

Name: _____

CONTEMPORARY POLITICS & ISSUES

FINAL EXAMINATION

Your answer to the question listed below will be graded using the same criteria used all term for your in-class essay responses with the important caveat that the organization, degree to which you provide an answer to the whole question, and your quality of evidence should reflect the fact that you have been given the question in advance.

As long as I will be able to understand what you are writing, do not worry about spelling or small grammar issues. You do NOT need to quote material or provide specific citations, but you should reference readings and authors when you can and provide other evidence—especially examples—showing that you have completed course assignments.

You should plan on devoting approximately one hour to writing this essay. You will be allowed to use the outline that you have prepared in advance provided that you adhered to the following:

- *Your essay's preparatory notes are in outline form and address only the essay question listed below.*
- *Your preparatory notes are limited to one side of a single three-by-five-inch notecard or piece of paper cut to this size.*
- *No other materials whatsoever are to be used during the exam, and you must submit your notecard when you turn in the essay.*

Essay topic

Thinking about what you learned this semester about why American political and electoral institutions work the way they do, the causes and extent of today's political polarization, and changing levels of support for democracy in the US and elsewhere, what are some of the main concerns political scientists have about how American democracy is working? What—if any—ideas does political science offer for ways to improve and stabilize American democracy over the long run?

Your answer should carefully consider specific examples of political science research and findings from each of the following: (1) one or more of the issues covered in our class before the first test, (2) one or more of the issues covered in our class between exams one and two, and (3) one or more of the topics covered since exam two.

____ **Start your answer here:**



