**Comparative Politics Comprehensive Exam, January 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. What are the limitations of a positivist approach to political science? Which studies in comparative politics illustrate these limitations?
2. Is a combination of in-depth qualitative research, statistical analysis, and game theory the ideal research design for political science? Why or why not?
3. Experimental methods (in particular field experiments) have recently become a “hot” method in comparative political science. Proponents cite their advantages over traditional regression analysis in achieving randomization of treatments and thereby leading to valid causal inferences. Evaluate this claim. Are experimental methods the wave of the future for political science?

**Part II**

1. Much of the writing about development prospects in the Third World, from the early modernization theorists, through Huntington, and even the work of Acemoglu and Robinson, are essentially apologias for colonialism. Do you agree?
2. What would political science research on civil wars and ethnic conflict suggest might be the most likely outcomes of the civil war in Syria?
3. “Ethnic differences lead to ethnic conflict.” Do you agree?
4. “Men make history, but not as they please.”—Karl Marx. Consider this famous observation in the light of work done on path dependence. Where does agency fit in?
5. Levitsky and Way have argued that we gain better understanding of hybrid regimes (which they call “competitive authoritarianism”) if we think of them as instances of weak authoritarianism instead of imperfect or unconsolidated democracy. Weigh the merits of this claim.
6. To what extent has the interest in social capital served mainly as an attempt to bring back political culture as a key element of comparative politics.
7. To what extent are ethnic divides a problem for democratization? Is consociationalism the best option for balancing democracy and ethnic accommodation?
8. Is stable democracy possible in poor countries? If not, why not? And if so, what are the conditions that make it most likely?
9. “Social movement theory is not theory but a checklist of things to look for.” Do you agree?