

Political Economy Field Exam
August 2008

Instructions: Answer three of the following questions, choosing questions to show the breadth as well as the depth of your knowledge. Closed book exam, but feel free to refer to political economy reading list for spelling.

1. What is the economic approach to human behavior? What are some alternative ways of viewing human actors in models of political economy? How do the assumptions about human behavior affect theories of political economy?
2. "To what extent do fiscal regimes equalize opportunities for income among citizens?" Discuss different theoretical approaches to answering this question. What are some factors that produce systematic differences across countries?
3. Do strong central banks help or hurt the ability of employers and workers to reach agreement over wages and labor conditions?
4. If you were to be asked to evaluate the effects of alternative possible electoral rules on a country's governance, where would you start? How would you factor in materialist, institutionalist, cultural, and cognitive effects on voting behavior?
5. In studying "rule of law" some scholars argue that culture paves the way for cooperation whereas others argue that prolonged experience of cooperation generate cultural support of those values. How would we know? What is at stake in the answer to this question?
6. Why is there a gender wage gap? Consider two empirical strategies to test your answer.
7. What accounts for systematic variation in central bank independence? Does it matter?
8. What is the relationship between economic wealth and democracy?