influence on the decline of Rick Perry and the rise of Newt Gingrich; by the end of December, Newt Gingrich and Mitt Romney were more or less tied nationally at around 25%, but the eventual winner of the Iowa caucuses, Rick Santorum, was still below 5% 	

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3.	To what extent are caucuses an appropriate means of selecting candidates?
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Indicative content (*this is not an exhaustive account of relevant points*)

Caucuses are neighbourhood party meetings in community buildings such as schools, and are used in a minority of states instead of (or sometimes as well as) primaries to select candidates. There are different procedures from state to state and party to party, but the 'classic' caucus proceeds not by conventional voting, but by attendees grouping themselves at the beginning of the event to indicate their support for a candidate; groups which do not meet a viability threshold have to disperse and other groups try to persuade their members to join them. At the end of the caucus for presidential candidates, the size of the remaining groups is translated into delegates to the national party convention, or in some versions to further state events.

Criticisms of caucuses include:

- because of the time required, public nature and sometimes arcane procedure, turnout is usually very low, often around 10%
- they attract only committed party supporters, which may disadvantage moderate candidates
- because of the large number of meetings (in Iowa, for example, approaching 2,000), candidates with extensive organization and money may have an advantage; Barack Obama's nomination in 2008 depended on his string of successes in caucus states

defences of caucuses include:

- caucuses are a traditional form of civic engagement for local communities, and an active and participatory form of democracy
- in caucuses where voters can move from non-viable groups, they reduce the number of wasted votes
- from the point of view of parties, caucuses, unlike primaries, give close control over proceedings and who can vote

The win of Rick Santorum and the strong showing of Ron Paul in Iowa in January 2012 suggest that caucuses still reward candidates who have a strong presence in the state (Santorum was the first candidate to visit all of Iowa's 99 counties) or have a core of committed support (Paul).

The confusion over the final result in Iowa and the reported 'disappearance' of results from eight precincts highlight the organisational problems of a voting format comprising nearly 1,800 separate meetings.

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4.	What explains the influence of the most powerful US pressure groups?
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Indicative content (*this is not an exhaustive account of relevant points*)

The three most influential US pressure groups are the NRA, AIPAC and AARP, and a variety of factors explain their influence.

NRA:

- 4M members
- the depth of attachment of its members to the cause of gun ownership
- prestige
- defending the status quo
- extensive lobbying and campaign finance organisation
- its effectiveness in targeting and defeating political opponents
- divided opposition

AIPAC

- close ties with the Israeli government, and the significance of Israel to US Middle East policy
- presence of AIPAC board members at the top levels of both parties
- the leadership and presidential candidates of both parties are always keen to be associated with AIPAC
- almost universal and unqualified support from members of Congress of both parties for Israel
- its effectiveness in targeting and defeating opponents

AARP:

- 35M members
- extensive political organisation /contacts
- the propensity of the elderly to vote

LEVELS	DESCRIPTORS
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<p>Level 2 (6-10 marks)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited to sound knowledge and understanding of relevant institutions, processes, political concepts, theories or debates. • Limited to sound ability to analyse and explain political information, arguments and explanations. • Limited to sound ability to construct and communicate coherent arguments, making some use of appropriate vocabulary.
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5.	What is black nationalism, and how influential is it still in the USA?
Indicative content (<i>this is not an exhaustive account of relevant points</i>)	
<p>Definition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • black nationalism is a social movement with a variety of aims, all of which centre around the creation of some sort of autonomy for black people from white society; it is underpinned by (at least) two views: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a political view, that attempts to achieve meaningful equality in a predominantly white US society are futile, as its power structure will always disadvantage black people • a biological view, that racial differences mean race will always be the determining feature of any person's experience, and that racial integration is misguided and doomed <p>Evidence for the extent of black nationalism's influence includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it has had some high profile leaders, e.g. Marcus Garvey, Malcolm X, Louis Farrakhan • arguably its most influential phase in the USA was in the 60s and 70s through the Black Power movement • it has only occasionally achieved a high profile since, through events such as the Million Man March in 1995 • and through the expression by its leaders of apparently far-fetched opinions, e.g Louis Farrakhan's reported view that the New Orleans flood defences were deliberately weakened at the time of Hurricane Katrina in an attempt to wipe out the black population • Jeremiah Wright, who attained notoriety during the 2008 presidential election campaign, has sometimes been characterised as a black nationalist. 	

LEVELS	DESCRIPTORS
<p>Level 3 (11-15 marks)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good to excellent knowledge and understanding of relevant institutions, processes, political concepts, theories or debates. • Good to excellent ability to analyse and explain political information, arguments and explanations. • Good to excellent ability to construct and communicate coherent arguments, making good use of appropriate vocabulary.
<p>Level 2 (6-10 marks)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited to sound knowledge and understanding of relevant institutions, processes, political concepts, theories or debates. • Limited to sound ability to analyse and explain political information, arguments and explanations. • Limited to sound ability to construct and communicate coherent arguments, making some use of appropriate vocabulary.
<p>Level 1 (0-5 marks)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very poor to weak knowledge and understanding of relevant institutions, processes, political concepts, theories or debates. • Very poor to weak ability to analyse and explain political information, arguments and explanations. • Very poor to weak ability to construct and communicate coherent arguments, making little or no use of appropriate vocabulary.

6	To what extent have the two major parties become ideologically distinct from one another?
Indicative content (<i>this is not an exhaustive account of relevant points</i>)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • under President Clinton, the Democrats moved back towards the centre; he campaigned for and achieved a balanced budget, campaigned on 'welfare, a second chance not a way of life' and signed the Republican Congress's welfare reform bill in 1995, and extended the federal death penalty. • President Bush campaigned as a 'compassionate conservative': the major domestic policy initiative of his presidency was the No Child Left Behind education bill, co-sponsored in the Senate by Ted Kennedy; he signed a \$534BN prescription drug benefit addition to Medicare in 2003 and the TARP program in 2008 • President Obama has adopted a more conciliatory persona abroad than President Bush, but in substance American foreign policy is arguably unchanged; he has doubled the number of troops in Afghanistan, and Guantanamo Bay remains open • domestically, he has failed to advance a number of liberal causes, e.g. immigration reform; he has re-affirmed the Hyde amendment's prohibition of federal funding on abortion through executive order and, in attempting to revive the economy and in 'bailing out' the banks and auto-makers, he is following the policies of his predecessor • the two front-runners for the Republican presidential nomination in 2012, Mitt Romney and Newt Gingrich, both had reputations as centrists, while those more obviously aligned with the Tea Party movement such as Michele Bachmann fell away <p>Evidence that the two parties are ideologically distinct includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • since the 1970s, the base of the Democratic Party has identified with 'big government' and liberal social causes, such as affirmative action, gay rights, abortion rights and gun control; the House leadership of 2009-11 pushed for policies such as a public healthcare option and cap and trade • the Reagan presidency established the core values of the Republican Party as social and fiscal conservatism; these were reinforced subsequently by the dominance of the Christian Right and recently by the rise of the Tea Party movement; the 2010 midterms saw a string of primary successes for Tea Party-endorsed candidates. 	
AO1	Knowledge and understanding
Level 3 (9-12 marks)	Good to excellent knowledge and understanding of relevant institutions, processes, political concepts, theories or debates
Level 2 (5-8 marks)	Limited to sound knowledge and understanding of relevant institutions, processes, political concepts, theories or debates
Level 1 (0-4 marks)	Very poor to weak knowledge and understanding of relevant institutions, processes, political concepts, theories or debates

A02	Intellectual skills
Level 3 (9-12 marks)	Good to excellent ability to analyse and evaluate political information, arguments and explanations
Level 2 (5-8 marks)	Limited to sound ability to analyse and evaluate political information, arguments and explanations
Level 1 (0-4 marks)	Very poor to weak ability to analyse and evaluate political information, arguments and explanations
A02	Synoptic skills
Level 3 (9-12 marks)	Good to excellent ability to identify competing viewpoints or perspectives, and clear insight into how they affect the interpretation of political events or issues and shape conclusions
Level 2 (5-8 marks)	Limited to sound ability to identify competing viewpoints or perspectives, and a reliable awareness of how they affect the interpretation of political events or issues and shape conclusions
Level 1 (0-4 marks)	Very poor to weak ability to identify competing viewpoints or perspectives, and a little awareness of how they affect the interpretation of political events or issues and shape conclusions
A03	Communication and coherence
Level 3 (7-9 marks)	Good to excellent ability to construct and communicate coherent arguments, making good use of appropriate vocabulary
Level 2 (4-6 marks)	Limited to sound ability to construct and communicate coherent arguments, making some use of appropriate vocabulary
Level 1 (0-3 marks)	Very poor to weak ability to construct and communicate coherent arguments, making little or no use of appropriate vocabulary

7	'US pressure groups concentrate political power, rather than disperse it.' Discuss.
Indicative content (<i>this is not an exhaustive account of relevant points</i>)	
<p>Arguments which suggest the activity of pressure groups concentrates power in small wealthy elite include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the constant need to fund-raise makes elected officials highly dependent on wealthy donors • wealthy groups are able to influence elections through own campaigns, and their ability to do so has recently been strengthened by the 'Citizens United' and 'SpeechNow' decisions and the subsequent emergence of 'super PACs' • lobbyists undoubtedly exercise influence in Congress and their services are only available at a price • as was evident in the recent passage of health care legislation, corporate interests are almost always better organised and better financed than groups representing the interests of consumers • with rare exceptions, real influence seems linked to financial clout <p>Arguments which suggest the activity of pressure groups disperses power include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • their ability to influence the political agenda and to scrutinise government, e.g. the success of the 'Occupy' movement in moving income inequality and the '1%' and the '99%' into current debate • relatively weak party discipline in Congress and beyond makes politicians receptive to pressure group approaches • the fragmented nature of the US system creates a multiplicity of access points at both federal and state level, making it probable a group will find a sympathetic response somewhere in the system; for example, liberal groups have had success in the courts in recent decades • there are competing groups in every sector of pressure group activity and even as powerful a group as the NRA is not unchallenged in its role of representing gun-owners • strict limits on donations to candidates and parties ensure that no group is able to buy influence through elections • the combination of all these factors ensure that no group is able to exercise disproportionate power. 	
AO1	Knowledge and understanding
Level 3 (9-12 marks)	Good to excellent knowledge and understanding of relevant institutions, processes, political concepts, theories or debates
Level 2 (5-8 marks)	Limited to sound knowledge and understanding of relevant institutions, processes, political concepts, theories or debates
Level 1 (0-4 marks)	Very poor to weak knowledge and understanding of relevant institutions, processes, political concepts, theories or debates

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8	To what extent is race an important issue in US politics?
Indicative content (<i>this is not an exhaustive account of relevant points</i>)	
<p>Throughout US history, and as recently as the 1960s and 70s, issues and policies relating to race have been at the top of the political agenda. Arguments that race is no longer an important issue include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • race-based issues like affirmative action rarely feature in presidential or congressional election campaigns • race-based issues are rarely part of the presidential or congressional agenda • race-based cases are only occasionally heard by the Supreme Court • the Supreme Court has declared that the end of affirmative action is in sight • black and Latino representation in Congress is rising, and there is a black president • inequality between the races is narrowing, and the political impact of inequality is centred round the '1% and 99%' debate rather than race <p>Arguments that race is still an important issue include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • referendums attempting to ban affirmative action continue to be held at state level • presidents continue to signal their attitude to affirmative action, e.g. the Bush administration's amicus curiae briefs in the two University of Michigan cases • at least some of the antipathy to President Obama is arguably race-based and, some would claim, race provides the energy behind such groups as the 'birther' movement • the race-based cases the Supreme Court does hear, e.g. Ricci, receive national coverage • not infrequently, politicians create national controversy through comments on race-related issues, e.g. Haley Barbour's comments on the Civil Rights period in December 2010 • immigration continues to be a sensitive and high-profile issue • black candidates continue to struggle in state-wide elections • inequality between the races remains, and at times has political impact, e.g. in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina; racial tensions persist and occasionally receive national coverage such as the case of the 'Jena Six'. 	
AO1	Knowledge and understanding
Level 3 (9-12 marks)	Good to excellent knowledge and understanding of relevant institutions, processes, political concepts, theories or debates
Level 2 (5-8 marks)	Limited to sound knowledge and understanding of relevant institutions, processes, political concepts, theories or debates
Level 1 (0-4 marks)	Very poor to weak knowledge and understanding of relevant institutions, processes, political concepts, theories or debates

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SUMMARY A2 MARKING GRIDS

These grids should be used in conjunction with the fuller Level descriptors.

PART A - SHORT QUESTIONS (15 marks)

Level 3	Excellent	15
	Very good	13-14
	Good	11-12
Level 2	Sound	10
	Basic	8-9
	Limited	6-7
Level 1	Weak	4-5
	Poor	2-3
	Very poor	0-1

PART B – ESSAY QUESTIONS (45 marks)

A01 / A02 / Synopticity	
Level 3 (Good to excellent)	9-12
Level 2 (Limited to sound)	5-8
Level 1 (Very poor to weak)	0-4

A03	
Level 3 (good to excellent)	7-9
Level 2 (Limited to sound)	4-6
Level 1 (Very poor to weak)	0-3

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