

**COVENANT UNIVERSITY  
NIGERIA**

*TUTORIAL KIT  
OMEGA SEMESTER*

**PROGRAMME: POLITICAL  
SCIENCE**

**COURSE: POS 322**

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## **POS322: CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL ANALYSIS**

**Lecturers: Dr. D. Gberevbie; Ms. A. Oyeyemi and Mr. U. Abasilim**

### **QUESTIONS**

1. Discuss the difference between elite and group theories in the analysis of political phenomena.
2. Discuss the major arguments of the Post-behavioural approach in political science analysis.
3. In empirical functionalism, functions are not performed as long as they failed to meet the desired results, discuss with useful.
4. Define contemporary political analysis.
5. With useful examples, discuss the institutional and behavioural approaches to the analysis of political phenomena in a society.
6. Identify and explain various approaches in contemporary political analysis.
7. Discuss the difference between empirical and normative proposition in contemporary political analysis.
8. Describe three theories in contemporary political analysis known to you.
9. Discuss three major problems of contemporary political analysis.
10. With your understanding of any approach in contemporary political analysis apply one of them in political events in Nigeria.
11. Discuss the survival of the political system from the point of view of the system theory.
12. Elucidate the major distinctions between systems theory and structural functional theory.
13. The elite theorists see the policies of government as a reflection of the elite's values and preferences. Discuss.
14. State and discuss three weaknesses of systems theory.
15. The concepts of Lag and Distortion where they are prominent indicate the inability of a political system to respond effectively to the load from the environment. How?
16. How is communications theory useful in understanding contemporary political issues in Nigeria?

17. With useful example, discuss the differences between empirical and requisite functionalism in political system stability and survival.
18. What are the relevant concepts in communications theory?
19. What are the major differences between empirical and normative propositions in political science analysis?
20. Clearly explain the assumptions of the group theory to contemporary political analysis.

## **MODEL ANSWERS IN ALTERNATE SEQUENCE (ODD NUMBERS)**

### **Question 1**

- (a) The main argument of elite theory is that public policy reflects the values and preferences of the elites rather than the preferences of the masses in society.
- (b) Group Theory affirms the democratic character by asserting that public policy is the product of competition and negotiation between groups in society.

### **Question 3**

- (a) Empirical functionalism focuses on facts, believes that functions are performed as long as such functions meet the satisfaction of the various individuals or groups affected in the political system.
- (b) To this effect, one can examine a particular structure of government like the police force, whether its performance in crime control is to the satisfaction of the people or not. It is important to note that function is not performed when an activity is undertaken, but when a need is satisfied

### **Question 5**

- (a) In institutional approach, the most obvious reality of politics is political institutions: legislatures, executives and courts receive the primary attention of the institutionalist. The emphasis here is mainly descriptive - detailed descriptions of political institutions – Properly discussed.
- (b) Behavioural approach is characterized by its concentration on the behaviour of political actors and to a large extent a rejection of the institutional approach. Behaviouralism is the label applied to the scientific movement in political science. Its objectives are the development of empirical generalizations, systematic theory, and the use of these in the explanations of political phenomena. In behavioural approach, concepts such as attitudes,

opinion and personality traits, which are mental in nature and not observable actions like leg kicks or eye-blinks are rejected as meaningless

### **Question 7**

- (a) Empirical propositions are based on what can be seen, quantified or measured. They simply state facts or relationships that have been observed or discovered through various methods such as experimentation, statistical control procedures etc.
- (b) Normative propositions are statements that state value judgments. They are neither true nor false because no amount of evidence can prove or disprove a value judgment.

### **Question 9**

The problems of contemporary political analysis include:

- (a) Boundary Problem
- (b) Problem of Under-generalization
- (c) Problem of Interdisciplinary Synthesis
- (d) Identification of Values
- (e) Varying Interpretations of Political Phenomenon

### **Question 11**

The survival of the political system from the point of view of the system theory is based on the fact that the system theory is the characteristics of the structural relationship to one another and interaction on the basis of certain processes. Easton sees the political system in the society that allocate values and its allocation are authoritative and binding on the society as a whole. This is with emphasis on the following concepts such as:

- (a) political system
- (b) Inputs
- (c) output
- (d) feedback mechanism
- (e) environment
- (f) stress

### **Question 13**

Elite's theory is based on the assumption that power is concentrated in elites drawn from business and financial centers of society. In elite theory, the basic unit of analysis is not the

individual or an organized interest group, but the small layer of elites who control powerful institution: primarily financial, but it may also include governmental and military institutions.

The main argument of elite theory is that public policy reflects the values and preferences of the elites rather than the preferences of the masses in society. Elites are interested in the maintenance of the status quo; hence policies of government are bound to be conservative, non- innovative and marginal rather than those with bold and high change potentials.

### **Question 15**

Lag is time between the reception of the information by the political system and the reaction to it. The greater the Lag, the less efficient a system is, the less able it is to cope with its environment. The time that a political system takes to process information about basic demands from its environment might indicative its inability to maintain itself.

The concept of distortion refers to the changes that occur in information between the time it is received and the time it is reacted to. If a system allows or produces much distortion, it is in trouble, for it is not reacting to the actual situation, but to a distorted impression of it. One measure of a capable system is the low level of distortion produced in the reception and transmission of information.

### **Question 17**

**Empirical functionalism** focuses on facts, believes that functions are performed as long as such functions meet the satisfaction of the various individuals or groups affected in the political system. To this effect, one can examine a particular structure of government like the police force, whether its performance in crime control is to the satisfaction of the people or not. It is important to note that function is not performed when an activity is undertaken, but when a need is satisfied, which leads to the stability of political system and its survival.

**Requisite functionalism:** The structural analysis postulates structures, while the functional analysis postulates functions, what this means is that there are certain structures and functions these structures must perform for the political system to survive. E.g. the Judiciary as a structure must perform its function of proper interpretation of the law for the stability and survival of the political system to be guaranteed.

### **Question 19**

**Empirical propositions** in political science are about and based upon evidence referring to the world of experience and are verifiable, that is, they can be determined if empirical propositions are true or false. A true empirical proposition states a fact.

**Normative propositions** in political science are statements that states value judgments. They are neither true nor false because no amount of evidence can prove or disprove a value judgment. A normative proposition is a statement of individual preferences and attempt to change the value of others. Normative propositions are descriptive in nature, seeking to ask “what ought” question and to that extent unscientific and more importantly it is largely based on assumptions.