***Instructions:***  *For the Comparative Politics Major exam, pick one question from Part I and two questions from Part II. For Comparative Politics as a Minor, pick one question from Part I and one question from Part II. Make sure that your choice of questions allows you to demonstrate the breadth of your preparation. Avoid essays whose literatures overlap.*

**Part I**

1. "The various schools and sects of political science now sit at separate tables, each with its own conception of proper political science, but each protecting some secret island of vulnerability." –Gabriel Almond

Was Almond right? What do you consider to be the main divide in political science? To what extent was the division of political science rooted in ideology? Does this divide still persist? If so, are there specific works which bridge the divide and offer a way forward?

2. Is comparative politics prone to methodological fads?  Might game theory and/or experiments be a methodological fad?  Assess the trajectory of the adoption of new methodologies in comparative politics and evaluate several studies using the newest methodologies.

3. Select two influential works of comparative politics from the past decade that each use a different methodological approach, such as: 1) small-N qualitative case studies, 2) large-N quantitative methods, 3) experiments, 4) some combination of these categories. Discuss the assumptions, trade-offs, and strengths/ weaknesses of each approach.

**Part II**

1. In 1978 Peter Gourevitch wrote an influential article entitled “The Second Image Reversed” where he argued for the importance of international factors in understanding comparative politics. Gourevitch focused on political development, but to what extent do international factors matter in our analyses of civil society and/or ethnic cleavages and/or intrastate political violence and/or nationalism?  Do international factors matter more in today's globalized world than in the past, in your view?
2. In the past five years, several authoritarian regimes have been overthrown or collapsed, while others have consolidated their power even amid changes in leadership. Why do some authoritarian regimes persist while others collapse? Consider both domestic and international factors in your answer, and discuss studies about authoritarianism in at least two different regions of the world.
3. What do the literatures on social movements and intrastate political violence teach us about the effects of state repression on the onset, organization, extent, and duration of contention or violence? Use examples from at least two regions of the world and assess the strengths, weaknesses, and compatibility of these literatures.
4. What is democracy?  Is there a scholarly consensus about the concept?  Are the various concepts for levels of democracy ("hybrid democracy," “competitive authoritarianism,” "democracy with adjectives," etc.) useful, in your view?  To what extent do comparativists link political participation, political inclusion, and policy responsiveness to concepts of democracy?  Similarly, is scholarship about civil society and social movements linked appropriately to concepts of democracy?
5. Peter Hall and David Soskice introduced the idea of “Varieties of Capitalism” to amend the “one size fits all” approach found in neoclassical economics. What are the advantages of the “Varieties of Capitalism” approach to understanding political outcomes in advanced industrial societies? How is this related to literatures focusing on institutions? Do these ideas help illuminate politics in countries where capitalism is less well developed?
6. Have comparativists shown that some kinds of political party systems and some kinds of electoral rules are superior to others for the consolidation of democracy?  Or have comparativists concluded that specific conditions within each country are too important, impeding the validity of any universal recommendation for particular kinds of party systems or electoral rules?

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