

Yale University
Department of Political Science
Comprehensive Field Examination in Comparative Politics
August 2023

Instructions: Answer 3 of the 7 questions below. Choose questions that show the depth and breadth of your knowledge. In incorporating the existing literature into your answers, do not simply summarize the readings but engage with the implications of their theoretical framework and the empirical findings for the question at hand. Each answer comprises one-third of the exam grade. The exam has a strict 21- page limit (double-space, 12 font). You have 7.5 hours to complete the exam. This exam is not open-book, but you can use up to 30 single-spaced pages of notes using standard 12-pt font size and a clean copy of the reading list.

Questions:

1. Assess how well theories of welfare state development in Western Europe apply elsewhere in the world.
2. What is the role of economic inequality in the emergence of political parties, social movements, mass revolts, civil war, and/or revolutions?
3. Compare at least two conceptualizations of culture within social sciences. Choose a core debate within comparative politics, and discuss the promise and limitations of these approaches to culture for advancing this literature.
4. What do we know about when authoritarian regimes are likely to become democracies? What are some of the key limits of existing theories? In your answer, please discuss in detail at least two empirical cases.
5. What is the relationship between state-building and nation-building?
6. Under what conditions might there be benefits of ethnic diversity for public goods provision and political development? Discuss with reference to the existing literature on ethnic heterogeneity.
7. Discuss a literature where you think problems with conceptualization or measurement have impeded knowledge cumulation. Please also discuss with reference to the arguments made by authors in the "methodology" section of the reading list.