

Comparative Politics Comprehensive Examination January 2021

Majors: Please answer three questions from at least two 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.
- 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 literatures that you discuss.

Section I: Approaches

1. What are the advantages and disadvantages of a strategy that studies historical developments in Europe in order to understand contemporary development processes? Give specific advantages and disadvantages of a historical approach relative to some other approach.

Section II: Primitives

2. Political scientists often base their theories on the expected behavior of individuals rather than the behavior of groups. What are the advantages and disadvantages of this approach? Discuss with respect to at least two problems studied in comparative politics.

3. When might collective action problems be better understood as coordination problems or as Prisoners’ Dilemmas? Illustrate your answer with respect to at least two cases of protest or revolution.

Section III: Political Structures

4. Under what conditions can autocratic leaders be held accountable for their policy decisions?

5. Is the median voter theorem useful in explaining fiscal policy outcomes in democratic societies?

Section IV: Outcomes I

6. Scholarship has emphasized that polarization can undermine the stability of democratic regimes. In light of the existing literature, are there institutional arrangements that can mitigate this risk?

Section V: Outcomes II

7. When should we treat religious politics as distinct from ethnic politics, and when should we treat it as a manifestation of ethnic politics?

8. When should we expect citizens to rebel against the state? How well are our theories supported by the data?

Section VI: Outcomes III

9. How does the study of political brokers improve our understanding of distributive politics?

Section VII: Wild Card

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

10. How will the UK's exit from the EU alter political outcomes in the UK. Be sure to reference evidence from other cases and specific theories to support your arguments.