

## **CHAPTER 1: The Irony of Democracy**

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### **MULTIPLE CHOICE**

1. Power is defined as \_\_\_\_\_ in the decisions that shape our lives.
- a. ceremonial participation
  - b. electoral participation
  - c. universal participation
  - d. meaningful participation

ANS: D                      REF: 1

2. Elite theory, or elitism, is the basic notion that within the government, \_\_\_\_\_
- a. exists a normative endorsement of elite rule.
  - b. elite behavior is an acceptable means of politics.
  - c. elites oppress and exploit the masses in the pursuit of power.
  - d. there are few with power who control all decisions.

ANS: D                      REF: 1

3. This theory of democracy is based on the idea that a small group of people are ultimately in control of the government.
- a. traditional
  - b. elite
  - c. pluralistic
  - d. substantive democracy

ANS: B                      REF: 1 | 2

4. Which of the following people would be considered part of the ruling elite?
- a. Martin Luther King, Jr.
  - b. Herman Melville
  - c. Barack Obama
  - d. Margaret Mead

ANS: C                      REF: 1

5. What is the “irony of democracy”?
- a. The fact that all democracies have a ruling class of elites.
  - b. Democracy requires the masses to overthrow the elites.
  - c. Democracy depends on elites governing wisely with little or no mass input.
  - d. There is no such thing as democracy

ANS: C                      REF: 1 | 2

6. In the United States, the masses are \_\_\_\_\_
- a. normally apathetic and ill-informed about politics and public policy.
  - b. exhibit a surprisingly strong and universal commitment to democratic values.
  - c. better educated and informed than elites.
  - d. poor and uneducated citizens with no knowledge of the government.

ANS: A                      REF: 2

7. What is the “iron law of oligarchy”?
- a. The notion that in any organization, power is in the hands of the few
  - b. The idea that elites should rule society because they are better able to do so
  - c. The philosophy that masses should obey because they are stupid and lazy
  - d. The theory that elites get their power from manufacturing

ANS: A                      REF: 2 | 3

8. Elite theory was conceptualized by which of the following political scientists?
- a. Gaetano Mosca
  - b. John Locke
  - c. Thomas Jefferson
  - d. Thomas Hobbes

ANS: A                      REF: 2

9. According to elite theory, in any organization, there will always be \_\_\_\_\_.
- a. the few who rule and the many who protest.
  - b. numerous competing elites.
  - c. an elite class forming an oligarchy.
  - d. corruption that comes with power.

ANS: C                      REF: 3

10. “Circulation of elites” is characterized by which of the following?
- a. The slow and continuous assimilation of new elites into the system
  - b. The promotion of change in the ruling group.
  - c. Reaching out by elites to similar elite groups in society.
  - d. A complete shift in the group forming the ruling elite within the government.

ANS: A                      REF: 3

11. Elites in America are disproportionately from which of the following groups?
- a. The educated
  - b. The poor
  - c. Liberals
  - d. Women

ANS: A                      REF: 3

12. The Ruling Elite allow those groups who are upwardly mobile in order to \_\_\_\_\_.
- a. to promote social stability.
  - b. to divert potentially revolutionary leaders.
  - c. maintain the stability of the elite system itself.
  - d. All of the above

ANS: D                      REF: 3

13. Which is *not* a consensus value in American democracy?
- a. Private property
  - b. Limited government
  - c. Equality of outcome
  - d. Individual liberty

ANS: C                      REF: 7

14. Elite power primarily consists of which of the following?
- a. the control of economic resources.
  - b. the tight control of the mass media.
  - c. the ability to achieve goals, regardless of the impact on the masses.
  - d. the oppression of the masses.

ANS: A REF: 3 | 4

15. In elite theory, masses are seen as \_\_\_\_\_.
- a. passive.
  - b. apathetic.
  - c. ill-informed.
  - d. All of the above are true.

ANS: D REF: 3 | 4

16. The underlying value in almost any modern understanding of democracy is
- a. elite rule.
  - b. mass activism.
  - c. individual dignity.
  - d. equality of outcome.

ANS: C REF: 6

17. Which philosopher theorized that every person was given certain rights that the government could not legally take?
- a. John Stuart Mill
  - b. Thomas Hobbes
  - c. John Locke
  - d. James Madison

ANS: C REF: 6

18. \_\_\_\_\_ guarantees every person life, liberty, and the right to property.
- a. Pluralism
  - b. Elite theory
  - c. Democracy
  - d. "Natural law"

ANS: D REF: 6

19. The Founding Fathers of the United States believed that direct democracy and "unrestrained" majorities would result in \_\_\_\_\_.
- a. the abuse of minorities.
  - b. attacks on unpopular or despised individuals and groups.
  - c. threats to individual liberty.
  - d. all of the above.

ANS: D REF: 8

20. Which type of democracy is exhibited by the current United States government?
- a. direct
  - b. participatory
  - c. representative
  - d. mandatory

ANS: C REF: 8

21. Valuable resources such as wealth, status, and celebrity are granted or withheld as the exercise of
- a. media control.
  - b. elitism.
  - c. power.
  - d. mass repression.

ANS: C

REF: 10

22. The relative autonomy of elites means
- a. elites agree on all matters in U.S. policy.
  - b. that each segment of the elite is relatively independent of the others and is able to pursue its own interests.
  - c. elites are entirely autonomous from the masses.
  - d. elites can disagree on foreign policy but never on immigration policy.

ANS: B

REF: 10

23. Pluralism is defined as \_\_\_\_\_.
- a. A system of government where many groups compete and bargain to determine public policy
  - b. A system of government where many groups work together to promote mutual interests
  - c. A system of government that helps elites manipulate the masses
  - d. Many interest groups vying for control of the government.

ANS: A

REF: 11 | 12

24. The predominant model of government power found in the United States is \_\_\_\_\_.
- a. the unitary model.
  - b. the nationalism model.
  - c. the ruling elite model
  - d. the plural elite model.

ANS: D

REF: 11 | 12

25. According to elitism, public policy is a result of \_\_\_\_\_.
- a. Elite interaction
  - b. Interests by large institutions
  - c. Elite self-interest
  - d. Mass demands

ANS: A

REF: 12 | 13 | 14

26. What is "elite distemper"?
- a. Elite repression of mass activism
  - b. Elites acting in a narrow, self-serving manner
  - c. Elites playing favorites among interest groups
  - d. Elites catching sicknesses from dogs

ANS: B

REF: 15

27. Applying the pluralist approach, which of the following explains the direction of influence on public policy?
- a. Elites influence the masses to make them believe a policy choice is good.
  - b. Interest groups work to influence public policy to favor their interests.
  - c. Masses influence the elites to make the best public policy for the general public.
  - d. Elites influence the masses through interest groups for their own good.

ANS: C

REF: 16

28. Masses are dangerously vulnerable to appeals of
- a. intolerance.
  - b. racial hatred.
  - c. class antagonisms.
  - d. all of the above.

ANS: D

REF: 16

29. Mass-oriented leaders who express hostility toward the established order
- a. are called demagogues.
  - b. are welcomed into the U.S. elite system.
  - c. are generally not successful in generating mass support.
  - d. often condemn the use of violence and mass repression.

ANS: A

REF: 16

30. Demagogues are
- a. mass-oriented leaders who express hostility toward the established order.
  - b. right-wing counter-elites who talk of "The will of the people."
  - c. left-wing radicals who talk of "Power to the people."
  - d. all of the above.

ANS: D

REF: 17

31. Based on polling data, roughly what percent of Americans believe that their opinion is irrelevant to the elites or the government?
- a. 40 %
  - b. 43%
  - c. 46%
  - d. 49%

ANS: D

REF: 17

32. Mass activism causes elite repression due to the fact that mass political movements often
- 
- a. give rise to hatred and violates the system's democratic values.
  - b. calm fears and return the system to balance.
  - c. encourage tolerance of unpopular beliefs and practices.
  - d. give rise to unity, as demonstrated by the United States after the 9/11 attacks.

ANS: A

REF: 17 | 18

33. Which of the following is *not* a threat to democracy?
- a. Elite misdeeds
  - b. Elite repression of the masses
  - c. Mass activism
  - d. Mass political participation

ANS: D

REF: 17

34. In any democracy, elites only engage in repression of the masses for what purpose?
- For the pleasure of acquiring power over the masses and subjecting them to repressive measures
  - To preserve democratic values
  - To preserve their power in the government
  - As an attempt to protect the country from an outside influence.

ANS: B

REF: 17

35. According to Elitism, \_\_\_\_\_ has the power through \_\_\_\_\_.
- masses; competition
  - elites; cooperation
  - masses; cooperation
  - elites; competition

ANS: B

REF: 13 | 15

### **FILL-IN-THE-BLANK**

1. The idea that elites must govern wisely if government by the people is to survive is known as \_\_\_\_\_.

ANS: the irony of democracy

REF: 1

2. The statement “He who says organization, says oligarchy” was coined by \_\_\_\_\_.

ANS: Roberto Michaels

REF: 3

3. Based on Elite theory, power and influence go from the \_\_\_\_\_ to the masses.

ANS: Elites

REF: 15

4. In addition to preserving the system, the goal of the Elites is \_\_\_\_\_.

ANS: staying in power

REF: 3

5. \_\_\_\_\_ Elites are subject to little direct influence from the apathetic masses.

ANS: Active

REF: 4

6. John Locke's principle of natural law includes the rights to life, liberty, and \_\_\_\_\_.

ANS: property

REF: 6

7. The concept of individuals being able to develop their own social, economic, and political capabilities is \_\_\_\_\_.

ANS: equality of opportunity

REF: 7

8. The notion that the government is responsible to ensure equality across social, economic, and political capabilities for all people is \_\_\_\_\_.

ANS: equality of outcome

REF: 7

9. \_\_\_\_\_, one of the Founding Fathers, believed that the government must guard against the "Tyranny of the Majority."

ANS: James Madison

REF: 5

10. Democracy relies on the consent of the governed in a \_\_\_\_\_ democracy.

ANS: representative

REF: 8

11. Although it is not considered strategically possible, allowing voters opportunity to vote on specific issues or legislation is a type of \_\_\_\_\_ democracy.

ANS: direct

REF: 7 | 8

12. \_\_\_\_\_ is defined as the ability to influence people and events by granting or withholding valuable resources.

ANS: Power

REF: 10

13. The term for multiple elites that compete and are largely independent of each other is \_\_\_\_\_.

ANS: relative autonomy

REF: 10

14. The key difference between democratic states (United States) and totalitarian states (Baathiat Iraq) is \_\_\_\_\_.

ANS: freedom

REF: 10

15. In order to pursue their own interests, elites are \_\_\_\_\_ groups across government, economic, media, and cultural characteristics.

ANS: independent

REF: 11

16. \_\_\_\_\_ is the theory of politics that views society as being divided up into groups with competing demands.

ANS: Pluralism

REF: 11 | 12

17. The plural elite model views \_\_\_\_\_ as more widely shared among leadership groups representing different segments of society.

ANS: power

REF: 11 | 12

18. Short-sighted and self-interested behavior that undermines popular support for the political system can be called elite \_\_\_\_\_.

ANS: Elite distemper

REF: 15 | 16

19. “You scratch my back and I’ll scratch your back” is an accommodation according to \_\_\_\_\_.

ANS: Elite Theory

REF: 13

20. The implementation of programs such as “diversity” or “sensitivity” training at university is an example of \_\_\_\_\_.

ANS: elite repression

REF: 17



## TRUE/FALSE

1. The assimilation of new members into the elite helps the system siphon off revolutionaries.  
ANS: T REF: 3
2. Elites disagree about the “ends,” or political policy, and agree on the “means,” or the intricate details and implementation of the policy.  
ANS: F REF: 3
3. Elites typically exclude individuals who are lower or middle class. .  
ANS: T REF: 3
4. The term “circulation of elites” refers to elites moving from one position of power to another.  
ANS: F REF: 3
5. Bill Gates would be considered an Elite in the United States.  
ANS: T REF: 1
6. Elitism holds that the elite are more likely to manipulate each other than the masses.  
ANS: F REF: 4 | 5
7. Most democracies utilize majority rule with minority rights.  
ANS: T REF: 6 | 7
8. Elites manipulate the masses in order to preserve their own power positions.  
ANS: F REF: 3
9. Representative government is based on consent of the governed within a given country, state, or local jurisdiction.  
ANS: T REF: 10
10. Direct democracy is not feasible Due to the number of people participating in the system.  
ANS: T REF: 7 | 8
11. Based on pluralism, the masses affect politics through elite interaction rather than individual participation.  
ANS: T REF: 12
12. The Ruling Elite Model states that power is widely shared among groups representing different groups.  
ANS: F REF: 11 | 14
13. The United States Constitution allows for national popular referendums as do many states.

ANS: F      REF: 8

14. The United States focuses on equality of opportunity rather than equality of outcome.

ANS: T      REF: 7

15. Pluralism contends that competition among leadership groups protects the individual.

ANS: T      REF: 12 | 13

16. Elites are generally more willing than the masses to show tolerance to despised or obnoxious groups or individuals.

ANS: T      REF: 15

17. Despite United States leadership being from a specific limited group, pluralists argue this does not preclude “those” leaders from making decision in the masses’ interests.

ANS: T      REF: 14

18. Elite distemper results when the elites look beyond short-sighted, self-interests and make political decisions based on the broader, shared values of society.

ANS: F      REF: 15 | 16

19. Mass activism has little effect on the behavior and subsequent policy choices of the elites. .

ANS: F      REF: 17

20. Democracy is in peril when the masses lose confidence in the elites and their ability to make wise decisions.

ANS: T      REF: 16 | 17

## ESSAY

1. Explain the major tenants of Elite Theory and Pluralism.

ANS: Students’ answers will vary.

2. What are the major differences between the ruling elite model and the plural elite model?

ANS: Students’ answers will vary.

3. The authors consistently use the phrase “the irony of democracy.” Explain this concept using Elite theory and how the government interacts with the masses at large.

ANS: Students’ answers will vary.

4. What is political power in the United States? How is power exercised in our democratic government?

ANS:

Students' answers will vary.

5. Which theory of democracy is the most applicable to the United States government today – Elite theory or Pluralism? Explain how and why the government more closely follows this model of democracy.

ANS:

Students' answers will vary.

6. Are elites or the masses a greater threat to democratic values and democracy? Chose one group and explain why this particular group poses a greater threat?

ANS:

Students' answers will vary.

7. Compare and contrast Elite theory and pluralism. Is Elite theory compatible or counter to democratic government?

ANS:

Students' answers will vary.

8. Do you think it could ever be possible to have a government without an elite class? Why or why not? Who do you believe are the most influential elites in the United States today – government, economic, social, media?

ANS:

Students' answers will vary.

9. Elite theory stands in critical contrast to the more common ways in which American politics is understood and taught. Give your explanation as to why Elite theory is not utilized as a teaching approach in most government classes.

ANS:

Students' answers will vary.

10. Even if governmental elites could be held accountable through elections, what about the non-governmental elites, like corporate executives, media elites, union leaders and others? Even if they are held accountable by “the market,” their customers, members and stockholders, what does that say about the health of democracy in America in the twenty first century?

ANS:

Students' answers will vary.