
AP[®] Comparative Government and Politics

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary Set 2

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Free-Response Question 4

- ✓ Scoring Guidelines
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Question 4: Argument Essay**5 points**

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row A Claim/Thesis (0–1 points)	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Responds to the prompt with a defensible claim or thesis that establishes a line of reasoning.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	Responses that do not earn this point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only restate the prompt. Do not make a claim that responds to the prompt. 	Responses that earn this point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respond to the prompt rather than restating or rephrasing the prompt and establish a line of reasoning. Provide a defensible claim or thesis that establishes a line of reasoning as to whether a regime change towards authoritarianism would be supported by citizens using one or more of the provided course concepts: political stability, civil society, economic development.
	Examples that do not earn this point: Restate the prompt <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“A regime change to authoritarianism would not be supported by citizens in a society.”</i> Do not respond to the prompt <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“If given a choice, citizens will always choose to live in democracies because they get more freedoms in a democracy.”</i> 	Examples that earn this point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“A regime change to authoritarianism would be supported by citizens because it leads to political stability and they would value the security and peace.”</i> <i>“A regime change to authoritarianism would not be supported by citizens because it could lead to instability and conflict.”</i> <i>“A regime change to authoritarianism would be supported by citizens because enhanced governmental control would promote higher economic development.”</i> <i>“A regime change to authoritarianism would not be supported by citizens because it undermines the ability to conduct business, reducing economic development.”</i> <i>“A regime change to authoritarianism would be supported by citizens because it would restore societal harmony, protecting traditional values and/or slowing the impact of globalism on civil society.”</i> <i>“A regime change to authoritarianism would not be supported by citizens because it would lead to restrictions on civil society.”</i>
	Additional Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The claim or thesis must consist of one or more sentences that may be located anywhere in the response. A claim or thesis that meets the criteria can be awarded the point whether or not the rest of the response successfully supports that line of reasoning. 	

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria		
Row B Evidence (0–2 points)	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point	1 point Provides <u>one</u> piece of specific and relevant evidence from a course country relevant to one of the course concepts in the prompt.	2 points Provides <u>two</u> pieces of specific and relevant evidence from one or more course countries relevant to one or more of the course concepts in the prompt.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes		
	Responses that do not earn points: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Do not provide any accurate evidence.Provide evidence that is not relevant to the course concepts in the prompt.	Responses that earn 1 or 2 points: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Provide specific and relevant evidence from required course countries, relevant to the course concepts in the prompt.	
	Examples that do not earn points: Provide evidence that is not specific <ul style="list-style-type: none">“Russia has an authoritarian regime.” Provide evidence that is not relevant to course concepts in the prompt <ul style="list-style-type: none">“The Chinese government allows citizens to vote in some local elections.”	Examples of acceptable specific and relevant evidence (one example is one piece of evidence): <ul style="list-style-type: none">“The alternation of political parties has created more stability and less conflict in the country. Nigerians have come out in high numbers to vote in recent democratic elections.”“In Russia, Putin’s move toward increasing authoritarianism has led to political stability in a heterogeneous country spread across 11 time zones that experienced political instability following the collapse of the Soviet Union (the Yeltsin years).”“Chinese citizens have supported an authoritarian regime because of high economic growth rates over time with high GNP, high literacy, rising life expectancy.”“Nigeria’s period of coups and military regimes was associated with rising debt and economic crisis.”“Russia’s authoritarian government allowed the country to achieve sustained economic growth and improved the living standards of its country.”“Putin’s moves to centralize power and restrict civil society, especially international NGOs, was met with protests, ex. Pussy Riot, etc.”“Attempts by the Chinese government to reduce Hong Kong’s political autonomy spurred protests from citizens.”“China’s restrictions on the activity of international civil society groups in China as well as the domestic civil society groups have been integral to the country’s high level of political stability and robust economic growth.”	
	Additional Notes <ul style="list-style-type: none">A response does not need to earn the point in Row A to earn points in Row B.A response does not need to explain the relationship between the evidence and the claim or thesis to earn points in Row B. (That explanation is evaluated in Row C.)		

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row C Reasoning (0–1 points)	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Explains how or why the evidence supports the claim or thesis
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	Responses that do not earn this point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include evidence but offer no reasoning to connect the evidence to the claim or thesis. • Restate the prompt without explaining how the evidence supports the claim or thesis. 	Responses that earn this point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the relationship between the evidence provided and the claim or thesis.
	Examples that do not earn this point: Include evidence but no reasoning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Chinese citizens support authoritarianism” Restate the prompt without explanation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “A move to authoritarianism would be supported by the citizens.” 	Examples of reasoning that explain how evidence supports the claim or thesis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The move to authoritarianism leads to political stability and predictability and higher economic development so it would therefore be supported by its citizens.” • “The move to authoritarianism would be supported by the citizens because it would increase the political stability and reduce the conflict and political tensions (disharmony) that democratic competition brings to the political system.” • “A move toward authoritarianism would not be supported by citizens because of the political instability it would create and the economic upheaval that could occur.” • “A move toward authoritarianism would also not be supported because citizens would not have input on policy making which could lead to a decrease in legitimacy and an increase in political unrest.”
	Additional Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To earn this point, the response must have a defensible claim or thesis (earned the point in Row A). • The explanation of the relationship between one piece of evidence and the claim or thesis is sufficient to earn this point. 	

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row D Responds to Alternate Perspectives	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Responds to an opposing or alternate perspective using refutation, concession, or rebuttal.
(0–1 points)	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	Responses that do not earn this point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restate the opposite of the claim or thesis. May identify or describe an alternate perspective but do not refute, concede, or rebut that perspective. 	Responses that earn this point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must describe an alternate perspective AND refute, concede, or rebut that perspective.
	Examples of responses that do not earn this point: Restate the opposite of the claim or thesis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“A regime change to authoritarianism would be supported by citizens because it does not undermine the private sector and ability to conduct business, reducing economic development.”</i> Describe an alternate perspective but do not refute, concede, or rebut that perspective <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“Democratic countries may experience economic problems and have differing opinions on how to bring about economic growth that results in gridlock.”</i> 	Examples of acceptable responses to an alternate perspective may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“Alternatively, citizens might support a change to authoritarianism if it came with the promise of political stability. However, authoritarian regimes cannot provide enduring economic development or space for civil society, meaning that protests will ensure and political instability will prevail in the long run.”</i> <i>“Alternatively, citizens might support a change to authoritarianism if it came with the promise of political stability. However, protections for civil society and for institutions that can support economic development are far more important than the illusion of political stability.”</i> <i>“Alternatively, citizens might support a change to authoritarianism if it came with the promise of political stability. Without stability economic development may stagnate and civil society protections may wane. Thus, democracies should treat threats to political stability with great care if they wish to endure.”</i>
	Additional Notes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To earn this point, the response must have a defensible claim or thesis (earned the point in Row A). Responses that demonstrate an incorrect understanding of the alternate perspective do not earn this point. 	

Important: Completely fill in the circle that corresponds to the question you are answering on this page.

Question 1

Question 2

Question 3

Question 4

Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

A regime change towards authoritarianism would not be supported by the citizens as authoritarian regimes often limit civil society, leading to dissatisfied citizens and less political stability as citizens resist and protest the change.

Within the last decade in Russia, Putin has trended the country towards authoritarianism with the ~~reduction~~ disruption of free speech, fair elections, and limiting civil society groups. It has been evident that the general populace has heavily resisted this change, as ~~they are~~ seen in ~~thousands~~ protests after Navalny's poisoning (~~in~~ Putin suppressing political enemies), and new civil society groups forming as ~~the~~ Putin crushed old groups advocating for free press and free speech. ~~Russia's economy and population growth has also seen effects~~

After the Iranian revolution, ~~the authoritarian~~ an authoritarian theocratic regime has existed. ~~In the 2009 elections, there~~ There has long been dissatisfaction in the authoritarian nature of its elections, where candidates are vetoed unfairly and ~~there~~ there have been ~~corruption~~ perceived corruption by the population. These ~~dissatisfactions~~ dissatisfaction with the ever increasing authoritarian nature of Iran led to the Green movement, ~~after~~ ~~the population~~ protests that occurred after an election was thought to be unfair by the population. ~~Even~~ Even before the green movement, there has been a

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Question 4



Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

lot of resistance towards authoritarianism, and they still continue with subsequent Arab Spring movements and further Iranian protests.

~~As seen in the Chinese resistance~~

This resistance towards authoritarianism is natural, as citizens desire civil society, which can only fully exist with free speech and political participation, elements that are lacking in authoritarian regimes. ~~Resistance~~ Resistance against authoritarianism also tends to degrade the legitimacy of a government in the eyes of the people, and that can negatively impact political stability, weakening functions of government, and further pushing the people ~~to~~ against ~~the~~ the authoritarianism of the government.

Though most charges towards authoritarianism is not supported by the citizens, ~~citizens of China~~ ~~China has~~ the government of China has had widespread support of the people though ~~being~~ ~~being~~ increasingly authoritarian. This is due ~~to~~ mainly to the amazing and rapid growth of the Chinese economy. This massively adds to the legitimacy of ~~an~~ ~~authoritarian~~ government, and prevents the people from being dissatisfied by the regime, thus leading to more support of the authoritarian regime. China is also a special case, as it ~~is~~ has been a very long standing authoritarian regime, with extremely

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Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

potent propaganda and ~~a~~ ~~even~~ censorship of media and news. This gives the Chinese population much less information on ~~other possible~~ benefits of other regimes, and combined with the general ~~helpless~~ contentness of the people towards their regime, the citizens do not oppose authoritarian ~~change~~ change, though ~~in~~ in most other cases they would.

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Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

An authoritarianism regime change would be supported by citizens who want economic development and political stability as authoritarian policy making is quick and powerful. China is an authoritarian regime who spurred rapid economic development through implementation of neo-liberal economic policy like ~~up~~ the creation of special economic zones and joining free trade organizations like the WTO. Russia, despite starting out as a democratic regime, gave into authoritarianism due to the political stability it offered during the fallout of the collapse of the USSR. The neo-liberal economic reforms swiftly brought extreme economic development through efficient authoritarian rule in China, while Putin's nationalization of the energy sector and subsequent expansion to the welfare system brought much needed political stability to Russia. However, authoritarian regimes harshly crack down on political opposition, severely curtailing civil liberties and civil society.

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Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

In the west, we hold democracy up on a pillar, and I certainly believe we should. However, we should not be completely surprised when we see authoritarian regimes take hold around the world. We saw this recently with the rise of Putin. Following rapid marketization and the fall of the USSR, the Russian economy was in absolute shambles. When people can't put food on the table, they don't care about liberties. They will gladly take a strong man like Putin, if he can lift them out of crisis. And that is what Putin did. Since then, he has been able to maintain a decent economy, and because of this he's been popular, which has allowed him to amass more power and remain in office. The Chinese absolutely trample over civil liberty, but they remain in power, as over the last few decades they have become leaders in the global economy, and, regardless of how they do it, maintain stability in their politics and keep a lid on civil society. The Chinese have demonstrated that authoritarianism is efficient, as they have been creating impressive infrastructure projects and tackling issues like climate change. Worrying about free speech is in many places a luxury. While bar elections and checks and balances are great, and I would fight tooth and nail to protect them, not everyone is in our situation. If a person is starving, ~~would~~ the big man who says he can provide bread in exchange for being all powerful starts to sound like a good deal.

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0032270



Question 4

Argument Essay

Note: Student samples are quoted verbatim and may contain spelling and grammatical errors.

Overview

The intent of this question was to assess student’s understanding of the sources of popular support for transitions to authoritarian regimes using one or more of the following course concepts: economic development, political stability, or civil society. Students were expected to articulate a defensible claim/thesis and establish a line of reasoning using one or more of the concepts provided; support the thesis with relevant evidence from a course country; use reasoning to explain why the evidence provided supports the thesis; and respond to an alternative perspective using refutation, concession, or rebuttal. Students were expected to write an argumentative essay, demonstrating each of the skills mentioned above. In particular, students needed to demonstrate their understanding of the relationship between popular support and authoritarian transitions by indicating the causal mechanisms, using the course concepts to establish the link. Students further needed to demonstrate their knowledge of the course countries by providing appropriate evidence from these countries that involve course concepts the students used in their thesis. Students also needed to be able to demonstrate their understanding of how the evidence they described was linked to the relationship between authoritarian transitions and popular support. Finally, students needed to demonstrate their understanding of alternative explanations by describing an alternative thesis and then either refuting that thesis, rebutting it, or conceding it.

Sample: 4A

Claim/Thesis Score: 1

Evidence Score: 2

Reasoning Score: 1

Alternative Perspectives Score: 1

(a) The response earned 1 point for a thesis establishing a clear line of reasoning, by stating, “A regime change towards authoritarian would not be supported by the citizens as authoritarian regimes often limit civil society, leading to dissatisfied citizens and less political stability.”

(b) The response earned 2 points for supporting the thesis with two pieces of evidence from one or more of the course countries related to the topic and course concept. It earned 1 point for stating, “Putin has trended the country towards authoritarianism with the disruption of free speech, fair elections, and limiting civil society groups.” It earned 1 point for stating, “These dissatisfactions with the ever increasing authoritarian nature of Iran led to the Green Movement, protests that occurred after an election was thought to be unfair by the population.”

(c) The response earned 1 point for using reasoning to explain why the thesis is supported by the evidence by stating, “This resistance towards authoritarianism is natural, as citizens desire civil society, which can only fully exist with free speech and political participation.”

(d) The response earned 1 point for establishing an alternative line of reasoning, by stating that “the government of China has had widespread support of the people though being increasingly

Question 4 (continued)

authoritarian. This is due mainly to the amazing and rapid growth of the Chinese economy.” It then rebuts this line of reasoning: “China is also a special case, as it has been a very longstanding authoritarian regime, with extremely potent propaganda and censorship of media and news,” supported by “the citizens do not oppose authoritarian change, though in most other cases they would.”

Sample: 4B

Claim/Thesis Score: 1

Evidence Score: 2

Reasoning Score: 0

Alternative Perspectives Score: 0

(a) The response earned 1 point for a thesis with a clear line of reasoning, for stating, “An authoritarianism regime change would be supported by citizens who want economic development and political stability as authoritarian policy making is quick and powerful.”

(b) The response earned 2 points for supporting the claim with two pieces of evidence from one or more of the course countries related to the topic and course concept. It earned 1 point for stating, “China is an authoritarian regime who spurred rapid economic development through implementation of neo-liberal economic policy ... The neo-liberal economic reforms swiftly brought extreme economic development through efficient authoritarian rule.” The response earned 1 point for stating, “Russia, despite starting out as a democratic regime, gave into authoritarianism due to the political stability it offered ... Putin’s nationalization of the energy sector and subsequent expansion to the welfare system brought much needed political stability.”

(c) The response did not earn a point for reasoning because no line of reasoning is established beyond the evidentiary points.

(d) The response did not earn a point for responding to an opposing or alternate perspective. It attempts to establish an alternative line of reasoning but does not rebut, refute, or concede this alternative.

Sample: 4C

Claim/Thesis Score: 0

Evidence Score: 2

Reasoning Score: 0

Alternative Perspectives Score: 0

(a) The response did not earn a point for developing a thesis with a line of reasoning because it does not reference a relevant course concept. The response offers a sentence resembling a thesis: “If a person’s starving, the big man who says he can provide bread in exchange for being all powerful starts to sound like a good deal,” but this provision of bread is not linked to either political stability or economic development.

Question 4 (continued)

(b) The response earned 2 points for supporting the thesis with two pieces of evidence from one or more of the course countries related to the topic and course concept. It earned 1 point for stating, “Following rapid marketization and the fall of the USSR, the Russian economy was an absolute shambles ... since then, he [Putin] has been able to maintain a decent economy, and because of this he’s been popular, which has allowed him to amass more power and remain in office.” It also earned 1 point for stating, “The Chinese absolutely trample over civil liberty, but they remain in power, as over the last few decades they have become leaders in the global economy.”

(c) The response did not earn a point for explaining its reasoning because it does not have a workable thesis.

(d) The response did not earn a point offering an alternative perspective because it does not have a workable thesis and offers no rebuttal, concession, or refutation of an alternative perspective.