

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION: COMPARATIVE POLITICS
MINOR FIELD
4 HOURS

Friday 14, 2014

(Comparative - Parties & Political Behaviour)

You must answer a total of three (3) questions for this examination. You have four (4) hours to do so. You must answer one question from the core section, one question from your subfield section, and a third question from either section.

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

1. Do "institutions matter"? That is, do institutions have an independent effect on political processes and outcomes? In answering this question, you should discuss how the main approaches to understanding institutions in political science shed 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 intrinsically 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?
4. Thinking about recent regime changes (e.g., Latin America in the 1980s, Eastern Europe in the 1990s, the Middle East today), why is regime change so hard to predict? What are some of the major theories of political regime change? Assess their strengths and limitations.

SECTION 2. COMPARATIVE PARTIES & POLITICAL BEHAVIOUR QUESTIONS

1. Is sudden change in party systems best explained as a function of opinion change among the citizenry, internal party dynamics, or legislative and electoral institutions?
2. Is it valid and useful to use the concept of party identification to explain comparative (i.e., non-American) political behaviour? Explain why or why not.
3. There has been a move in recent years to study the public opinion and voting choice in the laboratory, not just through surveys and observational data. Which classic questions in the comparative study of political behaviour are most amenable to laboratory study, and which

classic questions are less amenable to laboratory study, and why?

4. Do you agree or disagree with the proposition that the nature of the choice that voters are presented with on election day is mainly a function of the structure of electoral competition as dictated by electoral rules and the party system, and that it has little to do with the type and organization of the parties themselves? Justify your position on theoretical and empirical grounds.