

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION: COMPARATIVE POLITICS
MAJOR FIELD
5 HOURS

(Democratization / Chinese Politics)

You must answer a total of four (4) questions for this examination. You have 5 hours to do so. You must answer one (1) core substantive / theoretical question (Section 1.1) section and the fourth methodology question (Section 1.2). You must also answer one (1) question each from your subfield sections (Sections 2 and 3, respectively).

In your answers to any of the questions below, please be sure to present an argument and to refer to relevant readings and empirical examples.

SECTION 1. CORE QUESTIONS

Section 1.1 Substantive / Theoretical questions

1. In recent times, a debate has emerged amongst political scientists about whether "institutions matter" - that is, about whether they have an independent effect on political processes and outcomes. Discuss the main approaches to understanding institutions that are prevalent in our discipline and describe how each approach sheds light on this question.
2. A previous editor of *Comparative Political Studies* (a leading journal in comparative politics) had an informal policy of rejecting single-country studies on the grounds that such studies were not inherently comparative and thus out of place in a journal of comparative politics. Do you accept the editor's proposition that single-country studies are not comparative in nature and hence not really part and parcel of comparative politics? Explain why you agree or disagree with this proposition, making clear what qualities identify a piece of research as part and parcel of comparative politics.
3. What is the relationship between state development and regime development?

Section 1.2 Methodology Question

4. Propose and justify a plausible research design for empirically investigating ONE of the 3 substantive questions that you have answered elsewhere in your Comparative Politics exam. Your answer should entertain and discriminate between alternative hypotheses, and regardless of whether you opt for a qualitative or quantitative approach, it should consider the relative strengths and the weaknesses of either approach in answering the research question.

PLEASE NOTE: You may NARROW the scope of the substantive question in order to formulate a testable causal hypothesis.

SECTION 2. DEMOCRATIZATION

1. The essence of Barrington Moore's *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* is sometimes paraphrased as, "No bourgeoisie, no democracy", a phrase that implies that the middle class is critical to democratic development. Do you agree with this thesis, or do you think that there is a stronger case for casting the working class as critical to democratic

development? Regardless, does it matter whether we cast the middle class or the working class as the fulcrum of democracy?

2. In *Democracy*, Charles Tilly makes the argument that if capacity-building outpaces democratization, a regime passes through authoritarian stage, whereas if democratization develops faster than capacity, the regime passes through a "risky zone of capacity building". What if anything distinguishes Tilly's perspective on democracy and state capacity from Huntington's, and insofar as you see a difference between Tilly and Huntington on this issue, who is correct?
3. Recent literature in the field of democratization has trended towards analysis of authoritarianism rather than democracy. What remains to be understood about authoritarian regimes that the literature has not yet settled, and why is understanding authoritarian regimes important for understanding democratization?

SECTION3. CHINESE POLITICS

1. Do you think that the Chinese case proves or disproves the contention that authoritarian governments are better at industrial transformation and economic development than democratic governments, and why do you think that?
2. Explain why has the Chinese regime moved to increase the degree of public deliberation and consultation in its policy process, and consider whether such deliberation is ultimately compatible with a stable one-party authoritarian state.
3. Have global forces started to erode China's authoritarian institutions, or have China's authoritarian institutions shown their resilience in the face of globalization? In answering this question, use the Chinese case to assess whether or not authoritarian governance is fundamentally (in)compatible with a deep engagement with globalization.