

CHAPTER 1: APPROACHING THE STUDY OF POLITICS

MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. Which of the following form the three branches of government?
 - a. the executive, the legislature, and the judiciary
 - b. the legislature, the executive, and the administration
 - c. the executive, the courts, and Parliament
 - d. the Parliament, the Senate, and the courts

ANS: A PTS: 1 REF: The Political System
BLM: Remember

2. According to political science, what are the three different types of power?
 - a. coercion, authority, and legitimacy
 - b. authority, influence, and coercion
 - c. influence, legitimacy, and respect
 - d. authority, coercion, and influence

ANS: D PTS: 1 REF: The Political System
BLM: Remember

3. Which of the following is **NOT** an example of a pressure group?
 - a. National Citizen's Coalition
 - b. The Federal Conservative Party of Canada
 - c. Women's Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF)
 - d. Mothers Against Drunk Drivers (MADD)

ANS: B PTS: 1 REF: The Political System
BLM: Higher Order

4. Which approach best exemplifies the use of "brokerage politics"?
 - a. social cleavage
 - b. Marxist
 - c. pluralist
 - d. class

ANS: C PTS: 1 REF: Approaches to the Study of Politics
BLM: Higher Order

5. What analytical approach is linked closely to the "democratic ideal"?
 - a. pluralist
 - b. Marxist
 - c. class
 - d. social cleavage

ANS: A PTS: 1 REF: Approaches to the Study of Politics
BLM: Remember

6. According to the institutional approach, what are the two main elements of politics and government that are considered to be the main essence of political analysis?
 - a. institutions and the constitution
 - b. bureaucracy and law
 - c. constitution and law

d. bureaucracy and courts

ANS: C

PTS: 1

REF: Approaches to the Study of Politics

BLM: Remember

7. Which term refers to states that steer the economic development of their countries in directions favoured by state actors?
- pluralist
 - dirigiste
 - staple
 - embedded

ANS: B

PTS: 1

REF: Approaches to the Study of Politics

BLM: Remember

8. Which statement best describes the notion of the embedded state?
- Elites cannot operate with total autonomy because of the fusion of state and society.
 - The state wields an enormous amount of power, unchecked by societal norms.
 - Individuals view the powers of the state to be entrenched within all aspects of society.
 - Politicians are unable to operate without the bureaucratic functions of the state.

ANS: A

PTS: 1

REF: Approaches to the Study of Politics

BLM: Remember

9. What is an example of elite accommodation?
- the Harper government's decision to remove the tax advantages of corporate income trusts
 - the \$1 billion fine levied against tobacco companies for smuggling cigarettes
 - the reality that leaders of different ethnic groups and politicians often come from the same ranks
 - the anti-Kyoto stance taken by several Western politicians

ANS: C

PTS: 1

REF: Approaches to the Study of Politics

BLM: Higher Order

10. Which statement best describes the rational choice approach in politics?
- People get involved in politics because they want to get something out of it for themselves or others.
 - Its primary focus is the source of human motivation.
 - Its theory stipulates that individuals will deductively reduce their logic in order to achieve their goals.
 - What is good for the individual is the same as what is good for the group.

ANS: A

PTS: 1

REF: Approaches to the Study of Politics

BLM: Remember

TRUE/FALSE

1. The institutional approach is closely linked to the historical approach.

ANS: T

PTS: 1

REF: Approaches to the Study of Politics

2. Feedback is a communication of outputs back into the system, in response to which the pattern of demands and support is altered.

ANS: T

PTS: 1

REF: The Political System

3. Government authority is based on accountability.

ANS: F

It is based on legitimacy.

PTS: 1 REF: The Political System

4. The notion that the operations of the state are so extensive that they are connected to virtually every aspect of society is called the state-centred approach.

ANS: F

It is called the embedded state.

PTS: 1 REF: Approaches to the Study of Politics

5. In the class analysis approach, the political elite takes orders from the capitalist elite and the state is an instrument of bourgeois domination.

ANS: T

PTS: 1

REF: Approaches to the Study of Politics

6. The class approach postulates that the political system is characterized by openness and that power is widely dispersed among many interests.

ANS: F

The pluralist approach postulates that the political system is characterized by openness and that power is widely dispersed among many interests.

PTS: 1 REF: Approaches to the Study of Politics

7. The Marxist approach is synonymous with the class approach.

ANS: T

PTS: 1

REF: Approaches to the Study of Politics

8. The state-centred approach views those individuals endowed with the authority to formulate and implement public policies as basically autonomous from the rest of society.

ANS: T

PTS: 1

REF: Approaches to the Study of Politics

9. The behaviour of individual politicians is an example of the political psychology approach.

ANS: F

The behaviour of individual politicians is an example of the political behaviour approach.

PTS: 1 REF: Approaches to the Study of Politics

10. In the rational choice approach, “goal-oriented” is synonymous with “preference-oriented.”

ANS: T

PTS: 1

REF: Approaches to the Study of Politics

ESSAY

1. Compare and contrast two of the five approaches to the study of politics (institutional, state-based, political sociology, political psychology and political behaviour approaches, and rational choice approach).

ANS:

Answers will vary.

PTS: 1

2. Consider the rising costs of postsecondary education. Apply any three different approaches to the study of politics to the economic concerns of postsecondary students.

ANS:

The pluralist approach would assume that students could join together to form an interest group that would lobby for student concerns, including lower tuition rates. The pluralist argument would continue, however, that if student organizations were larger and stronger, and if student identities led them to take a more aggressive part in the political system, they might have greater success.

The class analysis approach would first examine the class composition of the postsecondary educational cohort—in particular, what proportion of such students come from the less affluent levels of society? Do high tuition fees and inadequate financial assistance programs keep lower-income students out? Second, much depends on whether the bourgeoisie believe that the state should pursue student-friendly policies. Well-educated students are an asset to the corporate elite, and if they can be hired fully trained, it will save corporations money. Since corporations provide much employment for this group as well as others, grateful politicians will be responsive to their concerns on these as well as other issues. Third, attitudes toward student concerns on the part of the population as a whole, as well as of many students themselves, will have been influenced by the way such issues are portrayed in the corporate-owned media. Fourth, student protestors, especially on wider issues such as globalization or poverty, may well be victims of coercive actions on the part of the police, but, on the other hand, students can influence the system if they function as a class.

Applying the state-centred approach to postsecondary student concerns, such demands would have little effect on the authorities unless the latter were themselves concerned. Student-friendly public policies would depend on the extent to which bureaucrats and/or politicians saw the value in postsecondary education to society as a whole.

PTS: 1

3. Describe how power resolves political issues.

ANS:

Answers will vary.

PTS: 1

4. Explain the relationship between authorities, input, output, and feedback and how these relate to the Canadian political system.

ANS:

(Refer to Figure 1.1)

The authorities describe the four branches of government involved in the decision-making process for a society. These include the legislature, the executive, the bureaucracy, and the judiciary. The authorities receive input from society in the form of demands and support. Individuals, groups, political parties, and the media can raise demands. Support is less concrete and can take the form of support for the government of the day, support for the decision-making structures within the political system, or support for the political community known as Canada.

One or more branches of government receive these forms of input and make decisions regarding some of the demands that come to their attention. These decisions are referred to as output. Whatever the type of output, it usually sparks a reaction in the rest of the system. This leads us to the concept of feedback—that is, a communication of the outputs back into the system, in response to which the pattern of demands and support is altered. If an output satisfies a particular demand, then that demand will no longer have to be articulated. On the other hand, a backlash may result. The authorities will then respond in one way or another to this new pattern of demands and support.

Thus, the political system is a dynamic, circular, never-ending process in which the authorities react to demands and support (known as input), seek out public sentiment, convert some of the demands into outputs, and then respond in turn to whatever changes in the pattern of inputs have resulted from the feedback from such outputs. Individuals and groups raise conflicting demands, but because there is a consensus on the legitimacy of the government, people generally abide by its authoritative decisions, even when they disagree with them.

PTS: 1

5. How are demands transmitted to the authorities? Which method do you think is most effective, and why?

ANS:

Demands can be transmitted to the authorities in several different manners. First, demands can be transmitted on a personal basis, by means of a letter, fax, telephone call, e-mail, or face-to-face encounter. Second, demands can be transmitted via group action, from interest groups, pressure groups or advocacy groups. Groups may also come in the form of corporations or institutions. By joining a political party, people can attempt to get it to recognize their concerns in its platform or policies. If the party forms a government, it can incorporate the demand into its decisions and government policy; in opposition, the party can bring the problem to national attention. Media can have enormous political influence, as they provide the electorate with most of its information about politics and government.

PTS: 1