

Comparative Politics Comprehensive Exam, May 2012

For the MAJOR: 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 the MINOR: 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. Does it matter that there is no dominant guiding paradigm in comparative politics?
2. Have increasing expectations of rigor in research design led comparativists to have methods drive their research questions rather than the other way around?
3. Does the current interest in mixed methods put unrealistic burdens on the researcher?

Part II

1. “Despite the importance of nationalism, political scientists are neither well equipped nor sufficiently interested in it because the topic is not easily amenable to theoretical and comparative analysis.” Discuss.
2. Comparative scholars have given a good deal of attention in recent decades to studying democratization. How do we know democracy when we see it?
3. Discuss authoritarian learning in two world regions.
4. Is there a resource curse?
5. Are comparativists and international relations scholars converging in their understanding of political violence?
6. “Social movement theory is not theory but a checklist of things to look for.” Do you agree?
7. Select an area of particular interest to you (such as political economy, parties, democratization) not mentioned in another answer and explain whether you think that existing comparative literature in that area is insufficiently attentive to international dimensions or overly attentive.
8. “Modernization theory is viewed negatively but still informs much research in unacknowledged ways.” Is this true?
9. Political scientists have waxed and waned in their interest in the connection between regime type and economic development. And they have differed greatly in their approaches to causality as well. Is there any evidence that our understanding of this relationship has grown deeper or more sophisticated? Or does research just go in cycles?