**AS Government and Politics – Unit 1 Past Paper Questions**

**January 2012**

**June 2011**

(a) Outline the key features of a referendum.

(b) Apart from referendums, explain **three** ways in which democracy in the UK could be improved.

(c) To what extent does democracy in the UK suffer from a ‘participation crisis’?

(a) Using examples, distinguish between promotional and sectional pressure groups.

(b) How and why do pressure groups seek to influence public opinion?

(c) Is pressure group politics in the UK better described as pluralist or as elitist?

(a) What is meant by consensus politics?

(b) Has consensus politics become more or less evident in the UK since May 2010?

(c) To what extent are the major UK parties internally united over ideas and policies?

(a) Distinguish between a mandate and a manifesto.

(b) Explain the workings of **three** electoral systems used in the UK.

(c) Should the Westminster electoral system be reformed?

**January 2011:**

(a) How do elections promote democracy? (5)

(b) Distinguish between majoritarian representation and proportional representation. (10)

(c) How far does the Westminster electoral system ensure strong and stable government? (25)

(a) Outline two differences between pressure groups and political parties. (5)

(b) How and why do some pressure groups use direct action? (10)

(c) To what extent are the largest pressure groups the most successful ones? (25)

(a) Define two functions of a political party. (5)

(b) Explain what is meant by the term Thatcherism. (10)

(c) To what extent do the UK’s major parties accept Thatcherite ideas and policies? (25)

(a) Apart from voting in elections and referendums, describe two ways of participating in politics. (5)

(b) Explain the arguments in favour of lowering the voting age. (10)

(c) To what extent would the wider use of referendums improve democracy in the

UK? (25)

**June 2010:**

(a) Distinguish between elitism and pluralism. (5)

(b) Explain three political functions of pressure groups. (10)

(c) To what extent do pressure groups undermine democracy? (25)

(a) What is meant by legitimacy? (5)

(b) Explain three strengths of representative democracy. (10)

(c) How democratic is the UK? (25)

(a) Distinguish between left-wing and right-wing political ideas. (5)

(b) Explain the differences within the Labour Party over ideas and policies.(10)

(c) To what extent are the ideas and policies of the Labour and Conservative parties similar? (25)

(a) Outline two functions of elections. (5)

(b) Explain three advantages of the ‘first past the post’ electoral system. (10)

(c) Make out a case in favour of the introduction of proportional representation for Westminster

elections. (25)

**January 2010:**

(a) Define proportional representation. (5)

(b) Explain why proportional electoral systems have been more widely used in the UK since 1997. (10)

(c) Assess the criticisms of the various electoral systems used in the UK. (25)

(a) Using examples, distinguish between insider and outsider pressure groups. (5)

(b) Explain the reasons why the success of pressure groups may be limited. (10)

(c) To what extent do pressure groups promote political participation in the UK? (25)

(a) Using an example, define consensus politics. (5)

(b) Explain the ideas and policies which link the modern Labour Party to socialism. (10)

(c) To what extent is the modern Conservative Party influenced by ‘One Nation’ principles? (25)

(a) Define direct democracy. (5)

(b) Explain three forms of democratic participation. (10)

(c) Assess the arguments in favour of the greater use of direct democracy in the UK. (25)

**June 2009:**

(a) What is meant by pluralism? (5)

(b) Why is it sometimes difficult to distinguish between pressure groups and political parties? (10)

(c) To what extent have pressure groups become more important in recent years? (25)

(a) Define liberal democracy. (5)

(b) Explain the main features of the UK’s democratic system. (10)

(c) To what extent is there a ‘democratic deficit’ in the UK? (25)

(a) What is the doctrine of the mandate?(5)

(b) Explain the workings of three electoral systems used in the UK. (10)

(c) Assess the advantages of the ‘first past the post’ electoral system. (25)

(a) Outline two functions of a political party.(5)

(b) In what ways has the Conservative Party distanced itself from Thatcherism? (10)

(c) To what extent is the Labour Party still committed to its traditional principles? (25)

**January 2009:**

(a) Outline the workings of the Additional Member System (AMS). (5)

(b) How has the use of AMS affected party representation in the UK? (10)

(c) Should proportional representation be introduced for elections to the House of Commons? (25)

(a) Using an example, define adversary politics. (5)

(b) What divisions exist within the current Conservative Party over ideas and policies? (10)

(c) To what extent are there differences between the Labour and Conservative parties over policies and ideas? (25)

(a) Using examples, distinguish between sectional and promotional pressure groups. (5)

(b) Explain the methods used by pressure groups to influence government. (10)

(c) To what extent do pressure groups promote pluralist democracy? (25)

(a) What are the main features of representative democracy? (5)

(b) In what ways has political participation declined in the UK in recent years? (10)

(c) Evaluate the effectiveness of the various ways in which participation and democracy could be strengthened in the UK. (25)