

Department of Political Science
Yale University
Field Examination in Comparative Politics
August 2019

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 7 hours.

1. What theories explain best the variation in state capacity one observes around the world?
2. Party systems vary on multiple dimensions. What factors determine the type of party system that emerges in a particular country? Which are most important in ensuring citizens' interests are well represented by political parties?
3. To what extent can arguments made about the electoral system choice in Western Europe be applied to other regions of the world?
4. Describe and evaluate two competing explanations about the factors conducive to the adoption of democracies.
5. In recent years, political scientists have made great progress in understanding how cultural beliefs are transmitted across generations. Do you agree or disagree?
6. Ethnic divisions have been blamed for many problems, including poor political representation, weak public goods provision, and conflict. Based on existing research, what would you say are the circumstances and types of outcomes for which ethnic diversity become a problem?
7. Do levels of inequality across countries explain differences in the size of welfare states?