Studying for Success in Dr. Roblyer's POLS 207

Which Questions do Great Quizzers Ask?

"State & Local" Edition

Let the lecture be your guide...

- Each lecture covers multiple concepts, and/or facets of a single concept
  - Look at them one by one
  - Sometimes one appears on a single slide; other times it may span several slides
- Remember the important aspects that may apply to any concept
  - Who, what, when, where
  - Why, how
  - Components
  - Similarities and dissimilarities
  - Description of relationships
  - Sequences
  - Sizes of important ratios & numbers

Sample quizzing questions to use... (Chapter 1A)

Political Beliefs vs. Political Facts

- Are these <u>independent</u> of each other?
- Beliefs are the things we consider to be true about politics
  - We know what we beli[eve]... with people who have s[ome]
- ... but in politics, b[eliefs must be] based on facts
  - Contemporary politica[l...] more than they discuss[...]
  - ...but call it all "truth" [and] do not support their cl[aims]

Political Beliefs vs. Political Facts

- Savvy citizens _must_ be able to tell the difference between beliefs and facts, whether listening, writing, or speaking
  - We learn to understand what others believe <u>so</u> we can interact, cooperate, and compete
  - This benefits our politics and our communities
  - Also benefits our effectiveness in other roles/areas

- What is a political belief and a political fact? How are they similar and/or different? Why is it important for citizens to know these things? How does that happen?

More samples: (Chapter 1A)

Tale of Two Groups: *What are Their Goals and How do They Use Political Facts?*

- Group 1: Political actors & commentators
  - Goal A: Seek power, change policy, advance careers, hold/gain
  - Goal B: Entice us whatever means a
    - Factually incorrect
    - Factual information
    - Factual information
    - Happens all the tim
      - www.factcheck.org
      - www.politifact.com
  - IT IS NOT their j
    provide all the fac
    analysis or ration

Tale of Two Groups: *What are Their Goals and How do They Use Political Facts?*

- Group 2: Political scientists
  - Goal A: Scientifically seek out the best empirical information to transparently describe & explain events/behavior
    - "Empirical" means _____
  - Goal B: Fund research and publish findings; increase standing in field of study (all possible sources of bias)
  - IT IS their job to produce trustworthy findings, but results of different studies are sometimes contradictory

- Compare and contrast Political Actors & Political Scientists in each of these areas:
  - Objectives & motivations
  - Type & use of political information
  - Expectations of society as to how they handle this info

More samples: (Chapter 1A)

Distinguishing Between Beliefs and Facts

- Research <u>who</u> they are & <u>why</u> they are speaking
  - ◦ Assess motives & likely biases
  - ◦ Example: *What would you expect a non-profit's analyst to say about "Obamacare?"*
- Listen to understand <u>what</u> they are saying, then analyze that content critically
  - ◦ Factual correctness of information
  - ◦ Information completeness and context
  - ◦ Meaning they attributed to this information and how their conclusion was determined

- How would you analyze a political speaker and her or his message? Why?
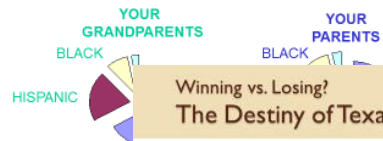
More samples: (Chapter 1A)

Important Ideas in Analyses of Politics

- "Winners" vs. "Losers"
  - No matter the decision, there will be some of each
- "Individuals vs. Groups"
  - Who is disfavored? Who is empowered?
- "Today" vs. "Tomorrow"
  - Which is sacrificed for the other?
- "Motivated" vs. "Scientific/Objective"
  - Is information used to enlist or inform?

- Provide and explain 2 examples of each of these "important pairings" that are frequent issues in politics:
  - winners vs. losers
  - individuals vs. groups
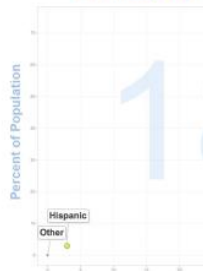 - today vs. tomorrow
  - motivated vs. objective.

More samples: (Chapter 1A)

- What is happening in the racial/ethnic makeup of Texas demography? When did it start? When did it stop? Why is this phenomenon so difficult to alter? What are some of its possible impacts on state politics?
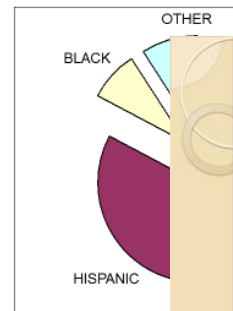
More samples: (Chapter 1A)

"Winning" vs. "Losing?"
Texas Population When You Are Your Parents' Age

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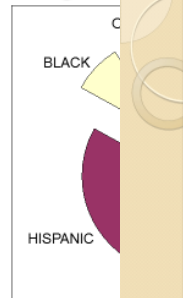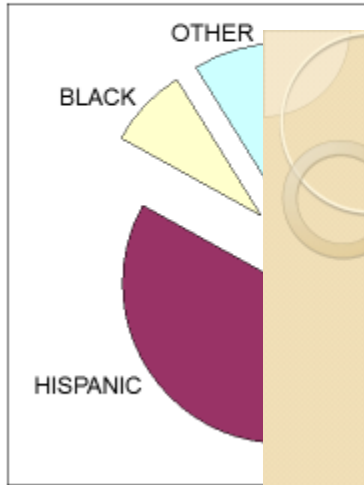
Texas Population of Voting Age When You Are Your Parents' Age — *Important differentiation in the measure if concerned about "winning vs. losing!"*

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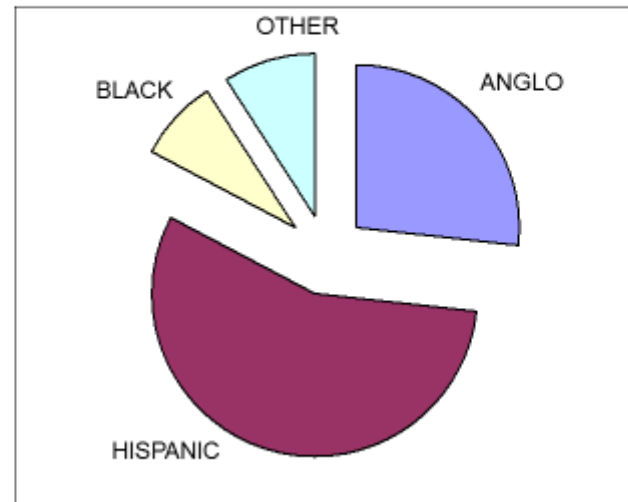
- What is the difference between the measures used on these two charts? Does it matter? Why?

- Now remember that I referenced these slides later in Chpt 1 when we discussed "validity." What is the connection?

More samples: (Chapter 1A)

"Winning vs. Losing" & Effects of Time
Adding a New Aggie Parking Garage

- Long-term project: 4 years to approve & build
- To be funded upfront via increased student fees

http://www.ece.tamu.edu/OtherLinks/map_garage.htm

"Winning vs. Losing" & Effects of Time
Your Child's Kindergarten Teacher

- You will want experienced, quality teachers for your first child
- Those teachers must be _graduating_ _about now_ to have the experience you will want
  - Their career choice will be stimulated by _current_ TX teacher salaries, _not future_ ones
  - TX teacher salaries are currently _nearly the lowest_ in nation
    - TX has significant teacher shortage
    - Therefore, TX often waives minimum qualification standards to hire new teachers
- Uncertainty amplifier: Long lag between cause & effect
- Uncertainty amplifier: Different groups
  - Older Texans who vote or legislate _and_ like low taxes (and aren't worrying about your child)
  - You (currently unlikely to vote and unconcerned about teacher salaries and taxes)
- Uncertainty provides many reasons to allocate TX tax $$ elsewhere

http://tamutimes.tamu.edu/files/2013/09/kindergartners-reading.jpg

- In each of these examples:
  - Who are the winners and losers?
  - What does time have to do with determining winners/losers?
  - How would these problems change if the intervening time period was very short?

More samples: (Chapter 1A)

Definitions of Politics

- Politics is concerned with the *authoritative allocation* of *values* (Easton)
  - Does "authoritative" mean "objective?"
  - Does "allocation" mean "winning vs. losing?"
  - Does "values" mean favoring of individuals, groups, today, or tomorrow?

- Political endeavor seeks to bring about a *maximum degree* of change in the opposing group with a *minimum of change* in one's own group (Deutsch)
  - Conflict results from differences between groups' preferred allocation of goods
  - Why? Because goods in question are public, not private (more on this in a couple of slides)

- What are the similarities and differences between the definitions of politics by Easton and by Deutsch?

- Do these two definitions agree or disagree?

More samples: (Chapter 4, moved from 1A)

START HERE Mon, 26 Jan

Winning, Losing, and Governments

- **Conflict** in politics is **inevitable** and a clear hierarchy of **preferences** exists (per Tucker):
  "It is best to win big
  It is next best to win small
  It is worse to lose small
  It is worst to lose big"
- But…
  - Outcomes <u>may vary</u> over time: "big win" today may not be a "win" at all in a few years
  - Everybody <u>gets to define</u> "winning/losing," "big/small" for themselves
- State & local governments are <u>not neutral</u>, but are crafted with goal of <u>maximizing "wins"</u> of certain groups or individuals
  - Who are some of these in Texas and other states?

- What two aspects of "winning" or "losing" are not straightforward, as Tucker explains the political conflict and preferences?
- Provide and explain examples to illustrate these principles.

More samples:
(Chapter 4, move from 1A)

Goods: Private vs. Public

- Private goods can be conveniently limited to those who pay
  - Example: Your child cannot attend a private grade school unless tuition is first paid
  - Example: _____
- Public goods are available to everyone
  - Example: national defense
    - Why is this a public good?
  - Example: _____
    - Why is this a public good?

- Give two examples of both private and public goods, then explain what makes each example belong to the associated category.

More samples:
(Chapter 4, moved from 1A)

Public Goods & Private Market Failure

- Private markets cannot offer public goods and remain solvent
- Public goods bring with them certain prerequisites that are incompatible with private businesses
  - Users can get benefits for free, without making any contribution ("free rider problem")
    - Private schools would have to _____
  - Good of the group ≠ good of each member
    - Private schools could not permit children to move to another school just because their parents felt the education would be better elsewhere
  - Consumption by one does not reduce the benefit available for others
    - Private schools would have to _____, no matter how many new residents arrived

- Use a public good other than education as an example and explain how market failure might occur *in 2 different ways* if a private business concern had to offer that public good.

More samples:
(Chapter 4, moved from 1A)

Why Government is Necessary: Provider of Public Goods

- Government ensures payment for, and provision of, public goods
  - All may get benefits for free
    - Your child can attend a public grade school even if you have not paid your property taxes
  - Good of the group ≠ good of each member
    - Your public school district's decision to increase class sizes to save money may be detrimental to your small, shy 1st grader (yet you will probably not be permitted to switch schools)
  - Consumption by one does not reduce the benefit available for others
    - Above-capacity public schools are still required to educate all the children in their districts, no matter how many new residents arrive

- What are the 3 characteristics of public goods discussed in lecture? Explain each using the public good example you used in the previous question.

More samples:
(Chapter 4, moved from 1A)

American Political Philosophy on Individuals & Groups

- Individuals & personal choice are important
  - Example: You may choose your major/career, even if no job will be available
  - Most other societies: good of group paramount
    - Result: _____
- Organizations should benefit individuals
  - Government aid for school not dependent on major area of study and national needs
  - Elsewhere: You could only major in a field in which there is an anticipated national need
    - Result: _____

- How and why does American political thought prioritize individual good over that of the group?

- Is there a contrasting view in other cultures around the world? What is it?

More samples: (Chapter 4, moved from 1A)

If Governments are necessary, why do we have to have so many?

- US has 1 federal, 50 state, and 90,000 local governments
  - Seems to support the desires of Tea Party adherents and Libertarians for less government
- Here are advantages in multiple levels of government
  - Efficiency – tailored to local needs. Example: _____
  - Equity - those who pay also benefit. Example: _____
  - Participation – local decisions affecting local decision makers. Example: _____
  - Protection against tyranny – difficult to usurp power from dispersed power centers. Example: _____
  - Choice – Relocation can resolve conflicts with previous state/local governance. Example: _____

- What are the 5 advantages of multiple levels of government, as discussed in lecture? Explain each and provide an example.

Remember to follow the rules of successful quizzing…

- Review the separate presentation, *"How to Make the Most of Quizzing Partners,"* if you and your partner need a reminder
- Work with your partner to ensure that you both are asking sufficiently challenging questions
  - Required answers should be "mini essays" with respect to content
  - If a question you are asked is too superficial, answer it, then respond back with a more probing question!
- Apply these types of questions to every lecture, then *continue* to fight for understanding!