

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

Friday 14, 2014

Comparative – CPE

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 POLITICAL ECONOMY QUESTIONS

1. Offer an explanation for the origin of variations among types of capitalist systems. Please use examples from at least three countries in your answer.
2. Do you agree with the proposition that capital markets have put national governments into a straitjacket with limited autonomy for national policy priorities? Either way, what is the causal mechanism for that process? What are the implications for sovereignty and democracy?

3. What explains the depth of the Euro crisis, in comparison to the partial rebound after the 2008 financial crisis in places like the US, Canada, or Japan?
4. Has globalization caused an increase in inequality in major democracies and does it represent a threat for democracy? Why or why not?