**Comparative Politics Comprehensive Exam, September 2012**

***For the MAJOR:  Answer 4 questions.  You must answer one question in Part I and three questions in Part II.  Time: 8 hours.***

***For the MINOR:  Answer 3 questions.  You must answer one question in Part I and two questions in Part II.  Time: 6 hours.***

**Methods**:

1) Recently, field experiments have become popular among many scholars in the field of comparative politics. Is randomization possible in the social sciences? Do experimental methods provide a better solution to problems of inference than other methods?

2) Imagine that you are about to start a research project in the field of Comparative Politics. In crafting your research design, discuss which of the approaches among case study, statistical analysis, and multi-method work you find most useful to theory building and testing. In pursuing this research plan, what are the most important methodological issues that you are likely to confront, and how would you resolve them?

3) Select two important works in the field of Comparative Politics, and write a critical review in which you evaluate the strength and weakness of their research designs. Based on your analysis, should they be regarded as essential readings for students of Comparative Politics? Why or why not?

**Substantive:**

1) What is a 'hybrid regime'? Do we need this category to make sense of political regimes in the developing world? Or could we make due with two categories, 'democratic' and 'authoritarian' regimes?

2) Does democracy promote or impede economic development? Does economic development facilitate democratization?  Discuss the theory and evidence concerning the link between development and democracy.

3) A lot has been made of the distinction between strong and weak states. Is this a relevant distinction for developing countries, and how does it relate to economic and human development? What role do social forces play in development, and how can states effectively manage society in their efforts to promote growth and human welfare?

4) Under what circumstances does ethnic diversity give rise to conflict? Is it possible to promote ethnic peace through institutional engineering?

5) What are the main differences and similarities between national and class identities? Give examples to illustrate your points.

6) How do people overcome a ‘free rider’ problem to engage in collective action? What theoretical apparatus gives us the most purchase on answering this question?

7) What phenomena in comparative politics can culture help us explain, if any?