

THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY
School of Public Affairs * Department of Government

Govt 73 Comparative Politics (Doctoral)
Comprehensive Examination
January 2005

Directions: Answer THREE (3) of the following questions: one question from Part I, one question from Part II, and one question from either part. Your answers will be judged for their responsiveness to the specific question, their skilled and ample citation of the relevant literature, and their clarity of organization. Any arguments you advance should be defended against plausible counter-arguments. The material used in your answer to any question should not substantially overlap with the material used in other questions. Take time to organize your answer.

Part I (Answer at least ONE question from this section)

1. Many theorists argue globalization is reducing national sovereignty and diminishing the meaning of national boundaries. Does globalization demand a rethinking of some central questions and debates in Comparative Politics?
2. What is the most important subfield in Comparative Politics? Why?
3. Francis Fukuyama recently announced that 'development' has become 'purely academic' and is a "total disaster" in terms of actually bringing about change in impoverished nations. Select any major theorist or theorists within the Comparative Politics field and propose what form their response to Fukuyama's statement might take. Do not overlook the possibility that they might agree with him.
4. Comparative Politics, more than other subfields within political science, has been marked by major works of empirical research which have defined and developed its major theories, concepts, and questions. Trace this empirical research history and say what you believe the next steps will, or should, be.
5. Institutionalism means many things to many different people within Comparative Politics. Analyze the concept, its many varieties of practitioners, and its research success.

Part II (Answer at least ONE question from this section)

6. What kind of institutions might Comparative Politics scholars propose as the basis for a permanent constitution to govern Iraq? Discuss at least two different scholars' approach to

such matters, and compare their possible solutions. Evaluate their chances of success from your own viewpoint.

7. Imagine a debate between scholars of modernization theory and political development theory, with attention to their agreements as well as disagreements. What has more recent scholarship brought to this debate?
8. Can a war against terrorism be won? Give your answer from the viewpoint of at least three scholars in the Comparative Politics field, and include your personal critique and evaluation.
9. The development of Asian societies and political systems have often served to cast doubt on prevailing theories within American political science. Analyze the sometimes imperfect fit between development theories and the Asian experience, and draw suggestions for new approaches to the analysis.
10. "Culture theory is easy to reject empirically, but hard to get rid of conceptually. There are certain phenomena of major importance to politics that cannot be handled any other way." Discuss this opinion, and your proposed solution.
11. James Scott's *Weapons of the Weak* seems to come to the conclusion that the weak have no weapons. Is this a fair evaluation of the book? of his work in general?
12. Comparative Politics is often said to be marked by revolutions (the behavioral revolution, 'bringing the state back in'), but it is also marked by sometimes subtle continuities. Select a major writer from the Comparative Politics field and discuss the sources from which his/her work derives, and the influence it may have had on subsequent work.

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