AP Comparative Government

Iran Study Guide

**Part I: Vocabulary**

1. Ahmadinejad, Mahmoud
2. Assembly of Religious Experts
3. “axis of evil”
4. Baha’i
5. Bazaaris
6. Bonyads/religious endowments
7. Constitution of 1979
8. Constitutional Revolution of 1905-09
9. Cultural Revolution
10. Faqih
11. Fundamentalism/Islamism
12. Guardian Council
13. Head of state, head of government
14. Hezbollahis
15. Imams
16. Islamic Iran Participation Front
17. Jurist’s guardianship (velayat-e-faqih)
18. Khamenei, Ayatollah Ali
19. Khatami, Muhammad
20. Khomeini, Ayatollah Ruhollah
21. Majles
22. Mosaddeq, Muhammad
23. Muhammad Reza Shah
24. National Front
25. OPEC
26. Rafsanjani, Akbar Hasemi
27. Reformers v. conservatives
28. Rentier state
29. Resurgence Party
30. Revolution of 1979
31. Revolutionary Guards
32. Reza Shah
33. Secularization
34. Shah
35. Shari’ah Law
36. Shiism
37. Statists v. free-marketers
38. Sunni Muslims
39. Supreme Leader
40. Theocracy
41. White Revolution

**Part 2: Possible FRQs**

The Making of the Modern State

* What is unique about Iran’s geography and population?
* Describe the Shi’ite/Sunni split by summarizing the major beliefs of each.
* Explain the influence of the rule of the Safavids and Qajars in Iran.
* Identify the democratic elements of the Constitution of 1906. Identify the theocratic element of the Constitution of 1906.
* Describe the rule of Reza Shah and Muhammad Reza Shah. Who supported the Shah? Who did not?
* Identify policies by the Shah that led to increased secularization in Iran.
* Describe the causes of 1979 Iranian Revolution (both underlying and immediate).
  + What role did Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini play in the revolution?
  + Describe how the revolution compares to revolutions in Russia, China, and Mexico.
* Explain the consequences of the 1979 Iranian Revolution.
  + Describe the regime before and after revolution.
  + How does the outcome of the revolution compare to revolutions in Russia, China, and Mexico?
* Explain how the Ayatollah was able to institutionalize the Islamic concept of jurist guardianship.
* Describe two distinct sources of political legitimacy established by the 1979 Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran and how having both those sources of political legitimacy simultaneously has led to tensions in Iran in the last fifteen years.
* Identify similarities in the goals of the Cultural Revolution in China and the Cultural Revolution in Iran.
* Identify democratic reforms made by President Mohammad Khatami.
* Explain how Iran has become less democratic under President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

Government and Policymaking

* Identify the political system in Iran. Unitary/Federal? Authoritarian?
* Define Theocracy. Describe theocratic elements of Iran as well as democratic elements, including:
  + Institutions/leaders that represent religion in Iran. What are their purpose/powers?
  + Institutions in Iran for which members are directly elected by citizens. What are their purpose/powers?
* Identify the Dual Executive in Iran.
  + Who is the Head of State (title and current leader)?
  + Who is the Head of Government (title and current leader)?
  + What is their relationship to one another? Who holds the power?
  + How does the executive compare to the other AP6 countries?
* Explain the significance of the Supreme Leader:
  + How is he chosen? What are his qualifications? How did they change after Khomeini’s death in 1989?
  + What is the length of his term?
  + Does he have a term limit?
  + What are his powers?
  + Are there any checks on his power?
* Explain the role of the President:
  + How is he chosen?
  + What is the length of his term?
  + Does he have a term limit?
  + What are his powers?
  + Are there any checks on his power?
* Describe the role of the bureaucracy in Iran.
* Describe the role of religious endowments in Iran. How much accountability do they have?
* Identify Iran’s legislature as unicameral or bicameral.
  + How are members of the legislature chosen?
  + What are the lengths of their term?
  + Do they have term limits?
  + What powers does the legislature have?
  + Are there any checks on its power?
  + What is the relationship between the Majles and the Guardian Council?
* Describe the relationship between the government and the military. Who holds the power? What role has the military played in Iran? What role do the Revolutionary Guards play?
* Describe the role of the judiciary, including the status of judicial review.
  + What makes the judiciary in Iran unique compared to the countries in the AP6 that we’ve studied?
  + What relationship does it have to other institutions in Iran?

Citizens, Society, and the State:

* Identify ethnic groups in Iran, including majority/minority groups.
  + How has Iran addressed minority groups?
* Identify social cleavages in Iran. Classify them as coinciding or cross-cutting.
  + Which minority religious groups are officially recognized by the state? Which are not?
* Describe the role of women in Iran, in both government and society. In which areas have women made gains? In which areas have women been restricted?
* Identify forms of political participation in Iran, including the role of political parties, voting, interest groups, protests, NGOs & civil society.
  + What types of elections are held at the local and national level?
  + What type of party system does Iran currently have? How has that changed over the years?
  + How have political opposition groups operated?
  + Which groups are most likely to form protests? What events have led to protests? How has the state responded?
* Describe the role of the media/press/censorship in Iran, both historically and currently.
* Describe the factors that shape political culture in Iran.

Public Policy

* Describe major economic policies, both historically and currently.
* Define a rentier (rent-seeking) state. Describe a problem that a rentier state typically faces that has an impact on economic development.
* Describe current major public policy issues in Iran today as well as policymaking factions within Iran.
  + Include nuclear energy, inequality, foreign affairs, human rights, and population.
  + What impact do these issues have on the political and/or economic development of Iran?
  + Identify one issue with population growth Iran has had to address and explain a policy they have implemented to address it. Describe one social or economic consequence of manipulating population growth rates.
* Describe Iran’s role in supranational organizations, such as the UN, WTO, and OPEC.
* How does Iran compare to other countries in the AP6 in terms of GDP, Gini Index, Freedom House, and CPI?