

Comparative Politics Comprehensive Examination August 2018

Majors: Please answer three questions from three different sections.

Minors: Please answer two questions from two different sections.

In each essay, you should:

- Answer the question asked. Refine if necessary but do not expand.
- Unless directed otherwise, discuss at least two theoretical accounts and at least two bodies of evidence as they relate to the theories (a “body of evidence” is a study or related set of studies that address a problem empirically).
- Include critical assessments of the theoretical and empirical literature you discuss.

Section I: Approaches

1. In thinking about research design, what would be the added value of qualitative components if you seek to study causality? Provide examples to illustrate your argument.

2. Lucian Pye (1921-2008), one of the pioneers of political development studies in the 1950s and 1960s, is said to have remarked (the story is probably apocryphal), "Some people can understand a country's political culture just by watching, some have to ask questions, and some actually have to count the answers." What are the advantages and disadvantages of counting the answers when studying the influence of attitudes, values, and norms on political behavior?

Section II: Building Blocks

3. Consider a class of problems in which we sometimes see bargaining failure (e.g. civil war onset, strikes or other protests, the breakdown of centralized wage bargaining). Describe at least two reasons bargaining failures occur and assess the evidence supporting those reasons.

4. Though the institutional arrangements used for making decisions would seem to obviously affect political outcomes, understanding these effects empirically is challenging because the institutions themselves are endogenous. Discuss two issues in comparative politics where institutions are central but where the endogeneity problem is fundamental. What is the way forward?

Section III: Political Structures

5. Can theories that account for state-building in Europe inform our understanding of state-building in contemporary cases?

Section IV: Outcomes I

6. Under what conditions does conflict over resources produce democracy?

Section V: Outcomes II

7. Corruption and unsuccessful policy reforms are largely driven by failures of political accountability. Do you agree?

Section VI: Outcomes III

8. What accounts for variation in bureaucratic performance? Examine at least two works that explore this issue.

Section VII: Wild Card [Note: this is an extra section which may be answered by majors or minors instead of any other section]

9. The U.K.'s referendum on the E.U. and Trump's ascendancy in the U.S. might suggest the beginning of fundamental changes in well-established party systems. Do you feel this the case? Draw on existing literature in comparative politics to justify your answer and to help us understand parallels and differences in the two cases.