

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

30 March 2016

The State; Latin America

You must answer a total of three (3) questions for this examination. You have five (5) hours to do so. You must answer one (1) question from the core section and one (1) question from each of the two (2) subfield sections.

In your answers to any of the questions below, please be sure to directly address the question and to refer to relevant readings and empirical examples.

SECTION 1. CORE QUESTIONS (Answer ONE)

1. Do we understand why, or under what conditions, institutions change? What do you consider the most important findings on this issue in comparative politics, and what do we still have to learn?
2. How important are international and transnational factors in shaping domestic politics? How has the comparative politics field taken them into account? What international and transnational dynamics require greater analytical attention?

SECTION 2. SUBFIELD 1 – THE STATE (Answer ONE)

1. In seeking to understand the relationship of states to their populations, what models of state-society relations can we draw on? Critically compare and contrast models developed in the state literature. Which of these models do you find most compelling, and why?
2. While early accounts of state development prioritized material explanations, recent scholarship has sought to incorporate cultural and ideational variables into the study of the state. How would you go about studying the significance of culture and ideas relative to material variables in relation to state development?

SECTION 3. SUBFIELD 2 – LATIN AMERICA (Answer ONE)

1. What are the obstacles to social inclusion in Latin America today? In your answer, you may focus on one or two countries. Discuss how excluded groups (labour, middle sectors) were previously incorporated into the political system (through corporatist mechanism, parties, or populist mobilization), and compare these historical experiences with new challenges of political inclusion that have emerged in recent years (such as indigenous movements,

opposition to neoliberalism, or protests against extractivism). Is the region undergoing a second period of incorporation?

2. In recent years, many Latin American governments—collectively representing most of the region's population—have shifted to the left. Is this the most recent example of the tendency in the region to shift dramatically between alternative development models? What does the history of previous policy shifts (from the agro-exporting model to import substituting industrialization, or from ISI to neoliberalism) tell us about the current shift and its reversibility?