

**Department of Political Science, Yale University**  
**Field Examination in Comparative Politics**  
**August 2009**

**INSTRUCTIONS:** This is a closed book, closed notes exam, with access to a clean copy of the reading list only. You are required to answer 3 questions (each answer comprises one-third of the exam grade). The exam has a strict 21 page limit (double-space, 12 font). You have 8 hours.

1. The literatures on state-building and nationalism are often seen as separate, as in the reading list for the exam. Arguably, many of the classic works in each draw essentially on concepts from the other. What is the relationship between state-building and nationalism? Does it vary between world regions, for example, between Europe and Africa? Discuss, with reference to works in both literatures.
2. To what extent do studies of political participation in autocracies and democracies rely on the same paradigms? Should they?
3. Why are some states, some times, able to assimilate some ethnic and/or regional groups but not others? Which theories might explain variation?
4. The literature on democratization twenty years ago emphasized contingent choices of elites. Much of the recent literature focuses on structural aspects of the polity. Would this more structural approach be significantly enriched by a renewed consideration of contingent events and actor agency, or do you find the new emphasis persuasive? Drawing on the relevant literature, argue for one position or the other.
5. In your opinion what has been the most dramatic empirical falsification of an established political science theory in the past ten years? Discuss the modalities of the process and the surrounding debates and assess its impact on the evolution of political science.
6. Is institutional engineering a solution to the problem of state failure? Discuss.