

Department of Political Science, Yale University
Field Examination in Comparative Politics
January 2014

INSTRUCTIONS: This is a closed-book, no-notes exam, with only access to a clean copy of the reading list allowed. You are required to answer 3 questions, including 2 questions from Section A (#1-4) and 1 from Section B. Each answer comprises one-third of the exam grade. The exam has a strict 21-page limit (double-space, 12 font). You have 7 hours.

Section A. Answer 2 of the following 4 questions.

What role does nationalism play in processes of state formation, democratic consolidation, and war? In your answer, consider the ways that nationalism can vary across and within states and the implications for these outcomes.

Examine the relationships between capitalism and democracy, both developmental (how they affect each other's emergence and transformation) and functional (how they affect each other's performance). Give at least 3 empirical examples to support your answer.

Nelson Mandela led South Africa to a post-apartheid era with political rights for black South Africans, yet economic inequality has, if anything, grown worse in South Africa over the past decades. Why does inequality often persist after democratization, and under what conditions does it change? Focus your answer on what comparative politics scholars have to say about the causes and effects of economic inequality, considering its relationship to factors such as societal cleavages, level of economic development, and civil war.

Since 2011, authoritarian regimes in the Arab world have come under enormous pressures. Some have survived, at least to date, while others were overthrown. What best explains why some authoritarian regimes are resilient while others are contested and overthrown? In your answer, draw on three cases (from the Arab world or elsewhere) that help exemplify the processes of stability and transition.

Section B. Answer 1 of the following 2 questions.

How much can we learn from cross-country comparisons (including small-N and large-N approaches) about the major questions in comparative politics? Provide examples from recent work in the field to illustrate the prospects and potential limitations of these methods.

What are the methodological advantages and deficiencies of small-n historical case studies in comparative politics? Discuss examples from the literature.