

POL 120 – Kramer—Study Guide for Exam #3

Note: The Study Guide contains material from both the lectures and the textbook. Some terms are common to both formats while others are found only in the lecture or in rare cases, only in the textbook.

Public Opinion, Political Socialization and Voting

--Definition of public opinion; polling—weaknesses of polling data: Survey size; question wording; randomness; persons surveyed; Anthony Downs' model of voter attitudes in the U.S.

--normal distribution (“bell curve”), bimodal distribution; skewed distribution

--political socialization; the role of “mommy” in instilling political values

--political ideology: communitarian, liberal, conservative, libertarian

--qualifications for voting: left to the states with many federal prescriptions

--states may not disenfranchise on basis of: Property ownership (1850s), poll tax and literacy tests (1960s), gender (1920s), race (1868), or age (1960s) (at least if you're 18!)

--voter turnout: US relative to other industrial countries; reasons why

--who votes? Higher turnout as age, education, and income increases

--voter registration: various procedures depending on state

---NIMBY; single issue voters; cross-pressures

---What is a referendum? Where is it used?

Nominations, Elections and Campaigns

--open vs. closed primaries; blanket primaries

--the Electoral College (again!): where has political influence shifted among the states?

--alignment; realignment; critical elections; dealignment

--“split level realignment”; “soft money”; campaign finance limitations—arguments for and against; money as “speech” under current law

---“the smoke filled room”; party loyalists; role of party conventions

Political Parties

- party identification; history of Democratic and Republican parties
- “Solid South”
- Roosevelt “new deal” coalition in 1932
- Single member districts vs. proportional representation
- machine politics
- decline of political parties in US since 1900: reasons for decline: Civil service reform, decline of patronage, candidate centered politics, loss of financial clout in bankrolling campaigns
- usual fate of “third parties”: Teddy Roosevelt, Ross Perot, John Anderson, Ralph Nader

Interest Groups

- PAC (Political Action Committees)
- role of interest groups: Education of congresspersons; providers of information/data
- entrepreneurial leadership; AARP; NRA
- who joins an interest group?: membership increases with age, education, wealth
- “free rider”; selective (direct) benefits