

**COMPARATIVE POLITICS
QUALIFYING EXAMINATION
Program of International Studies
Spring 2015**

DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME OR STUDENT NUMBER ON YOUR EXAM

Instructions: Ph.D. students have eight (8) hours to complete the exam and must answer the mandatory and three (3) optional questions. M.A. students have four (4) hours and must answer the mandatory and two (2) optional questions. Note: you may answer only one question from any optional group. The exam will begin promptly at 9 am at the Math Computer Lab (Merrick Building Room 307). You must email your exam to Dr. Yaffe (lyaffe@umiami.edu) immediately upon completion.

MANDATORY QUESTION

1. Political sociologist Seymour Martin Lipset's (1959) observation that democracy is related to development has generated the largest body of research on any topic in comparative politics. The Lipset thesis has been supported and contested, revised and extended, buried and resuscitated. Neither the theory nor the facts are clear, however. One thing is clear: in terms of aggregate patterns, the relationship between levels of development (measured by income per capita) and the incidence of democratic regimes is quite robust. Yet there are two distinct reasons posited to explain why this relationship may hold: either democracies are more likely as countries develop economically, or they may be established independently of economic development but may be more likely to survive in wealthier countries. In your opinion, which interpretation, if either, is correct? Citing the major contributors to this debate, your task is to review the theoretical and empirical studies and to adjudicate the findings in the contested field of democratization studies.

OPTIONAL QUESTIONS

Methodological Debates

2. It is common practice for comparativists to carry out comparisons among countries within the same region. While one reason might be sunk intellectual costs, proponents of area studies (e.g Latin American studies, African studies, etc.) contend there are sound reasons for doing this. What are the methodological benefits of intra-regional comparisons? Are these benefits the same across all regions? In contrast, critics of area studies argue that there are drawbacks to this approach and defend cross-regional comparisons. Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of both types of comparison. Using examples of both intra-regional and cross-regional comparison be sure to identify the most significant benefits and the limitations of both strategies of comparison, particularly in identifying causality.

Comparative Political Economy

3. Welfare state policies have suffered important transformations since the second half of the 20th century. Your task is to analyze the emergence and evolution of welfare state policies and answer the following questions: Do different regions have varying systems of welfare states? If so, why? How have historical legacies influenced contemporary social policies? How can we best explain the variations over time in extent of redistribution and the identities of the beneficiaries of welfare state policies? Be sure to mention the principal contending theorists in CP literature, and address concrete examples that illustrate the similarities and/or differences in welfare state across regions.

Political Development

4. Two decades ago Samuel Huntington wrote about the "Third Wave" of democratization. Both before and after Huntington's book, there has been a flood of publications discussing the preconditions for democratization, the importance of the pre-democratic system in shaping the process and outcome of democratization, the process of democratic consolidation, and related issues. Drawing upon this literature, evaluate and compare the process of political development in any two countries — preferably from different geographic regions or from different "historical waves" of democratization. Be sure to discuss the framework within which your examination will occur, provide precise definitions of terms, and provide enough historical evidence to support your argument.

Revolutions and Civil Wars

5. Revolutionary movements and civil wars have been the subject of study and permanent debate among CP scholars. Theories developed by Moore (1966), Skocpol (1979), Wickham-Crowley (1993), Woods (2003) and Bates (2008) among others, address the conditions that precipitate the outbreaks of civil wars, revolutions or failed states. No consensus has been reached, as some scholars prioritize economic factors, whereas others stress the role of institutional and social factors, and others focus on ethnic cleavages. Write an essay surveying this literature, identifying the most influential authors and their arguments, theoretical approaches and methodologies employed. In your view, what is the current status of the debate in the social sciences on the causes of revolutions, failed states and civil wars?

Regional Studies

6. Although democratic processes have been the standard in Latin America since the transition from dictatorships to electoral constitutionalism, today's variations in political practice offer a much ampler panorama. Summarize the current political trends and trace them back to key historical periods. Choose three of them that according to your view define time periods and the fabric of specific countries. Illustrate your choices with examples of leadership, political parties or ideologies.

OR

7. Explain the architecture of the European Union, outlining the essential functions of its main institutions, and compare them to the structure of a state.

Domestic Politics and International Trends

8. Recent elections in Latin America, political upheavals in the Arab world, and trends in Europe have shown the reappearance of native political formats (new populism, religious fundamentalism, secularism, right wing tendencies, racism). There seems to be a pattern of *vive la difference*, in contrast with successive democratization waves of the past and the prediction of the “end of history” and the establishment of orthodox liberal democracy. At the same time, traditional ideologies supporting standard parties seem to be threatened by new trends. Trace an approximate map of the shifting political and ideological patterns in Europe, Latin America, the Middle East/ Arab world, and beyond if applicable, proposing geographical, cultural, economic, and social identifiers. In sum, how the world is and will be governed in these first decades of the new century

Transitional Justice

9. Kathryn Sikkink and other scholars have argued that a “justice cascade” has emerged in a world where the impunity for massive human rights violations that characterized much of the 20th century was no longer possible. Nevertheless there are dramatic examples of impunity across the world today, i.e. the collapsed prosecution of President Bashir of Sudan following his indictment by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for crimes in Darfur; Hosni Mubarak and his sons have been freed by the Egyptian military; and in Libya, Muammar Gadhafi’s son and the dictator’s intelligence chief are in the custody of militias and the justice promised by the international community when NATO intervened has vanished, along with all semblance of peace. Considering these and numerous other cases, analyze the role of Transitional Justice in the fight against impunity, and in particular the role of the ICC in this struggle. 1. Is the world better or worse off than in the 1990s? 2. Has the field of TJ evolved or fallen short in the fight against impunity? 3. Is the ICC capable and equipped to set international standards in this fight against impunity and for justice?

Institutions

10. The different variants of the so-called “new institutionalism”—rational-choice (RI), historical institutionalism (HI), sociological institutionalism (SI) and discursive institutionalism (DI)—do a reasonably good job of bringing institutions “back in” and providing persuasive accounts of stability and continuity in more institutionalized polities. However, critics claim that institutionalist theories are largely incapable of providing persuasive accounts of processes of dynamic change, such as revolutions or other major historical transformations. Taking care to identify the key authors and arguments, your task is to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the rival explanations for stability and change articulated by each variant of institutionalism.