

17.251
Congressional Politics I
Fall 2000
Final examination

This examination has three parts. Follow the instructions in each. *Please write on only one side of the paper in the blue books.*

I. *Formal models of legislatures.* (20%) Answer the **one** of the following two questions.

I.1. One of the top priorities of the new Bush Administration [sorry Roger] is passing a law to repeal the estate (death) tax. A bill repealing the estate tax passed the 106th Congress, but died when the House failed to override President Clinton s veto.

Using the spatial model to illustrate your point, argue why you think Bush will, or won t, be successful in getting the estate tax repealed..

[The following statistics might be useful:

Partisan division of the 106th Congress:	Partisan division of the 107th Congress:	Vote on passage of the estate tax repeal in the 106th Congress:
<i>House: 225R, 210D</i> <i>Senate: 54R, 46D</i>	<i>House: 222R, 213D</i> <i>Senate: 50R, 50D</i>	<i>House: 279 136</i> <i>Senate: 59 39</i>

For the purposes of this exercise, you may assume that all the Republicans in both chambers voted for the repeal in the 106th Congress. You will need to tell me what you re assuming about which Democrats supported repeal in the 106th Congress.]

I.2. A famous justification for having a relatively aristocratic Senate was that it would be like a saucer that cools the tea of legislative politics implying that the Senate would tend to favor less radical legislation than the House. Using the spatial model, show the conditions under which the most important rules differences between the two chambers confirm or disconfirm this hypothesis. (*Note: For the sake of simplicity, assume that the distribution of preferences is identical in the two chambers.*)

II. *Short answers.* (30%) Answer *two* of the following questions.

- II.1 What did the court case of *Shaw vs. Reno* establish?
- II.2 What important characteristics distinguish the role played in the House by the *majority leader* and the one played by the *minority leader*? What similarities do the two positions share?
- II.3 What is the *Pareto set*? Sketch an example.
- II.4 What is the difference between a *simple unanimous consent agreement* and a *complex unanimous consent agreement* in the Senate?

III. *Essay* (40%) Answer the following essay question. You may use the one-page outline you prepared in anticipation of this exam. Turn in your outline with your examination when you are finished.

In *Congress: The Electoral Connection* David Mayhew writes that the fact is that no theoretical treatment of the United States Congress that posits parties as analytic units will go very far. Yet we have also read another book (David W. Rohde's *Parties and Leaders in the Postreform House*) that claims parties are ascendant as independent political actors on the congressional stage.

Write an essay in which you assess the truth of Mayhew's claim, in light of what you know about the contemporary Congress. Take into account all the recent material you have encountered in this class, including newspaper articles culled from the weekly roundtable and the assigned readings.

Extra credit:

You will get ½ a letter grade increase on this exam if you identify (name) the people who held the following positions in the 106th Congress:

1. Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee
2. Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee
3. Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee
4. Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee
5. Chair of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee
6. Chair of the Senate Republican Conference