Sensorveiledning POL 1001 Høsten 2012, Politisk atferd:

Svar på tre av de fire spørsmålene:

2. Hvis vi ser bort fra deltakelse ved valgene, hvordan deltar folk i politikken og hva motiverer dem?
3. Hva en «kommentaturet» og hvordan vil du plassere kommentaturet i medialiseringsspiralen?
4. Antallet politikerskandaler øker. Hvordan kan det påvirke ulike sider av den politiske tilliten?

Om oppgave 1:
Den første oppgaven kan besvares med utgangspunkt i begrepene «stigende forventningers misnøye» og «politisk nådetid». Begge begrepene beskriver situasjoner definert av endringer i den økonomiske situasjonen og endringer i folks forventninger til den økonomiske situasjonen. Oppgaven kan godt peke på forskjellen mellom disse forklaringene og de mer tradisjonelle modellene for økonomisk stemmegiving som ikke legger vekt på forventninger til den økonomiske utviklingen. Særlig pensumartikkel fra Jenssen og Kalstø er relevant for å besvare oppgaven, men også boka av Aardal (red.).

Om oppgave 2:

Om oppgave 3:
Begrepet «kommentaturet» ble brukt av Rød-Isaksen og Lysbakken i en pensumartikkel. Det henspiller på den maktposisjonen medienes politiske kommentatorer har fått. Et tilsvar fra Strand (Dagsavisen) er også pensum. Diskusjonen kan knyttet til «politikkens medialisering» og «medialiseringsspiralen» som er drøftet i pensumboka av Jenssen og Aalberg (red.).

Om oppgave 4:
Plankeoppgave. Hvis studenten klarer å definere en politikerskandale (til forskjell fra en politikkskandale) har studenten et godt utgangspunkt for å drøfte spørsmålet. To momenter er viktige i sammenheng med definisjonen: normbruddet og politikernes avhengighet av tillit fra velgere og andre politiker. Oppgaven ber om en drøfting av flere mulige effekter. Studenten bør ta opp (1) rekruttering til den politiske eliten, (2) forholdet mellom politikk og privatliv, (3) svekkelse av det politiske systemets handlekraft.

Answers for the special make-up exam for Politisk teori (second make-up exam for the Spring 2012 term, to be administered in December 2012)
Please answer any two of the following questions:

1. It might be said that both **Mikhail Bakunin** and **John Locke** championed liberty, and yet their strategies differed considerably. Please explain how each of these thinkers thought about liberty, what each had to say about human nature, and what each had to say about the purposes and functions of the state.

   Answer: Bakunin and Locke had entirely different understandings of human nature. Bakunin had a deep faith in the basic goodness of people, and believed that people were corrupted by political institutions and by unequal relations in society. He believed that true liberty could be attained only by destroying the state as quickly as possible, and eliminating all agents of oppression, under which he included the Churches, the police, and all bureaucracy. To his way of thinking, the purpose of the state was to protect the rich from the poor, to disseminate propaganda to mislead the oppressed into thinking that they were being treated justly, and all in all to uphold an unjust system. Bakunin did not believe that it was possible to create a just state, but believed that, if left to themselves, people could organize their own society and make decisions collectively. He wrote that the role of the “leader” was not to lead, as such, but to guide the people so that they could organize their own revolution. Locke, by contrast, had a more mixed view of human nature, believed that the human mind was a “blank slate upon which experience writes” – which in practice meant that education and socialization were the key to how people turned out. Like Bakunin, Locke was involved in revolutionary struggle and, like Bakunin, he believed that the system was unjust. But Locke did not blame government as such, only the ruling dynasty and its efforts to limit the role of the parliament. Locke wanted parliament’s power to be expanded and believed that the purpose of the state was to protect life, liberty, and property (not “the pursuit of happiness” as carried over into the American Declaration of Independence). Locke was not hostile to Churches, but believed that there were some religious associations which were worthy of toleration (Protestant Churches) and some which were not (the Catholic Church and Islam – in both cases because of their subservience to a “foreign prince”).

2. Explain **Jean Bodin**’s theory of sovereignty, and explain what sovereignty has to do with morality in Bodin’s view. How might Bodin’s theory relate to classical liberalism (e.g., of John Locke)?

   Answer: Jean Bodin defined sovereignty as “legitimate authority” and linked “legitimacy” to the ruler’s respect for the moral law. The moral law consisted, for Bodin, of both Natural Law and Divine Law; a modern-day equivalent of this would be respect for human rights. Bodin believed that a ruler who did not respect the moral law was not legitimate, and therefore not sovereign. Although he struggled with this over the course of his career, he eventually came around to the idea that a ruler who violated the moral law egregiously could and should be overthrown. Although Locke
does not spend time discussing sovereignty as such, his theory connects with Bodin’s on three points. First, Locke believed that the ruler could not do exactly as he pleased, but was bound by some conditions; second, both Bodin and Locke underlined the signal importance of the ruler’s oath of office; third, Locke argued that a ruler who violated his oath of office could properly be overthrown by the people; and fourth, both Bodin and Locke asserted the inviolability of private property and denied the ruler/sovereign any right of taxation except with the consent of the representatives of the people (in effect, a parliament). Interestingly enough, Bodin did not consider that a sovereign was bound either by the laws which had been passed by his predecessors or even by laws which he himself had sanctioned; what mattered for Bodin was that the King should rule in the interests of his people – a sentiment to which Locke also subscribed.

3. In his book, History of Political Thought, 1789 to the present, Bruce Haddock discusses the ideas of Giuseppe Mazzini at considerable length. What was Mazzini’s practical objective, what did he have to say about individualism and nationalism, and what kind of government did he advocate? What did Mazzini think about sectional (or regional) interests and plans for decentralized government or forms of federalism?

Answer: Bruce Haddock calls Mazzini “the most striking representative” of a new kind of nationalism (p. 64) and notes that, in 1831, Mazzini created the organization “Young Italy” in order to promote the unification of Italy via popular insurrections. For him, the individual was a part of the nation and he believed that “unity of belief and a social consensus” (p. 68) should be regarded as more important for the stability of a country than allowing a variety of different beliefs to spread. He favored “republicanism” – what we would call “democracy” today, and viewed “republicanism as the only political principle which recognized the ‘liberty, equality and fraternity’ of all men” together with the principle of popular sovereignty (p. 67). He was hostile to federalism or other forms of decentralism which he “regarded...as a mantle for the assertion of the privileges of local elites” (p. 67).

4. In his book, History of Political Thought, 1789 to the present, Bruce Haddock discusses the ideas of John Stuart Mill at considerable length. What – according to Haddock – is Mill’s central argument in On liberty? Specifically, what is individual liberty good for, what legitimate limits may be set on people’s liberty, and when is state coercion warranted? What is meant by calling Mill a “utilitarian”? And, if possible, say something about how Mill’s utilitarianism differed from that of Jeremy Bentham.

Answer: John Stuart Mill’s central argument in “On liberty” is that liberty is good for society as a whole. His point of emphasis was on liberty for intellectual and scientific workers whose insights, breakthroughs, innovations, and inventions could make for a
better world. We may say that this is a functional defense of liberty. The legitimate, indeed necessary, limits on liberty are these: that there is no liberty to harm others or to restrict the freedom of others. State coercion is necessary to protect people's liberty, especially against the threat of what Mill called “the tyranny of the majority”, whereby the group may exert pressure on a creative thinker to conform and to give up his or her creative thinking. As for “utilitarianism”, this is a current of thought which holds that right and wrong are determined by what is useful for society; utilitarianism is conjoined with consequentialism. Its originators were James Mill (John Stuart’s father), Jeremy Bentham, and John Stuart Mill himself. Mill was at first an admirer of Bentham’s ideas, but later concluded that Bentham’s approach was too mathematical. In particular, Bentham’s formula “the greatest good for the greatest number” – which he thought should be the guiding principle of government – could all too easily be translated into policies injurious to minorities.

5. How does Thomas Hobbes' understanding of the moral law and who is to interpret it differ from that of Immanuel Kant, and what are the political consequences of each of these outlooks?

**Answer:** Hobbes and Kant were antipodes, and Kant criticized Hobbes directly and by name. Hobbes accepted the idea that there was such a thing as Natural Law, which had previously been understood to be comprehended by each individual using his or her faculty of reason. But Hobbes rejected the idea that each person should be allowed to interpret Natural Law for him- or herself, and insisted instead that only the sovereign (ruler) was entitled to do so, and that the sovereign’s interpretation of Natural Law should be binding on all the subjects of the land. This argument brought Hobbes very close to the purely conventionalist argument of Thrasymachus, with the difference that Hobbes’ incorporation of Natural Law into his framework provided a fig leaf for the sovereign, and allowed Hobbes to insist that he had not rejected the moral law at all, merely provided a definitive interpreter. The political consequence of Hobbes’ argument was to reinforce absolute monarchy (or rulership).

Kant mentioned Natural Law only rarely but placed his emphasis rather on the categorical imperative, which stated that people should always act in such a way that, if everyone acted as they did, the world would be a better place (this is a paraphrase of Kant’s more abstruse formula). Kant had no use for allowing a King or ruler to dictate morality and believed that each individual had both the capacity and the duty to think and act morally, and not just to follow orders from the government. Kant’s moral individualism lent itself to his defense of the rule of law and of limited government.