**Comparative Politics Comprehensive Exam, May 2014**

***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. There is a significant movement of political scientists these days using field experiments to study political phenomena. What are the strengths and weaknesses of field experiments as a method?
2. What is the role of area studies in comparative politics today? What should be the role of area studies in comparative politics?
3. Benedict Anderson’s *Imagined Communities* and Michael Loriaux’s *The European Union and the Deconstruction of the Rhineland Frontier* are examples of discursive analysis. What are the advantages of this kind of analysis? What are the disadvantages? Which recent books from this tradition strike you as the most useful to comparativists?

**Part II**

1. What does the literature on nationalism tell us about the conditions under which a state’s understanding of nationhood changes?
2. Widely dismissed by comparativists, Huntington’s “Clash of Civilizations” may, in fact, raise important issues in comparative politics. To what extent do vestiges of historical cleavages help us understand domestic politics in some countries? Compare the politics of countries from two or three world regions in formulating your answer.
3. Often, the defining characteristic of a society is its level of economic development. This in turn may be understood as either the presence or absence of a large peasantry. How do peasants influence the nature of politics? To what extent do they inhibit democratization?
4. “Social movement theory is not theory but a checklist of things to look for.” Do you agree?
5. What explains why some authoritarian regimes remain stable while others collapse?
6. How much difficulty do ethnic divides pose for democratization?
7. Three decades have passed since Peter Gourevitch wrote “The Second Image Reversed”. Since that time political scientists have identified many instances in which international forces have shaped domestic institutions. Choose three works in political science that make such an argument and critically assess their contribution.
8. Though in no way Marxist, Thomas Piketty’s *Capital in the 21st Century* has inspired many to reflect on Marx’s contribution to our understanding of the world. What aspects of the Marxist intellectual heritage have remained useful to social scientists. What aspects were blind alleys?
9. 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?