**Comparative Politics Comprehensive Exam, September 2013**

***For CP MAJORS: Answer 4 questions. You must answer at least one question in Part I and at least two questions in Part II. Time: 8 hours.***

***For CP MINORS: Answer 3 questions. You must answer at least one question in Part I and at least one question in Part II. Time: 6 hours.***

**Part I**

1. “Single-country studies are incapable of generating theory that applies beyond that single country.” Is this incorrect? Either way, argue your case using at least two examples of works that make theoretical claims based primarily on research in a single country.
2. In recent years, a number of scholars (Benedict Anderson, Michael Loriaux, Mark Blythe, and many others) have turned to interpretive or discursive analysis. Such scholars have become disenchanted with the positivist approach to social science and have looked to approaches grounded in different epistemological assumptions to enrich our understanding of politics. What are the disadvantages of the positivist approach? What are the limits of discursive or interpretive analysis?
3. Select two influential works in the field of comparative politics and write a critical review in which you evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of their research designs. Then, based on your review, what advice would you give PhD students who are preparing to research dissertations on topics similar to those of the two works you discuss?

**Part II**

1. Now that we are more than two years into the “Arab Spring,” many of the initial hopes for democracy in that region have been dashed. Anyone who had read Barrington Moore’s *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, however, could hardly have been surprised. Moore insisted on two important preconditions for democracy: a strong bourgeoisie and the transformation of the peasantry into a more modern social formation. Neither condition obtained in the North African and Middle Eastern countries swept up in the 2011 uprisings. Are there authors who might give us less reason to be pessimistic? Does political development require economic development?
2. What is the relationship between nation-building and state-building? Give examples to illustrate your points.
3. Are terms like “hybrid regime,” “competitive authoritarianism,” and “illiberal democracy” useful concepts? What has research in this tradition told us that theories of “democratization” have not?
4. What has political science now taught us about the nature of the “resource curse?” To what extent is oil, for example, really a curse for the economy and polity?
5. Is ethnic politics rational?
6. Does the concept of “modernity” have any use? Are contemporary theorists of development right to reject it?
7. To what extent are ethnic divides a problem for democratization? Is consociationalism the best option for balancing democracy and ethnic accommodation?
8. Evaluate the importance of the international environment in understanding political development. Consider the work of Alexander Gerschenkron, Peter Gourevitch, and Peter Katzenstein in formulating your response.
9. “Social movement theory is not theory but a checklist of things to look for.” Do you agree?