

**Comparative Politics
Preliminary Examination
Spring 2006**

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. Are insurgency and/or revolution best explained by perspectives which focus on the elite/state level, the mass level, or some combination of the two? In your answer, be sure to provide examples from specific cases of insurgency and/or revolution, and highlight any variables that the existing comparative politics literature has neglected.
2. In the vast literature on democratization, which do you find more convincing and why: arguments that emphasize structure or those that emphasize agency? Be sure to support your argument with examples from the democratization experiences of at least one “developed” and one “developing” country.
3. What role does the state play in economic development? Are there a set of pre-conditions, international or domestic, that enable a state to play a constructive role in development, or is it simply a matter of effective leadership and/or good luck? Don’t forget to define your terms and be sure to support your argument with examples from at least two different regions of the world.

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4. Is there such a thing as “political culture” and, if so, how should it figure in political science research? In your answer, please discuss the various ways that political scientists have attempted to measure or otherwise demonstrate the impact of political culture on political outcomes, and what you see as the strengths and weaknesses of those works.

5. International relations and comparative politics are separated into two distinct sub-fields in our discipline, each with its own specific premises, debates, and specialized journals. How useful is this division of labor in terms of advancing our understanding of politics? Could greater cross-fertilization between these two sub-fields improve the quality of the debates in each, or would this only serve to “muddy the waters” theoretically? In your answer, be sure to offer specific examples of work which you feel has been or could be enriched by incorporating insights from the other sub-field, and be very clear about what those insights are and how they serve/would serve to enhance theory-building.

Section II: Personalized Questions (Answer ONE)

1. Very few ideas have had more influence on political science than the liberal theory of the state. One of the starting points of liberal theory is that the family constitutes a separate realm of private authority. But since the middle of the twentieth century, issues of family, marriage, sex, and children have become ever more volatile and prominent in the politics of countries with quite different political systems and quite different cultures. Is there a better way of approaching the state that might enable comparativists to make more systematic sense of political fights over the family?

2. Why do some governments repress their people/commit human rights violations while others do not? How are the causes of repression associated with development and democracy? In your answer, please highlight the connections between the human rights literature and the broader comparative politics literature on development and democracy. Be sure to answer the question in your own voice and with reference to specific cases.

SECTION II CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

3. How does the literature on transitions to democracy in comparative politics relate to questions of transitional justice and human rights? In particular, which variables affect the choice of transitional justice mechanisms both at the domestic and international level, and how do those decisions, in turn, affect the stability and quality of the new democratic regime? Critically assess the arguments provided in the literature on these issues, drawing on specific cases to support your argument.

4. Draw on the literature on law and courts to address the following question: under what conditions might judges be willing and able to contribute to the stability and quality of democracy, particularly in “emerging” democratic regimes? In your answer, be sure to define your terms, provide examples from at least two country cases, and discuss the limits to and perils of an active judicial role in the political life of a democracy.