

## Comparative Politics Comprehensive Examination | August 2024

**Majors:** Please answer three questions from at least three different sections.

**Minors:** Please answer two questions from two different sections.

In each essay, you should:

- **Answer the question** that is asked. Refine if necessary but do not expand. If you find questions ambiguous, clarify how you interpret the question.
- **For all questions:** Unless clearly not relevant for the question, you should discuss at least two theoretical accounts and at least two bodies of evidence as they relate to the theories.
- **Be critical:** Include critical assessments of the theoretical and empirical literatures that you discuss.

### Section I: Approaches

1. Has the increasing methodological focus on internal validity in recent decades come at the expense of external validity? Illustrate your argument with respect to at least two literatures within comparative politics.

### Section II: Primitives

2. Politically salient identities (ethnic, racial, gender, national) can be shaped by political entrepreneurs, but are there limits to the degree to which this is possible? Discuss relevant theoretical literature and two cases.
3. Can we say that "culture" (defined as you see best) "explains" any political outcomes? Discuss by offering critiques (positive, negative, or mixed) of three works that make such a claim.

### Section III: Political Structures

4. What explanations have been offered for the high levels of political support enjoyed by some authoritarian regimes, and which of these theories do you find most persuasive and why? Discuss with reference to two such regimes.

### Section IV: Outcomes I

5. How and to what extent do concerns about the enforcement of exchange between patrons and clients shape clientelist politics?

### Section V: Outcomes II

6. Is citizen information necessary or sufficient to ensure government accountability?
7. What are the methodological and conceptual challenges scholars face when invoking institutional or historical legacies to explain political outcomes? Discuss with reference to two works.

**Section VI: Outcomes III**

8. What explains variation in income-based redistribution across countries?

**Section VII: Wild Card**

9. What does research in comparative politics tell us about the likelihood that the United States will experience democratic backsliding over the next decade?