

Comparative Politics Comprehensive Examination | August 2021

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. When—or for what—are case studies useful?

Section II: Primitives

2. Does a satisfactory explanation of an outcome require an account of mechanisms?
3. It is sometimes said that “All models are wrong, but some are useful.” Discuss two examples of useful models and indicate how you know they are useful (or: if you do not think there are two useful models show why at least two prominent models are not useful).

Section III: Political Structures

4. Have (civil or international) wars “made states” in cases other than early modern Europe? Explain.
5. Federalism has often been advocated as means to achieve responsible fiscal outcomes. What specific federal institutions are helpful to this end? Where can things go wrong?

Section IV: Outcomes I

6. What factors (besides poverty) best account for variation in how political parties use patronage/clientelism?

Section V: Outcomes II

7. What does the study of class politics add to the study of ethnic politics, and vice versa?
8. What factors best explain the sudden collapse of public support for some authoritarian regimes versus the maintenance of high levels of such support in others?

Section VI: Outcomes III

9. To what extent does the rise of populism falsify modernization theory?
10. What factors best explain why poor voters often vote against parties that favor expanding the welfare state?

Section VII: Wild Card

11. Democracies appear to have done no better than non democracies in limiting Covid mortality. Is there a causal relation between regime type and performance in this regard? What theories are supported by the patterns we observe and what theories are challenged by it?