**Comparative Politics Field Exam**

**May 2018**

**Instructions for Students for Whom Comparative Politics is A Major Field**

Choose one essay from Section I and two essays from Section II. Be sure that your essays take the form of an argument, that you cite relevant literature, and that you avoid overlap, so you can demonstrate familiarity with a wide range of comparative politics literatures. Also, be sure to draw examples from countries with which you are familiar in at least some of your answers-- preferably countries from more than one area of the world.

**Instructions for Students for Whom Comparative Politics is A Minor Field**

Choose two questions, at least one of which should be from Section II. Be sure that your essays take the form of an argument, that you cite relevant literature, and that you avoid overlap, so you can demonstrate familiarity with a wide range of comparative politics literatures. Also, be sure to draw examples from countries with which you are familiar in at least some of your answers--preferably countries from more than one area of the world.

**Section I**

1. In recent years, some political science journals have sought to promote greater transparency in political science research, requiring for instance that quantitative scholars make their data available for purposes of replication. Should journals hold similar expectations for qualitative research? Why or why not?

2. Many political scientists advocate a “mixed-methods” approach to comparative politics research. What is a mixed-methods approach?  What are different strategies for mixing methods? When are mixed methods most useful?  When might it be better not to mix?

3. What are the strengths and limitations of the single-country case study? Should scholars in comparative politics be doing more or fewer of these types of studies?

**Section II**

1. Do institutions in authoritarian regimes matter?  How?

2. Are ethnic divides inherently problematic for democracy? If not, why? If so, what can be done to maximize the stability and quality of democracy in multiethnic countries?

3. The concept of the “developmental state” was developed to understand the rapid rise to industrialization and prosperity experienced by post-war Japan and some other countries of East Asia. Does this concept continue to be useful in explaining patterns of economic development observable in the world today?

4. Do countries with abundant oil, natural gas, and mineral resources face a resource curse? Why or why not? In your answer, make sure you describe how the “curse” is said to work before discussing your views on it.

5. What tend to be the most important sources of violent insurgency in states?

6. What is ethnic identity and how does ethnicity differ from other social identities people may have? Looking at different regions of the world with which you are familiar, is the salience of ethnic identity in politics today rising, declining, or essentially remaining at the same level as always?

7. Is democracy in decline around the world? If so what is driving these trends? If not, what are the forces behind democracy’s resilience?