

## Comparative Politics Exam (January 2025)

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.

- 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-point font size and a clean copy of the reading list.
- The exam has a strict 21-page limit (double-space, 12 font).
- If you cite sources that are not on the reading list, please provide a full citation at the end of your answer. This reference list for external sources will *not* count against the exam's 21-page limit.

### Question 1

Many theories of democratization in comparative politics center on class conflict and cooperation. How do these theories vary in their explanations of democratization, which do you find most persuasive, and what avenues for future research might help adjudicate among them?

### Question 2

Ethnic divisions have been blamed for many problems, including poor political representation, weak public goods provision, and conflict. Based on existing research, under what conditions and for what types of outcomes might ethnic diversity instead bring benefits?

### Question 3

What theories best explain the variation in state capacity one observes around the world?

### Question 4

How are party systems shaped by cleavages and institutional factors? In your response, discuss the role of at least two distinct institutions and provide examples from at least two world regions.

### Question 5

Non-violent and violent protest, as well as revolution and rebellion, are all forms of popular mobilization. What kinds of theoretical frameworks can be used to study these different forms of collective action? What are the advantages and disadvantages of using the same analytical lens to investigate these different types of events? In your response, illustrate your argument with examples of protests, revolutions, and rebellions.

### **Question 6**

Much of our understanding of the welfare state has been shaped by the extensive literature on the Western European experience. To what extent do the theories and findings developed in this region help us understand the degree and shape of the welfare state in other regions?

### **Question 7**

At the traditional heart of the field of comparative politics is the “comparative method,” sometimes referred to as “small-n” analysis or the structured comparison of a limited number of cases. What are the strengths and weaknesses of this methodological approach? Can this method be fruitfully paired with other approaches, such as formal theory or survey experiments? If so, how? In your discussion, be sure to illustrate your arguments with plenty of concrete examples.