

General Certificate of Education
January 2007
Advanced Level Examination



GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS
Unit 4 Comparative UK/USA Government

GOV4

Monday 29 January 2007 1.30 pm to 3.00 pm

For this paper you must have:

- an 8-page answer book.

Time allowed: 1 hour 30 minutes

Instructions

- Use blue or black ink or ball-point pen.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book. The *Examining Body* for this paper is AQA. The *Paper Reference* is GOV4.
- Answer **Question 1** and **one** other question.
- Do all rough work in the answer book. Cross through any work you do not want to be marked.

Information

- The maximum mark for this paper is 80.
- The marks for questions (or part questions) are shown in brackets.
- You will be marked on your ability to use good English, to organise information clearly and to use specialist vocabulary where appropriate.

Advice

- You are advised to read through the examination paper before you attempt the questions.
- You are advised to spend the same amount of time on each question.

Answer **Question 1** and **one** other question.

Each question carries 40 marks.

1 Study the extract below and answer parts (a) to (c) which follow.

Legislatures and Representation

Both the United States and the United Kingdom have bicameral legislatures. Whereas the US has two directly elected chambers whose members have *fixed terms of office*, in the UK only members of the lower house are elected but without fixed terms. The House of Lords as at present constituted has no directly elected members and, unlike the US Senate, has no element of regional representation.

The overall roles of Congress and Parliament are extensive. As with all liberal democracies they perform a key representative function. People elect representatives to make decisions for them and, if they do not like the decisions that they have made, they can vote them out at the next election. In this way, a link between the people and the national government is formed and the consent of the governed, and the responsibility of those who make decisions on their behalf, is achieved. Representation is a difficult concept, but it involves the basic idea that legislators are responsive to those who put them in their position. Since 1913, when Senators were directly elected, both chambers in the US, like the House of Commons in the UK, can claim to be representatives of the people and as such have numerous roles and responsibilities within their national legislatures.

In both the UK and the US, it is often suggested that members of Congress and members of Parliament should have characteristics which are broadly similar to those possessed by the people as a whole. If this is the case, then it can be argued that Congress and Parliament as a whole should be a microcosm or mirror-image of the nation with regard to socio-economic factors. However, like Parliament, Congress is overwhelmingly white, male, middle class and middle aged in its social make-up.

Elected representatives of the people have a variety of different responsibilities. They have loyalties that often conflict and different members will reach differing conclusions about where their main duties and loyalties lie when they vote in their respective legislatures.

Source: adapted from D WATTS, *Understanding US/UK Government and Politics*, MUP, 2003

- (a) Explain the term *fixed terms of office* used in the extract. (8 marks)
- (b) Using the extract and your own knowledge, explain the reasons why Parliament and Congress are **not** mirror-images of their societies in socio-economic terms. (12 marks)
- (c) Compare and contrast the influences on members of the US Congress and the UK Parliament when voting within their respective legislatures. (20 marks)

Answer **either** Question 2 **or** Question 3 **or** Question 4.

- 2 To what extent have the constitutional reforms of the Blair Governments since 1997 brought the UK closer to the US in constitutional terms? *(40 marks)*
- 3 Consider the view that judicial independence is undermined by the selection and appointment processes of the judiciary in the UK and the US. *(40 marks)*
- 4 'A US President is ultimately far more powerful than a UK Prime Minister simply because of the greater resources at his disposal as head of the executive branch of government.' Discuss. *(40 marks)*

END OF QUESTIONS

There are no questions printed on this page