

Grading Criteria for POL 1080

The Multiple Choice Portion of the Exams

The multiple choice portion of the Midterm and the Final exams will consist of 4 options (a, b, c, d) and students will have to select only one correct answer. If possible, I try to avoid options that include “all of the above” or “none of the above.” Occasionally, students will be given questions that consist of 3 correct answers and one incorrect answer and the incorrect option may be the answer that we will be asking you to select. If this is the case, we will make sure to indicate that there are several correct responses listed below EXCEPT that you are requested to select the one that is not correct.

The Fill-in-the-Blanks Portion of the Exams

This option will require students to provide an accurate term or phrase from a word bank provided to the students. Note that usually the word bank consists of several additional terms or phrases some of which you will NOT need to fill in all the blanks.

The Short Answers Portion of the Exams

Students will receive 2 or 3 points for each of these answers. They are expected to answer the questions in writing, concisely. They can use sentence/ paragraph format or bullet point format. Both formats are acceptable as long as student write legibly and their answers make sense. Please, make sure to answer the question in full. Sometimes different parts of the short answer questions require from you to cite information or list variety of explanations; occasionally parts of the questions will ask you to compare different theories/ explanations, etc. Make sure to provide *full and accurate* information to the best of your ability. The grading matrix for a 2-point question is as follows:

0-0.5 pts – the student has tried to provide an answer but it is completely irrelevant and inaccurate. It is obvious that they are not prepared to answer the question.

0.75-1 pts – The student has provided a response but it is very poor with missing important pieces of information or they have tried to use general knowledge without referring to information provided in class or in the textbook.

1.25-1.5 pts – The student has provided an acceptable response with relevant information. However, there are varying degrees of missing information or incomplete answers.

1.75-2 pts – The student has provided a very good or excellent response. For 1.75 there are missing parts of the answer but most of the information is accurately provided.

The grading matrix for a 3-point question is as follows:

0-1 pts – the student has tried to provide an answer but it is completely irrelevant and inaccurate. It is obvious that they are not prepared to answer the question.

1-1.5 pts – The student has provided a response but it very poor with missing important pieces of information (varying degree of importance to differentiate between 1 and 1.5 pts) or the student has tried to use general knowledge without referring to information provided in class or in the textbook.

1.5-2.5 pts – The student has provided an acceptable response with relevant information. However, there are varying degrees of missing information or incomplete answers. The degree of missing information is differentiated between 1.5 and 2.5 pts

2.5-3 pts – The student has provided a very good or an excellent response. For 2.5-2.75 pts there are still missing parts of the answer but most of the information is accurately provided.

The Current Events Quiz Portion of the Exam

The current events quiz is 10 points or 10% of the overall grade. It is in a multiple-choice format (either 30 questions, 0.34 pts each question or 40 questions, 0.25 percent each question). Student should select one correct answer only. The test will be administered via Canvas and is normally open and available for only 24 hours to take. Students will have 45 minutes and only one attempt is allowed.

How can students prepare best for the quiz? I recommend to review all New York Times articles assigned throughout the semester, read them more closely by paying attention to the central claim, statement or argument made in the article, as well as possible explanations or analysis of current events. Who are the main actors/ players? What are the main events? What explanation have the authors offered about a specific event? Read carefully the questions and the four options that are available. If students are unsure, they should be looking for the most logical answer/ response. Some of the questions may list 3 correct and 1 wrong answer for a specific statement. In these cases, the wrong answer may be the one that we are looking for. There will not be any tricky or misleading questions but you need to read the articles to know the correct answers.

The Final Essay Portion of the Exam

As a part of the final exam, students will be required to write a comprehensive essay (20 points). They should present a clear, well-structured essay drawing on lecture notes and assigned course readings. Students should use historical examples and references to theories and concepts discussed throughout the semester to support their answer.

Specifically, students will be asked to discuss in detail the relevancy of the three levels of analysis (individual, state and the international system) in explaining the processes of world politics surrounding a major historical event (e.g., World War I or World War II). They should explain different assumptions and variables at the different levels. Furthermore, students should elaborate how power, institutions and identity (ideas) perspectives approach this specific historical case. They are expected to provide examples from readings and lectures to support their description of each level of analysis. Lastly, students should determine which of the three levels of analysis (individual, state, the int'l system) offers the most persuasive explanation of this particular historical case and why. The instructor will determine the case study in advance

The Echo 360 Participation Score

POL 1080 participation grade is based on student engagement recorded via Echo 360 (10% of the overall grade). Note that if students have been asked 3 questions in weekly lesson that contains six questions (with the other three questions being hidden) and, if the student has participated and answered correctly all three questions, they will see that their Echo 360 participation score is 50%. If they answered one of the questions incorrectly (and other two questions correctly), they will receive a participation score of 33.4%. I will take the highest Echo 360 participation score for the week (in this case 50%) and this score will be 1. Then the actual student score will be a fraction of the highest score of 1 in a scale from 0 to 1. For example, if the highest Echo 360 participation score for week Ten is 0.6 and your Echo 360 participation score is 0.4 then your weekly adjusted score would be 0.67. Then, I will average the adjusted scores for all 14 weeks and multiple the average value by 10 (since this component is 10 pts or 10% of the overall grade). Students unable to attend due to legitimate excuses (medical or personal) will have their scores adjusted. Note that failure to attend classes and submit answers to the participation questions will impact adversely your participation score. For example, if you not participated in Echo 360 for two weeks of classes, you have incurred 0 participation score for these two weeks. In this case, even if your response rate is 100% (or 1) for the rest of the semester (i.e., you have attended and answered correctly all other questions asked in class), your overall participation score will be 4.28 out of 5 pts.

The Group Discussions Score

The group discussion score will be determined based on the number of group discussions throughout the semester, the student participation in those discussion and the quality of responses that the group and its individual members have provided. Here is how the grading process and the criteria work:

First, students will be assigned random groups via WebEx during the semester. They will be asked to participate in discussions with the instructor and the TAs joining the group and engaging the small group in discussions.

Second, normally, we plan to hold 10 discussion activities during a given semester. This means that each discussion is worth 1 point (or 10 pts in total). A student will be assigned full credit if they have answered the question thoroughly and in detail. Note that the grade for this component is based exclusively on the student submissions on Canvas. In order to receive full credit, the students are expected to submit detailed answers and address all parts of the group discussion questions posed to them. If they fail to answer part of the discussion question or answer it incorrectly, 0.1, or 0.25 pts points will be deducted from their score. Failure to submit an answer will result in 0 (zero) points for this activity for this particular member of the group even if they have participated in the discussion because I have no record of such participation.

Third, if a student is unable to attend a weekly discussion and cannot submit their answer via Canvas due to health, personal, school-related, family or other reasons which have been excused, we will make sure to adjust their score for this particular group discussion activity.