

**Comparative Politics
Preliminary Examination
Fall 2007**

GENERAL RULES AND DIRECTIONS: You will have eight hours in which to answer the required questions. **The exam must be handed in no later than 4:00 p.m.** Be sure to save some of your time for putting the answers into an organized, typed or legibly written version in good English. This is an OPEN book exam. Students MAY use notes or books, BUT they may NOT discuss the examination with anyone while taking it.

SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS: Please answer ONE question from Section I and ONE question from Section II. Read the questions carefully and answer all parts of the two you choose. Note that you must write two distinct essays, **avoiding substantial overlap** between your answers.

Section I: General Questions (Answer ONE)

1. What are the promises and pitfalls of an historical approach to research in Comparative Politics? Be sure to reference a variety of works that do and do not “take history seriously” (explaining how and with what results) and give some examples of other questions that might be illuminated or muddied by an historical approach (explaining how and why).
2. What is the “new” institutionalism and what is “new” about it? What are the differences and similarities between institutionalist approaches? What advantages does an institutionalist approach offer to political science, and when does an institutionalist approach to politics fall short?
3. Is there such a thing as a “consolidated democracy” and, if so, what does it require? Discuss the relative importance of structural, institutional, cultural/ideational, geopolitical, and conjunctural (or agentic) factors. Be sure to support your argument with examples from the democratization experiences of at least one “developed” and one “developing” country.
4. Most comparativists would agree that “political culture” exists, but there is strong disagreement regarding if/how it should figure in political science research. Where do you come down in this debate? Be sure to refer to a variety of works in the literature that address culture in some way, and discuss the strengths and weaknesses thereof.

Section II: Personalized Questions (Answer ONE)

For all questions: Be sure to answer the question in your own voice and with reference to specific cases.

1. Compare and contrast approaches to the study of the evolution of party organization and strategy. What assumptions do different approaches (e.g. sociological, institutional, etc.) bring to the table? What is left off the table? What approaches are most fruitful for the particular study of party evolution in "third wave" democracies?
2. To what extent has religious identity been the basis of political mobilization in the "Muslim world" in the last 30-40 years? Be sure to address whether religious identity might explain the kinds of violence or the intensity or duration of violence; whether it has been a sole cause, one of several causal factors, or not a cause; and which theoretical approaches--constructivist, institutionalist, rational choice, ideational, and culturalist--are most useful for understanding the relationship between religious identity, mobilization and violence. Draw on at least two case studies in your response.
3. The human rights literature has addressed the causes of repression and its relation to development and democracy. Scholars of comparative politics have long debated the relationship between development and democracy. But scholars on these two topics rarely enter into dialogue with one another. What are most important theoretical arguments in the literature on the political and economic causes of human rights violations and how do these arguments relate to some of the issues and themes that appear in the comparative politics literature on democratization?
4. What is the relationship between structure and agency in socio-political change?