

Comparative Politics Field Exam
August 25, 2016

Instructions

This exam is closed book and closed note, though you are free to consult the CP reading list as you prepare your answers. You are required to answer three questions, two from Section A and one 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 two of the following four questions)

Democratization

Barrington Moore, Jr., wrote, in *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, “No bourgeoisie, no democracy.” But recent scholars have presented clashing views of the role of the “middle” classes in regime dynamics. What are their theories, how do they support them, and which one(s) do you find most persuasive? Why?

Nationalism

What is *nationalism*, and why does it emerge? How is national identity related to other identities, such as ethnic or religious ones? Please offer a critical assessment of the major studies you have read and explain where this line of inquiry should go next.

Parties and Party Systems

Studies of political parties and party systems in countries as diverse as Britain, India, Mexico, and Russia suggest their power in shaping democratization, distributive politics, and the representation. Why and how do parties and party systems vary and change, and in what ways does this variation matter?

Colonialism and State Development

How important were differences in colonial institution-building in determining levels of democracy and growth after independence? How persuasive are the studies that reach these conclusions, and why?

(Continue to Section B)

Section B (answer one of the following two questions)

Institutions

According to influential theorizing in comparative politics, political institutions explain variation in important outcomes across countries and regions, outcomes such as regime stability, democratic accountability, and economic growth. In light of accumulated research, discuss which institutions seem to really matter.

Political Violence

Under what conditions is violent collective action and its particular patterns (who participates or supports, where, against whom, etc.) best explained by individual factors, by elite politics, and/or by strategic considerations?

War and Political Development

What effects do scholars of comparative politics attribute to war? What is its reputed impact on democratization? On state formation? On fiscal systems and redistribution? Are there differing impacts of international and civil armed conflicts?