

**EXAMEN COMMUN D'ENTREE  
EN PREMIERE ANNEE**

**EPREUVE D'ANGLAIS**

**vendredi 1<sup>er</sup> juillet 2011**

**13h30 à 18h00  
(durée conseillée 1h30)**

**Coeff. 2**

Ce sujet est composé de 3 pages.

Il est demandé aux candidats de répondre directement sur leur copie en indiquant clairement les numéros des exercices.

## I. Written comprehension

Read the article and answer the following questions:

1. Using your own words, illustrate how and why this text represents the Conservative viewpoint on the first two years of the Obama Administration? /4
2. In your own words, how does the author account for this reversal? /2
3. What does the author mean when he refers to Barack Obama's "messianic campaign"? /2

## II. Synonyms

Find synonyms in the article for the following words.

*Words appear in the same order as in the text, not necessarily in the same form though.*

/4

- a) an illusion
- b) segments of the electorate
- c) taken for granted/guaranteed
- d) opposed to abortion
- e) expanding
- f) dubious proximity
- g) in the wrong part
- h) declining

## III. Expression

In the late 1920s and early 1930s in the US and in France, the economic crisis led to state interventionism, the implementation of social policies, and ultimately their consolidation into the Welfare State. Why should the crisis of 2008 not produce a revival or reinvention of the Welfare State but rather a conservative turn?

You may not limit yourself to the United States in your answer.

(300 words suggested)

/8

## How We Got Here

By ROSS DOUTHAT

Abridged from *The New York Times*, October 31, 2010

From the early 1990s through the 2008 election, Americans grew steadily more liberal. Voters became more supportive of government spending and more sympathetic toward the poor. They were increasingly secular and increasingly likely to favor gay marriage. They were more worried about climate change and more inclined to support universal health care. And not surprisingly, they were more and more likely to identify as Democrats.

This trend wasn't just a blip created by the Bush administration's unpopularity, as some conservatives hopefully suggested. It was a significant, long-running shift, pushed along by deeper demographic forces. Reliable conservative constituencies (white Christians, married couples) were shrinking. Liberal-leaning ones (Hispanics, single parents, the unchurched) were expanding. And the next generation seemed to be in the bag for liberalism. Younger voters weren't just more liberal than their parents; they were more liberal than the previous generation had been at the same age, suggesting a more enduring shift.

But since Barack Obama took the oath of office, the country's leftward momentum has reversed itself. In some cases, nearly 20 years of liberal gains have been erased in 20 months. Americans are more likely to self-identify as conservative than at any point since Bill Clinton's first term. They've become more skeptical of government and more anxious about deficits and taxes. They're more inclined to identify as pro-life and anti-gun control, more doubtful about global warming, more hostile to regulation. And, not surprisingly, they're more likely to consider voting Republican on Tuesday.

So what happened to the brave new liberal era? Well, a few things. The Wall Street bailout made big government seem like a corrupt racket. The unemployment rate made activist government appear helpless in a crisis. The yawning deficits made a free-spending government look like a luxury the country might not be able to afford.

These were all difficulties that Obama inherited, in one sense or another. But the Democrats swiftly created further problems for themselves. The central premise of the White House's policy-making, the assumption that an economic crisis is a terrible thing to waste, turned out to be a grave tactical mistake. It drew exactly the wrong lesson from earlier liberal eras, when the most enduring expansions of government — Social Security in the 1930s, Medicare in the 1960s — were achieved amid strong economic growth, rather than at the bottom of a recession.

The Obama Democrats, by contrast, tried to push through health care reform and climate legislation with the unemployment rate stuck at a 28-year high. On health care, they won a costly victory. On cap-and-trade, they forced vulnerable congressmen to cast a controversial vote, and came away with nothing to show for it. In both cases, they reaped a backlash, while defining themselves as ideological and intensely out-of-touch.

At the same time, their legislative maneuverings — the buy-offs and back-room deals, the inevitable coziness with lobbyists — exposed the weakness of modern liberal governance: it tends to be stymied and corrupted by the very welfare state that it's seeking to expand. Many of Barack Obama's supporters expected him to be another Franklin Roosevelt, energetically experimenting with one program after another. But Roosevelt didn't have to cope with the web of interest groups that's gradually woven itself around the government his New Deal helped build. And while Obama twisted in these webs, the public gradually decided that it liked bigger government more in theory than in practice.

Nor have Obama's political instincts helped him through these difficulties. Presidents always take more blame than they deserve for political misfortune, but Obama's style has invited disillusionment. His messianic campaign raised impossible hopes, and he has made a habit of baldly overpromising, whether the subject is the unemployment rate or the health care bill. Obama seems as if he would have been a wonderful chief executive in an era of prosperity and consensus, when he could have given soaring speeches every week and made us all feel tingly about America. But he's miscast as a partisan scrapper, and unpersuasive when he tries to feel the country's economic pain.

Thus his sagging poll numbers; thus the debacle that probably awaits his party on Tuesday. It will not be as grave a defeat as many conservatives would like to think: the health care bill may yet be remembered by liberals as a victory worth the price, the demographic trends are still with the Democrats, and the Republicans will return to power unprepared to wield it. But nonetheless, an opportunity has opened for the Right that would have been unimaginable just two years ago — a chance to pre-empt a seemingly inevitable liberal epoch with an unexpected conservative revival.

Now they just have to seize it.